

## Unit 3 Activity: Bible Study



### Cultural Awareness

#### ***Intercultural Awareness-*The ability to recognize four perspectives in relationship to a different culture:**

1. looking at your own culture from the point of view of your own culture
2. being aware of how your culture is viewed by other countries or cultures
3. being aware and understanding what people from another culture think of their own culture
4. being aware of how you see the other culture

#### **THE CANAANITE WOMAN FROM SYROPHOENICIA**-Matthew 15:21-28, Mark 7:24-30

##### ***Introduction:***

Can you remember a time in your life when you asked another person for something that was very important to you but the person didn't respond as you had hoped? How did that feel? Can you recall the reasons for this helpless and uncomfortable feeling between you both? Did you pursue the issue with the person or just leave it and go away? With those feelings in mind, read the story of the encounter between the Canaanite woman and Jesus.

##### ***The cultural setting for this story:***

Tyre and Sidon were two agriculturally-lush seaport cities on the coast of Phoenicia (today known as Lebanon.) The citizens of the cities were artisans, makers of purple dye, sea-traders, and they built temples dedicated to Astarte, Dagon and Baal. Tyre became known in Ezra's day as a "city of renown, peopled by men of the sea." (Ezra 26:17) The Matthew and Mark texts tell us that Jesus needed some "get-away quiet time," away from the growing crowds that were attracted to Him. There wasn't a better place to go than to a seaside resort in Gentile country, a home for many Canaanites. (The Canaanites were from Ham's ancestral line, Genesis 10:6-20, and the Hebrews were from Shem's ancestral line, Genesis 10:21-30, both sons of Noah. The Hebrews were instructed (Exodus 33:2) to drive the Canaanites out of the land that was promised by God to the Hebrews.) The culture clash between the Canaanites and Jews was based upon generations of family stories and mistrust of each other. (Sound familiar?)

Read the stories in Matthew 15: 21-28 and Mark 7:24-30, keeping in mind the cultural setting and cultural beliefs of both groups of people. (It's important to note that each writer of the Gospels had a different perspective of the events that surrounded Jesus life and as a result, these stories are not exactly alike.)

1. What titles did the Canaanite woman use for Jesus that showed her honor and respect for Him? What would be some reasons she would use these titles?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Jesus identifies His culture to the woman when she asks for help for her daughter. How does He explain Himself?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. This Gentile woman crossed a cultural barrier by asking Jesus for help. They get into an interesting conversation where both speakers continued to 'stand their ground.' What was Jesus' quick reply to the woman's request for help for her daughter?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Notice how the disciples respond to her and to her request.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. The woman knows the cultural bias of people "from the south." Yet she knows there's something different about this Jew and continues her dialogue with Jesus. What is her response to Jesus, and what does it tell us about this woman?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Jesus affirms the woman and her faith. What are some we lessons can we learn from Jesus' reply?