

MANY WATERS – SAMPLE LESSON

4. GRANDFATHER LAMECH AND GRANDFATHER ENOCH

Read

Chapter 4 of *Many Waters* by Madeleine L'Engle

Summary

When Dennys became conscious, he was frightened. All he saw were little, brown people and the previous small, brown people had flung him into a dung heap. Japheth carried him to the women's tent and laid him on soft linens that covered the rough animal skins. The women began attending to him.

Meanwhile, the women took turns going to Grandfather Lamech's tent each evening to take his night-light, so they had all seen Sandy. They each talked with Grandfather Lamech and gave him an update on the Den.

While attending the giant, Dennys, Oholibamah and Yalith talked about Grandfather Lamech and the problem between Yalith's father and the old man. Yalith loved to listen to her grandfather's stories, but Oholibamah said that things were changing.

Back at Grandfather Lamech's tent, Sandy was getting better. His fever left him and he and Grandfather Lamech sat out under the stars. Sandy noticed that the stars seemed brighter and there were more of them than at his home. Sandy still did not know where he was. But he learned there was a volcano. He tried to explain snow to Grandfather Lamech. And the old man was delighted to hear about Sandy's and Dennys' garden.

The old man talked about El and how his own days were numbered. He also talked about his own father and his Grandfather Enoch that walked with El and then he was not.

Activity

The Star Game

If you have a big group, divide up into teams of two or three.

Directions

Team 1 or Person 1 begins by choosing the name of a constellation. She or he/group then writes it on a piece of paper that is kept secret from the other teams or people playing the game.

The other teams or people must guess the constellation. To help them figure this out, the first team/person must act out something

that will give the other teams/people a clue to what constellation it is.

After a certain length of time if no other teams/people have figured out the constellation, the team/person reveals the answer by turning over their paper, which has been kept secret until this time.

Depending on how many people you have playing and the length of time it takes to play each round (a round equals when each person or team has had a turn), you may play several rounds. You can change it slightly by choosing planet names.

Discussion

Questions

1. If Sandy was looking at the stars, why do you think he couldn't tell that he was still on planet earth?
2. What seemed to be the problem between Yalith's father and Grandfather Lamech? Discuss family issues, such as fights between siblings (either brothers or sisters or between a parent and his or her siblings) and how that makes you feel. If you don't have siblings, think about other family squabbles that might have disrupted your happy lives.
3. Why did the women in Yalith's household take the lamp to Grandfather Lamech? Was this a way to continue caring for an elderly relative? How does that compare to how our society treats older people? Discuss.
4. What sorts of things have you noted changing in this oasis culture? Are there changes in our American culture? Discuss.
5. What UU Principle and Purpose do you see applying to this chapter? Discuss.

Teacher Discussion Helper

The only reason that Sandy could not tell where he was from looking at the stars seems to be that there were many more stars visible, which probably confused his brain. He probably could not identify any of the usual constellations.

Here are some of the reasons that caused more visibility:

1. There was not a problem with light pollution, because electric lights did not exist. Oil lamps do not burn very bright, so these did not give off the sorts of pollution from light we see today.
2. Since this was in man's early history, there were fewer people. Therefore, there would not be as much other pollution to cloud the atmosphere. We

had not invented so many power machines, discovered how to burn coal or any of the items that we use today that pollute our world.

3. It is also possible that some of the constellations we are familiar with today were still in formation during these early days.

Yalith's father, the patriarch, was angry with his father because his father was stubborn and refused to move close to where the patriarch's tents were. While today, many older people do not live close to their families and are taken care of by our well-developed social system; they had no such system in the time setting of this book. Of course, many older people today suffer abuse from the same social system that is supposed to be helping them. Limits on savings and earnings from other sources keep some people out of our Medicare system. But even when people qualify for the services, the services can be less than desirable. Changing the retirement age to older does not really help the system or the people who need the services.

Meals-on-Wheels is one service that older people often can take advantage of. This service brings lunch to the older person. Senior Centers also offer services that include help with mundane tasks, such as balancing the checkbook. These centers also offer classes that help seniors with a host of different items, including offering fun classes. Senior Centers are often an important social gathering place. Some sponsor card games, dominoes and other games that seniors enjoy. Out of this social community, seniors also take care of one another as they can.

The oasis culture is changing. Old traditions are being forgotten. Matred feels that young people are becoming rude and disrespectful, because Mahlah will not come with her Nephil lover and announce their engagement. Instead, Mahlah goes to him and stays gone for days or longer. The institution of marriage is being challenged in this ancient civilization. Today, kids are questioning some of the same issues and being accused of some of the same things.

Teens and young adults today do not believe they should "have to" get married. Many are having children first; some never marry but continue bearing children. Today, however, our culture does not center on populating the world.

Interracial issues today are very similar to their inter-species issue in the book.

The UU Principles and Purposes "inherent worth and dignity of every person" could relate to Dennys' being frightened by the little, brown people. Obviously, Dennys was abused by other little, brown people, which caused him to form a view of ALL little, brown people as people to fear. Since the first group of little, brown people did not treat him with inherent worth and dignity, Dennys might also have developed a similar view of the entire race and not treated them with inherent worth and dignity. Often our opinions are formed of an entire people by the actions of only a few. For example, because Hitler ordered the deaths of millions of Jews and Hitler was a German, one could form a similar belief that all Germans are evil. But we know that to be false. Many of our own ancestors were German.

Japheth and his family exhibited “Justice, equity and compassion in human relations”. Japheth carried him into the women’s tent and the women began tending Dennys burned skin. This is an act of compassion. They also could have feared Dennys, because they thought he was a giant. While we don’t know why the little, brown people feared the giants, we can guess. So this family treating Dennys as one of them is an exhibition of equity and justice.

“Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth” might be considered exhibited through the discussion of El and Grandfather Enoch. Sandy did not understand who or what El was. However, he did not reject any of Grandfather Lamech’s spiritual suggestions.

“A free and responsible search for truth and meaning” is what Sandy was after. While he began his search for truth and meaning, he has a long way to go. We often find that when searching, our journeys tend to be endless. Sandy is not as interested in finding spiritual solitude as finding answers to where he is and how to get back home, but this journey into the scientific world is much like many UUsers take to find their way to a meaningful spiritual path.

“The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process” are not exhibited in this chapter in our opinion. “The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all,” is also not exhibited in this chapter. “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence for which we are a part” might be hinted at during Sandy’s gaze at the stars in our opinion.