

John 2:1-11

Unexpected abundance

Jesus performs his first miracle while he and his mother Mary are at a wedding celebration and the wine runs out. Jesus is encouraged by Mary to solve the problem and instructs the servants to fill six jugs with water. Much to everyone's astonishment, as the liquid is poured out of the jugs, what comes out is the finest wine.



If you were offered three wishes, what would you ask for? Read the story in 1 Kings 3:5-14 of what King Solomon asked for and God's response. Imagine how the Cana guests might have behaved, when they realised they had more wine than they could possibly drink. What examples of using God's abundance responsibly can you think of?

Discuss

Bible notes



Many of us will have heard the phrase 'Jesus himself went to a wedding' (it's part of the marriage service in some churches). But there are other significant ideas at play in this story found in John. It is the first of the 'miraculous signs' in John's Gospel that reveal Jesus' identity as the Messiah. As theologian

Marianne Meye Thompson writes, 'His deed calls to mind the Old Testament promises of the feasting and drinking that will characterize the (messianic) age to come.' It is appropriate to link to today's reading from Isaiah (also see Isaiah 25:6-8). In an unobtrusive way, Jesus here declares his messianic intentions. The 'new wine' is the eschatological abundance that we read about in the Old Testament and finds its fruition in Jesus Christ (see Amos 9:13-14).

The words of Jesus to his mother (v.4) appear harsh, but Jesus uses the same term ('Woman') to refer to his mother at the cross (John 19:26 – even so we cannot rule out that there was degree of reprimand in his tone here). Jesus here shows that he is not acting in response to the obligation of earthly ties, but according to the designs of the Father, which will happen at the right time.

First impressions

- When have you experienced unexpected abundance?
- What is your favourite image of God's generous abundance?
- Can you surprise someone with a generous act this week?



Pray

Living God, we praise you for touching our everyday lives and bringing blessings.

Thank you for abundance in all you do: for hearing our prayers and bringing goodness and light.

For going above and beyond to bless people in need. Help us to live with abundant kindness too.

Amen.



How many 'over the top' responses to the question, 'How much do you love me?' can you think of? A popular one is 'To the moon and back'. With others, see who can make up the most extravagant. Fold a piece of card or paper like a greeting card. On the inside write 'I love you' plus your favourite responses from the ones you came up with. Draw and decorate a heart on the front, with the words 'An all-year Valentine'. On the back, write 'From God to' and your name.

Read

Read the traditional tale of *The Magic Porridge Pot*. What does the story teach us about abundance?



ACT

Place red cordial into a mug, and fill a clear glass with water. Act out and retell the Bible story, pouring water into the mug as you do. Pour the liquid from the mug back into the glass as the water is turned into wine. Jesus' first miracle identifies who Jesus is, not only as the Son of God, but also as someone who loves abundantly. How can you love generously today?