Literacy International: Water and Life

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English Spiritual

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English

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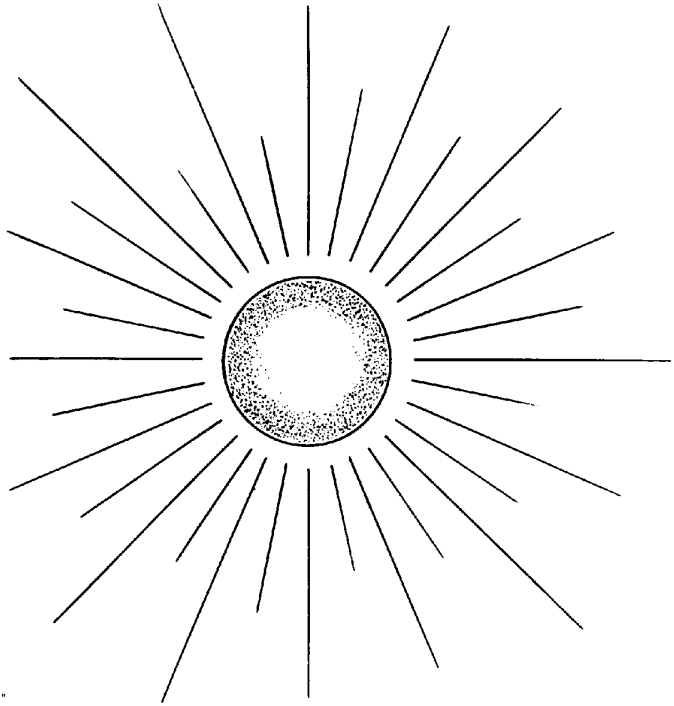


A boy lived in a desert in America. One morning he wanted to see some new things. He got up, put on his clothes and ate. He took a little water and left. He didn't tell anyone what he was thinking. He wanted to visit some relatives 50 miles away.

He was in a wild and dangerous desert. The sun got hot but he kept walking. Three or four hours later he was dead. He had not carried enough water.

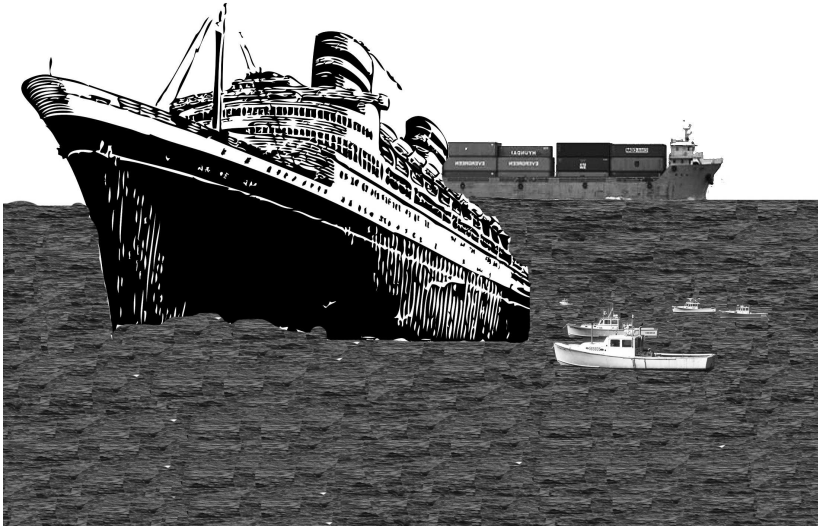
That American boy was foolish. Humans must drink enough water. They need more when the weather is hot. Bodies can dry out and die.

Water is part of life. We drink water. We cook our food with it. We wash our bodies with it. We use it to wash clothes. It can help us put out fires. It helps to cool us when we are hot. It often can stop disease.

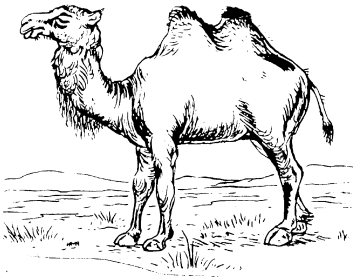
Some people live by a river or ocean. They catch fish and sea animals. They sell them and earn their money to live.

Large ships can carry huge loads from one place to another. They go for business. Smaller ships carry people. They go for pleasure.

We cannot live without water.

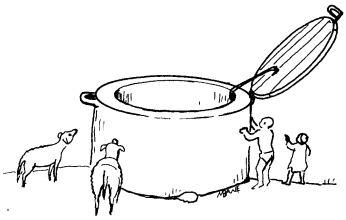


About a billion people on earth cannot find good water easily. What do they do?



Travel on camels. Camels can travel a long time without needing more water. Arabs and Berbers have traveled thousands of miles in the Sahara desert. Without camels, no one could go very far in the wind and heat.

Cut cactuses open. Some cactuses have water inside. Wise people have learned which ones!

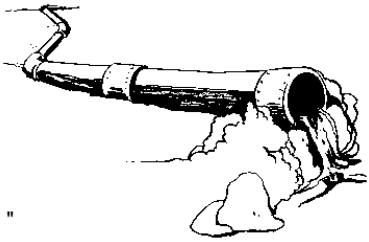


Store rain water in clay tanks underground. They are called cisterns (Jeremiah 2:15 and Isaiah 36:16). The ancient Israelites built cisterns.

Dig ditches. For thousands of years, people have made ditches. The ditches carry clean water from high mountains into dry fields or homes. The ditches send water just where it is needed. We call this irrigation.

Dig wells. Water can come up from the ground into the well and save lives.

Drink water from modern cities. It is almost always good. Men have learned to put things in the water to kill the germs. Germs are tiny plants or animals that cause sickness. Pipes take body wastes away from homes and buildings. Then they cannot get in the water and make people sick.

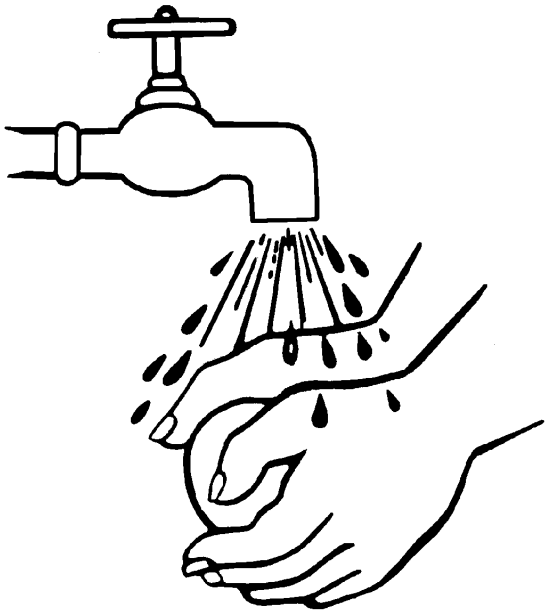


In modern cities, governments control waste water. They may pump it high into the air. Wind and sunlight help to clean it then. They may make it go through very fine filters. They put chlorine or other chemicals to kill germs. Then we can all drink this water if we use a clean glass or cup. We should also eat with clean dishes, knives, forks or chopsticks. We can clean them with soap or with sand.

What more do we do?

Wealthy people and governments use strong pumps to take water out of the ground. The pumps force the water into tanks for storage.

It stays there for a time. Then it runs down through pipes. It goes wherever people need it.



National governments make huge dams. They block rivers with dirt or concrete. The water goes where people need it.

Some water makes electricity. It has great power. People all around the world use electricity.

Here are some ideas that can help people to save lives.

Boil all water for 10 minutes before you drink it. If you can't boil the water, find a clear glass or plastic bottle. Fill the bottle with your best water. Let it stay in the sun for three or four hours. You can get rid of many germs that way. The idea comes from a long-term missionary to desert peoples.

Do not cut down any more trees than you have to. Some countries are poor because they didn't save trees years ago. The famous “cedars of Lebanon” in the Bible are mostly gone. Work with anyone around you to save fuel.

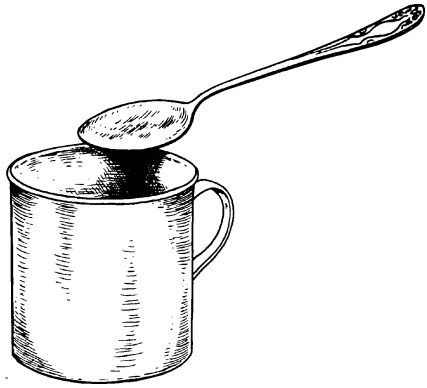
Burn trash or dry animal wastes instead. You can help to stop disease in this way. When trash lies around, it can get into the water and make the water dirty. Then mosquitoes and rot may come.

Always cover your water. Keep it away from animals and small children. Keep flies away. You will help to stop disease that way.

Malaria is a killer. Missionaries often tell people in villages never to let water stand after a rain. Germs grow in standing water. Mosquitoes love it. They take malaria germs from standing water and then spread malaria by biting people. Medicines and mosquito-nets help protect some people from malaria.

Wise governments drain swamps to get rid of the mosquitoes. They tell village people to bury wastes from their bodies or build latrines. They tell them not to drink water from rivers or streams. A mountain stream may look pure and clean, but it could be full of germs.

Diarrhea ("running stomach") is another killer. It steals water from a person's body. A teaspoon of sugar and a pinch of salt in a cup of water can stop diarrhea. Even babies and small children can drink this water. This special water has healed millions of people.



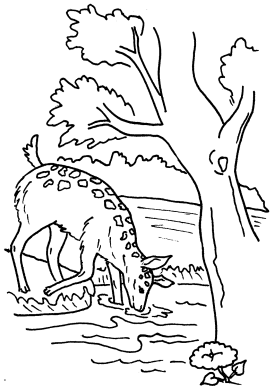
There is water for the body. There is living water for the soul. Our Lord Jesus talked about them both.

In the Bible Jesus once stood up in a crowd (John 7:37). He was in the temple of Jerusalem. It was the last great day of a big feast. He was talking to people from many countries. He shouted out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.”

Some religious people did not like that. They were proud. They did not think that *they* were thirsty. They felt that their lives were complete. They certainly didn't need a carpenter who said he was God.

But - - No one comes to Jesus without being thirsty. (Feeling their need for God.)

Jesus says we should “drink of Him.” Then we will have living water in ourselves that we can share with others. This living water brings life. The living water comes from knowing Jesus and belonging to Him.



We cry out for living water. The deer "panted for the water brooks." (Psalm 42:1) In the same way, we feel our need for God.

1. We need to *realize* that Jesus was and is God. For some people this is hard to believe. The Jewish leaders had trouble believing it. How could a man be God anyway? The Muslims agree. They believe that Jesus and the Jewish prophets were good people but none of them could ever be God.

Israeli leaders spent thousands of years trying to protect their religion from false gods. They kept God's name holy. The Name was so holy that they could only write parts of it. Jesus said that He and the Father were one. They thought Jesus was worse than a criminal when He said this. They decided He had to die.

But we know that He is God.

2. We need to *study* His teachings. We know He is holy. We ask Him to heal our hearts and minds.

3. We must *want* to believe. One boy kept falling into a fire and throwing himself all over everywhere. The Bible tells the story (Mark 9:24). The father begged Jesus to heal him. He said, "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief." We must pray and read in the same spirit as that father.

Then the Spirit teaches us and comes in to our inner life. Jesus leads us to water. (Psalm 23, Revelation 7:17) Jesus said this, "He who believes in Me, out of his inner parts shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:38)

4. We must *hold Jesus up* in our minds. We believe that He and the Father made our earth. Without them, there is only darkness. We look at trees, mountains, and oceans. We look for whatever is beautiful in our world.

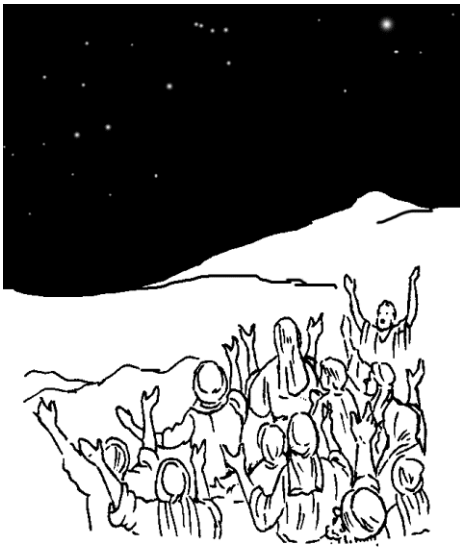
We worship Jesus. We memorize sayings in the Bible.

We think about how Jesus lived as a man. He acted one way with small children. He acted in different ways with fishermen, crying women and proud leaders. He taught people. He ate, laughed and cried. He enjoyed His friends.

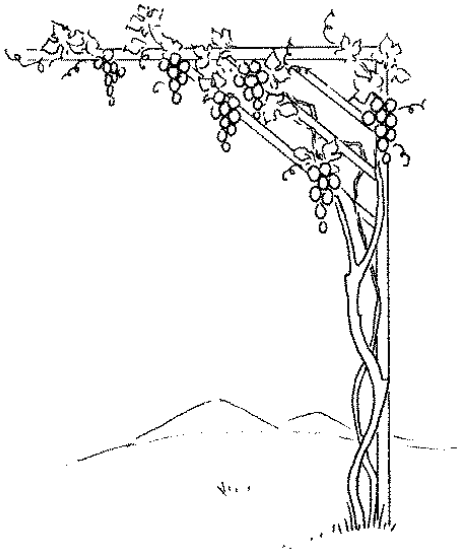
We also think about how Jesus lived as God. He fed 5,000 people and walked on water. He made storms quiet down. He drove away sickness and evil spirits. He died and rose again. These were all great miracles.

5. We *pray.* The Spirit shows us our sins. He shows us where we have made false gods of money, security and pleasure. When we are really sorry, Jesus forgives us. He gives strength and healing to us.

He made the stars and everything else. But... He wants to walk with us! As King David said in Psalm 139:6, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is too lofty (high) for me to reach."



6. We *open our minds to His mind.* His interests become our interests. King David said God's thoughts are "precious." David said they are many, like the sand in the sea (Psalm 139:17). Jesus suffered on the cross. He suffers for His world now. When there is great suffering, we feel it as He does. We help those who suffer in any way we can.



7. We *abide in Him* as a branch is connected to a vine. (John 15:5). He gives us strength, direction and peace. We keep ourselves ready to meet Him when He comes again to Earth.

Jesus said rivers of living water can come from our inner being. These are rivers of strength, wisdom and healing.

"In that (last) day," said Zechariah (Chapter 13:1), "a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity... Living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea... and the Lord will be king over all the earth." (Zechariah 14:8).

When Jesus comes again, water will flow in Heaven. It will cause trees to grow. Their leaves will bring healing to the nations. (Revelation 22:1 and 2).

In Isaiah 55:1-3a, God says, “All of you who are thirsty, come to the water... Listen and come to me; listen, and you will live.”

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