

Adopt a Body of Water Curriculum

Lesson Plan 2: Developing Our Permeneutics

To be sent ahead

What are the elements of a watershed?

These discernment questions and this educational experience are to eventually move you, your family, your faith community, and the wider community to action. As you answer these questions, be aware of God hovering in this moment.

- If you knew your life depended on this watershed, what questions would you ask for its care and protection?
- If you understood or knew this body of water as your sister, what daily, weekly, monthly, and annual practices would you make part of your routine, your family's routine, your community's routine?

Title Session

Developing Our Permeneutics
2

Governing Scripture

Mark 1:1-20

Place

Local church meeting room, public library, or place marked as central to your local watershed.

Day

Time

Posted upon arrival

On large butcher paper or post-it:

- Watershed ecclesiology quote: Ched Myers, *Watershed Discipleship* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2016), p. 216.
- Map clearly marking your watershed and your place on the map.
- Questions sent ahead

Materials

Non-plastic glasses placed around the table, water pitcher

Technology

Handouts

2A Prayer over water; 2B Permaneutics with Mark 2:1-20

1. Posted for people to see upon arrival/entrance:

- Ched Myers, watershed ecclesiology quote:

Developing a watershed ecclesiology simply involves consciously rethinking our collective habits, large and small, inwardly or outwardly oriented.

- Map of watershed with your location marked within that watershed.
- Reflections and questions sent ahead:
 - What are the elements of a watershed?

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2. Prayer over water:

Instruct each person to pour water in their glass as they read one line from the prayer. When the prayer is complete, have all people drink from their glass.

God of rain and river,
of stream and storm,
of sea and silent pools,
of waterfall and waterhole,
of wells and waves,
of aquifer and aqueducts,

Hear us as we pray
for water fresh and pure for all.
And guide us to partner with your water
wisely and well, to share in reciprocity with it,
ensuring that all your creation
can share in your bounty. Amen.

Adapted from Ruth Williams, used by churches of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland for World Day of Prayer.

3. Reflection

Without comment, ask the questions that were sent ahead for reflection on three separate pages that can be posted in the room. Record answers and encourage people to continue adding answers/discernment questions throughout future sessions as people come up with them.

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4. Permaneutics

Write out the term "Permaneutics" and share and summarize the following information to explain the term.

- Hermeneutics literally means "interpretation," as in an interpretation of texts, particularly Scripture using critical study. That definition has been extended to metaphorical texts to speak about how we interpret life in its context or matrix.
- Permaculture
 - Bill Mollison was an Australian biologist and environmentalist known for co-developing permaculture, a sustainable agricultural design system that emphasizes the interconnectedness of natural ecosystems. He founded the Permaculture Institute.
 - Permaculture is primarily a system of ethical land use and design for sustainable human settlements. The study of Permaculture Design

encompasses traditional knowledge, ecology, sustainability, organic food production, efficient energy use, natural home design, recycling, appropriate technology, ecological economics, and much more.

Permaculture Designers realize that the present systems of big agriculture and agribusiness, their use of harmful chemicals, GMOs, and pesticides, the unnatural treatment of animals, and monoculture farming (corn, soybeans, corn, soybeans, corn, soybeans....) are all seriously flawed. Scientists speculate that these practices are responsible for the disappearance of many species, and are the main cause of disease in countries that still farm using these outdated methods. When humans fail to work with their watershed and instead impose their own will, economy, and destructive methods on it, all humans and the rest of nature inevitably suffer.

The Permaculture approach is to **work with nature through careful planning and design and create systems** that nourish the earth and ourselves – with less work and more favorable yields. “Permaculture is a dance with nature – in which nature leads.” – Bill Mollison

- Principles of permaculture can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

5. MadLibs: Permaneutics with Biblical Story--Mark 1:1-20

Instruct people to substitute local places for the Biblical places found in this Biblical text using the key following the Scripture passage. After completed, read the Scripture verse with the substitutions. Ask participants for reflection on how the meaning of the passage changed, felt awkward, or came to life with the substitutions.

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way,

³the voice of one crying out in the **wilderness**:

‘Prepare the way of the Living God;
make God’s paths straight.’”

⁴so John the baptizer appeared in the **wilderness**, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And the whole **Judean region** and all the people of **Jerusalem** were going out to him and were baptized by him in the **River Jordan**, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and

he ate locusts and wild honey.⁷ He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals.”⁸ I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

⁹ In those days Jesus came from **Nazareth** of **Galilee** and was baptized by John in the **Jordan**.¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him. ¹¹ And a voice came from the heavens, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

¹² And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the **wilderness**.¹³ He was in the wilderness forty days, tested by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels waited on him.

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to **Galilee** proclaiming the good news of God ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the Empire of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

¹⁶ As Jesus passed along the **Sea of Galilee**, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.” ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ Immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Wilderness: a liminal or border place strongly associated with a spirituality of purifying intent and will. In the wilderness, the Children of Israel learn their rules for living in the Promised Land. In the wilderness, the Satan challenges Jesus. The wilderness is also outside the confines of the dominant economic system.^{ri}

Judean region: the large geographic region containing much of the Jewish population which had the Mediterranean Sea to the west, Syria to the north, Egypt to the south, and some of the Decapolis to the east.

Jerusalem: city considered to be the spiritual, historical, and national center for the Jewish people which also had strong association with monarchial or religious elite overreach critiqued by the prophets.

River Jordan: river which had strong meaning and association with Jewish liberation as they made their way out of Exodus into the Wilderness and then crossing over into the Promised Land. Largest river in Palestine/Israel.

Nazareth: backwater, rural community found just outside the Jewish revolt city of Sepphoris.

Galilee: a largely rural Roman client state that was predominantly Jewish and depended on agriculture and fishing for livelihood. Much of the population became peasants

(farmers without land) as tremendous debt forced farmers to sell their land. This, in turn, led to strong animus against city populations and those who imposed and enforced taxes. Galilee was known to be a place of political unrest, banditry, and resistance.

Sea of Galilee: area body of water fished by the local population as attested by Biblical story and archaeological evidence. Jesus made Capernaum, on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee a focus of his ministry. Probably not coincidentally, on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, people of Capernaum could see the city of Tiberias being built. Herod constructed Tiberias as a way to pay homage to the Emperor.

6. Discernment Homework:

These discernment questions and this educational experience are to eventually move you, your family, your faith community, and the wider community to action. As you answer these questions, be aware of God hovering in this moment.

- If your congregation were to do baptisms at your local body of water, would you be willing to be baptized in that body of water? Why or why not?
- How would it change the meaning of baptism in your church?
- What would have to happen for baptisms to take place at your local body of water?

7. Blessing: What do you call living water and bless this day?

Christ was called “the Living Water.” Ask each participant: What do you call Living Water that blesses you? What do you bless by naming Living Water?

