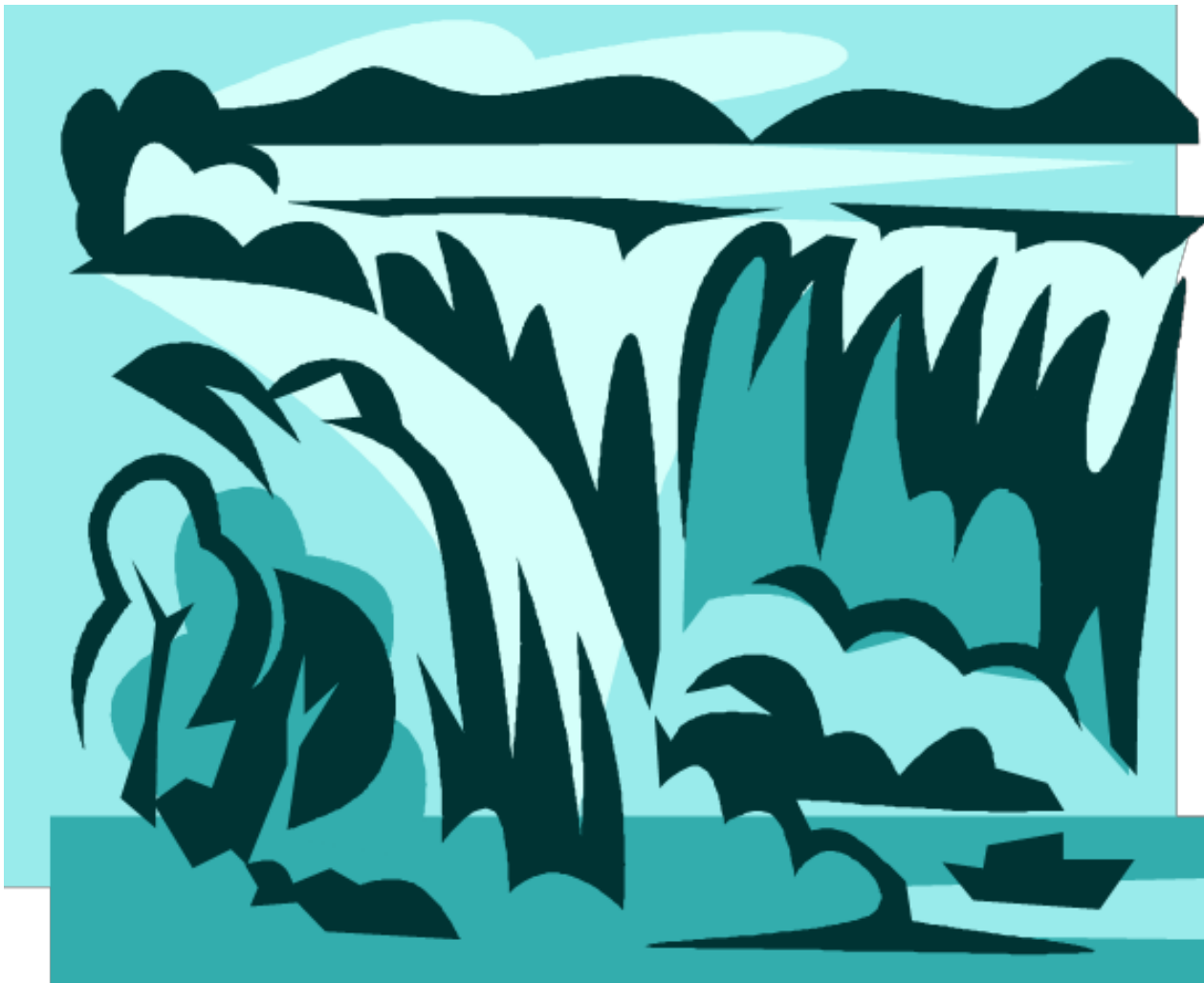


Jesus the living water



Thoughts & activities for Lent 2011
Saving for water projects around the world

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Introduction

Lent is a time for reflection and soul searching as we remember the days leading up to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ and our celebration of Easter. Like the woman at the well in Samaria we can meet with Jesus, the source of living water and let him reveal to us what our lives have become. Through daily readings and reflections we find Jesus again and he will change us so we can be wells of living water to share with others.

Traditionally Lent is a time of fasting, going without food to focus on God instead. This year our fast will be to reflect on our over-use of water. As we do this we will save money to donate to water projects around the world (CBM's Sharing Way, World Vision, Samaritan's Purse). We are so used to turning on the tap and expect water to drink that will sustain us or to step into the shower or bath tub. The majority of people in the world do not have this privilege. Many people, especially children, die daily because they do not have safe water to drink or clean water to wash. As we reflect on Jesus as the living water we can share our riches to bring life-giving water to those who have no access to safe water. Use a water pitcher or big Mason jar to save your coins.

Lent is observed the 40 days before Easter. It does not include the Sundays, because Sundays are days of celebration of the risen and living Christ. Easter is one of the Christian holidays that follow the lunisolar calendar (which is based on the cycles of the moon) rather than the Gregorian calendar (which is based on days and months). This means that the date of Easter changes each year.

This year Easter falls on April 24, the 7th Sunday after the beginning of the Lent season which begins March 8 with Shrove Tuesday.

I know a fount where sins are washed away
I know a place where night is turned into day
Burdens are lifted, blind eyes made to see
There's a wonderworking power in the blood of Calvary

✧ Oliver Cooke (1873-1945) ✧

Shrove Tuesday – March 8

Shrove Tuesday gets its name from the ritual of shriving, when the faithful confessed their sins to the local priest and received forgiveness before the Lenten season began. As far back as 1000 AD, "to shrive" meant to hear confessions.

Historically, Shrove Tuesday also marked the beginning of the 40-day Lenten fasting period when the faithful were forbidden to consume meat, butter, eggs or milk. However, if a family had a store of these foods they would certainly spoil by the time the fast ended on Easter Sunday. What to do? Solution: use up the milk, butter and eggs no later than Shrove Tuesday. And so, with the addition of a little flour, the solution quickly presented itself in... pancakes.

Today, the Shrove Tuesday pancake tradition lives on in Western Europe, the United States, Canada and Australia. It is most associated with the UK, where it is simply known as Pancake Day.

In France, (as well as in New Orleans, US) Shrove Tuesday is better known as Fat Tuesday which kicks off the annual *Mardi Gras* festival with wild celebrations just before the austere Lenten season. In some parts of Europe and South America this festival is called *Carnival* and comes with the same wild parties.

In Sweden, Fat Tuesday translates to *Fettisdagen*, and in Lithuania it's *Uzgavens*. In Poland, traditional celebrations take place on a Thursday a week before Ash Wednesday and so it's *Tlusty Czwartek*, or Fat Thursday*.

- ☞ Read the story of the woman at the well in John 4:1-42. Reflect how she turned her life around after meeting with Jesus, who promised her living water.
- ☞ Invite friends over for a pancake supper.
- ☞ Share around the dinner table how Jesus has changed your life.
- ☞ What is the living water that Jesus talks about.

- œ Write down what you can give up during Lent. (i.e. don't buy any bottled water, take 3 min. showers every other day)
- œ for a list with ways to save water see:
<http://www.cbmin.org/cbm/resources2?category=73>
<http://www.ecokids.ca>
<http://www.k12science.org/curriculum/drainproj/>
- œ Decide how you will save money for the CBM water project. (i.e. pay a penny/nickel every time you drink or use water)
- œ Make a chart of how much water you use per day and brainstorm ideas for conservation.

Ash Wednesday - March 9

The name "Ash Wednesday" is derived from the custom of marking foreheads of the faithful with blessed ashes as a sign of penitence and humility. The Lent season has been a time for self-examination and penitence prior to Easter for many centuries. The day also comes from the Saxon *lengten-tide*, referring to the days and the coming of spring in the northern hemisphere.

This 40-day period of abstinence recalls the fasts of Moses, Elijah and Jesus, all of which lasted for 40 days according to the Christian scripture. It originally began in the western church on a Sunday. Pope Gregory I moved the beginning of Lent four days ahead in the late sixth century because Sundays were feast days.

The ashes that priests use on Ash Wednesday usually come from the remains of burned palms that were blessed on the previous year's Palm Sunday. They symbolize death, mortality and sorrow for sin. The marking of ashes on foreheads in the form of a cross also symbolizes that sins are forgiven through Jesus' death and resurrection.

Ash Wednesday is a public holiday in places such as the Cayman Islands, French Guiana, and Jamaica. It is a holiday for bank and/or government workers, as well as some businesses, in places such as Guadeloupe and Panama. It is a regional holiday in some areas in Cape Verde and Brazil. It is not a national public holiday in countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States but local observances may be held.[†]

☞ Read one of the confession Psalms in the Bible: 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130 & 143.

☞ Reflect on the sin in the Samaritan woman's life and sin in your own life.

☞ Write down a confession on a little slip of paper and burn it in a pan. Use the ashes to make a cross on your forehead.

- œ If there is anything you need to confess to somebody, do that and ask for forgiveness.
- œ Pray together a general prayer of confession (Isa.1:18; Jer.31:34; Mic.7:18; Mat.6:14-15; 18:21-22; Eph.4:32; 1 John 1:8-2:2)
- œ Listen to a CD with a Mass, especially the Kyrie (short for 'kyrie eleison', Lord have mercy).
(Bach, Beethoven, Fauré, Liszt, Mozart, Schubert, Verdi, etc.)
- œ Collect your coins in your savings jar
- œ Investigate if you can install a rain barrel. These save a lot of water, which you can use to water your house plants or garden.

1st Sunday of Lent – March 13

The first Sunday of Lent is sometimes called *invocabit*, which is Latin for to call upon. This comes from Psalm 91:15

*He will call on me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble,
I will deliver him and honour him.*

This psalm is one of comfort and promise. It is the psalm that Satan used when he tempted Jesus (Mat.4:6). It shows that we need to know scripture for ourselves and study it. We can take hold of God's promises through scripture at times we get tempted. As we reflect on the journey to the cross we can get comfort from God's word, as Jesus undoubtedly took comfort from the words of his Father.

☞ Read psalm 91

☞ Reflect on the words in the psalm and how they apply to your life.

☞ Memorize the part that speaks the most to you or the whole psalm

☞ Write down some things that are a temptation to you. Share them with some one you trust and come up with a plan to resist or flee.

☞ How was the Samaritan woman delivered and what was the result?

☞ Hold a relay where you hold a plastic cup filled with water between your teeth to fill up a bucket.

☞ Play a game of hide & seek, where the hidden persons make animal sounds and the catcher has to find them.

2nd Sunday of Lent – March 20

The second Sunday is called *reminescere*, which is Latin for remembering. The scripture it comes from is Psalm 10:12

*Arise, LORD! Lift up your hand, O God.
Do not forget the helpless.*

This psalm is a cry to God about the injustice of life on earth and calls on God to act. We know that life often seems unfair and we all have moments that we would like God to strike the “bad people”. As we cry out to God to remember us and the injustice on earth may it remind us that Jesus went to the cross for those people as much as for us. Jesus also called his disciples to go as he had gone before them: proclaiming the Good News and healing people of injustice.

☞ Read Psalm 10

☞ Reflect on the words and their meaning for your life.

☞ What do you think these words meant for the Samaritan woman?

☞ How can you practically “love your enemy”?

☞ How can you share “a cup of water” with some one else in a practical way?

☞ Start praying daily for those people who are causing you pain or trouble and remember that they need Jesus as much as you do.

☞ A fun game is to talk into a bowl of water and others have to try to guess what you are saying.

☞ This week on the 22nd is World Water Day. Check online what people are doing to celebrate this.

3rd Sunday of Lent – March 27

The third Sunday is called *oculi*, which is Latin for eyes. The scripture it comes from is Psalm 34:15

*The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
and his ears are attentive to their cry;*

All through scripture we read that God is faithful and righteous and that he listens to those who love him. There is another psalm that talks about eyes lifted up to the mountains. Eyes are important to see and to keep focus, both in the literal and figurative way. In Psalm 34 we read also in verse 8: taste and see that the Lord is good. When people are thirsty a taste of fresh, clean and cool water is indeed very good.

☞ Read Psalm 34

☞ Reflect on the words and their meaning for your life.

☞ The Samaritan woman was thirsty for something more. How do you identify with that feeling that there has to be more? Why?

☞ See if you can make a fieldtrip to the water works of your city and find out how water purification works.

☞ Bake cookies together and give them different colours. Do they taste differently? How are sight and taste related?

☞ Play a game of Marco Polo in the pool, but remember that playing in water is using water! Don't forget to add a nickel or penny to your savings jar.

4th Sunday of Lent – April 3

The name of this fourth Sunday is *laetare*, which means rejoice in Latin. This is the Sunday halfway to Easter so we celebrate a bit more. The Psalm related to this is Psalm 84:7

*They go from strength to strength,
till each appears before God in Zion.*

This Psalm would have been very significant for Jesus as he went on his journey to the cross. The end was in sight and he could go home! This is Jesus' promise to us as well: we will live in God's presence for ever (John 14:1-4). The book of Revelation describes Heaven as a place with no more sorrows or pain (Rev.21:3-5); we will be drinking of God's glory all the time. The river of life-giving water will continually flow.

- ☞ Read Psalm 84
- ☞ Reflect on the words and their meaning to your life.
- ☞ Why do you think the Samaritan woman was so excited after she met Jesus?
- ☞ Were you excited after you met Jesus for the first time? Share some stories of that time or another time you met Jesus.
- ☞ What gives you joy?
- ☞ Joy multiplies when it is shared. Invite friends over for a random potluck party.
- ☞ Blow bubbles and see who can blow the biggest one.

5th Sunday of Lent – April 10

The name of this fifth Sunday is *judica*, which means vindicate or defend in Latin. It is found in Psalm 43:1

*Vindicate me, my God,
and plead my cause
against an unfaithful nation.
Rescue me from those who are
deceitful and wicked.*

This Psalm is a plea for justice and almost desperation. A Psalm very close to Jesus' heart as he anticipated the road he was on to save the world from sin. We might cry out to God this way sometimes too, when life gets tough or things go different from what we planned. This Psalm ends on a hopeful note though: when our hope is in God we will find joy.

However tough life gets, God is in control and He has a big picture in view that is only partially visible to us. Following Jesus is not easy and God does not always prevent things from happening in our lives. When we trust God, He will give us strength to continue our journey, like Jesus received strength for his journey to the cross.

☞ Read Psalm 43

☞ Reflect on the words and their meaning for your life.

☞ What is the difference between complaining about things and crying out for help?

☞ Notice how the Psalms mostly end in hope and trust. How can we follow this example?

☞ Do you think the Samaritan woman complained when the villagers did not want to believe her at first? Should we complain when people do not want to listen to us when we tell them about Jesus?

- œ Go for a hike in a city park or in the mountains and scream as hard as you can at the top.
- œ Find a big aquarium or fish tank in the zoo or a pet store and look at all the colourful fish. Does watching fish in water count for a donation to your savings jar?
- œ Make your own fish tank by cutting different colours fish from tissue paper and iron them between 2 sheets of wax paper.

6th Sunday of Lent – April 17 – Palm Sunday

The last Sunday before Easter is called Palm Sunday because of the leaves people waved when Jesus entered into Jerusalem (Lk.19:28-44). They thought that Jesus was a new king who would get rid of the Roman rulers. They did not understand that Jesus' kingdom was not a human kingdom but the kingdom of God.

In the Old Testament we find two scriptures that refer to Jesus' entry: Psalm 118:26-27 and Zechariah 9:9

Blessed is he who comes in
the name of the LORD.
From the house of the LORD
we bless you.
The LORD is God,
and he has made his light
shine on us.
With boughs in hand,
join in the festal procession
up to the horns of the altar.

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!
Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!
See, your king comes to you,
righteous and victorious,
lowly and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

The people finally get it that Jesus is God's son and the promised Messiah. But do they really?

Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week, the week before Easter. As Easter comes closer the mood is getting darker and darker. But remember there is hope.

- ☞ Read both Psalm 118 and Zechariah 9:9-17
- ☞ How do these words apply to your life?
- ☞ Did the Samaritan woman understand what Jesus was about?
- ☞ What does Jesus mean to you?
- ☞ Find out the differences between donkeys and horses and colts and foals.

- ☞ What was the significance of Jesus entering on a donkey instead of a horse? You may have to check a Bible commentary for this.
- ☞ Make your own palm leaves from green construction paper or news paper.
- ☞ What happens to the water when you put either green paper or news paper in it? Would you drink it? Don't! It can make you sick. Millions of kids drink dirty water every day and it does make them really sick. Count all the glasses of water you drank today and put your nickels or pennies in the jar.
- ☞ Look outside tonight and watch how big the moon is. God's light continues to shine even in the darkness.

Maundy Thursday – April 21

The word *maundy* comes from the Latin *mandatum*, which means command. This follows the words of Jesus we find in John 13:34

*A new command I give you: Love one another.
As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*

This is all part of the story of the last supper we find in John's Gospel. Jesus has gathered with his disciples for the last time and he explains to them one more time what it is all about and why he has to die. The disciples do not truly understand until after Easter, when their sadness is turned into joy.

The Thursday before Easter is sometimes celebrated with a foot washing service, after the example of Jesus washing his disciples' feet when he celebrated the Passover feast with them (John 13:1-17). Also tradition is to celebrate communion together as believers.

☞ Read John 13

☞ Imagine you were there with Jesus. How would you have felt?

☞ Why did Jesus have to die?

☞ What is a practical way to love others as Jesus loved us?

☞ How did the Samaritan woman show her love to others after meeting Jesus?

☞ If you can attend a service together. Some churches re-enact the last supper with communion and foot washing.

☞ Watch one of the movies about the life of Jesus together.

☞ With friends, buy a whole bunch of socks and deliver them to a homeless shelter. You could attach little heart shaped cards that say "Love one another".

- ☞ Soak your feet in a tub of warm water and imagine Jesus washing your feet.
- ☞ As Jesus took on the task of a slave, think of ways you can do random acts of kindness to people, family or friends.

Good Friday – April 22

The Friday before Easter we remember the crucifixion of Jesus. This is a most horrible way of death as you might have seen in the movie. Why do we call this good? Only after Jesus rose from the death could we call it good because Jesus had to die for the forgiveness of our sins. We remember God's goodness in taking on himself our punishment.

Scripture tells us that when Jesus died on the cross the land was covered in darkness. Jesus felt completely abandoned and alone as he cries out: my God, why have you forsaken me?

- ☞ Read Psalm 21
- ☞ Reflect on the words for your own life.
- ☞ Share when you have felt totally alone.
- ☞ Would the Samaritan woman have recognized these thoughts of loneliness? Why?
- ☞ As a reminder of the darkness, try to do everything by candle light as long as it is safe.
- ☞ Read the Passion story or listen to a CD of the St. Matthew Passion by J.S.Bach by candlelight.
- ☞ Make blackberry Jello and eat dark vegetables for supper.
- ☞ Forgo any loud sounds or noises from now on until Easter morning.
- ☞ Bake hot cross buns together

Here is a beautiful legend to read together:

The legend of the dogwood tree:

It is said at the time of the Crucifixion, the dogwood was comparable in size to the oak tree and other monarchs of the forest. Because of its firmness and strength it was selected as the timber for the Cross, but to be put to such a cruel use greatly distressed the tree. Sensing this, the crucified Jesus in His gentle pity for the sorrow and suffering of all said to it: "Because of your sorrow and pity for My sufferings, never again will the dogwood tree grow large enough to be used as a gibbet. Henceforth it will be slender, bent and twisted and its blossoms will be in the form of a cross -- two long and two short petals. In the center of the outer edge of each petal there will be nail prints -- brown with rust and stained with red -- and in the center of the flower will be a crown of thorns, and all who see this will remember."⁺



Holy Saturday – April 23

We remember that Jesus was dead and buried. Most of the disciples had fled and they were very scared and sad. In scripture we do not find any records of what happened after Jesus died other than that it was the Sabbath. The Sabbath is the day that the Jews do not do any work (Ex.20:9-11). In the Netherlands this day is called "quiet Saturday".

Church tradition tells that Jesus descended to hell to release the captives there as we read in the Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic¹ Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and life everlasting.

Amen.

This Creed dates from around the 5th century AD and is said to have been evolving from a creed, or statement of belief, made by the apostles in the 1st century. Originally Easter was the time when people were baptized into the

¹ Catholic here means common or worldwide; a universal and unified church.

Christian faith and they studied the creed before they were admitted. This creed is one of the oldest articles of faith that has been accepted in all the different denominations. All statements are taken from scripture (see <http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/history/creed.apost.t.proofs.html>)

- ☞ Read the Apostles' Creed together
- ☞ Reflect on the words and what they mean for you
- ☞ Read again the story of the Samaritan woman in John 4. Look for "creeds" spoken by the woman and the other Samaritans (hint, verses 25, 39, 42)
- ☞ Traditionally people fasted this day. If you are a healthy person you can go for a day without food, but drink lots of water instead. (Really young children, nursing/pregnant women and people with medical conditions are not encouraged to fast).
- ☞ Like Jesus cleanses us from our sin, clean up the house, your room, the yard or the bike path together. (The distraction will help you not to feel hungry).
- ☞ Listen to a CD or sing the Credo (Latin for I believe) while you work.
- ☞ The following are some popular Christian songs that have something to do with creeds:
 - Because We Believe (Nancy Gordon, Jamie Harvill *Mother's Heart Music/Integrity's Praise! Music/Integrity's Hosannah Music*)
 - I Believe (Andy Park, *Mercy / Vineyard Publishing*)
 - I Believe In Jesus (Marc Nelson, *Mercy / Vineyard Publishing*)

Easter – April 24

*Why do you look for the living among the dead?
He is not here, he has risen!*

Bells are ringing, people are laughing, music is playing; it is a day for celebration! Jesus has risen from the dead and He will live forevermore.

Our sorrow has turned to joy, our tears of suffering have been changed into tears of joy, our blind eyes finally see God's kingdom for what it really is: out of this world!

One of the traditions is to have new clothes for Easter and to go to church with a (new) hat on. In the more traditional churches baptisms only happen on Easter day as a sign of new life.

Many traditions include Easter eggs, all or not decorated, hidden or brought by Easter bunnies. Like with many Christian holidays the original Pagan ideas are Christianized to fit the Christian beliefs or are just adapted to celebrate the risen Christ. Whatever your traditions are, Easter is a day for celebration with family and friends.

- ☞ Read the Easter story in Matthew 28
- ☞ Reflect on the words and their meaning for your life.
- ☞ How did the Samaritan woman experience new life after meeting Jesus?
- ☞ Share together how you experienced new life after meeting Jesus.
- ☞ Share a meal together with friends and play some egg games.
- ☞ Go to church together and enjoy the celebration of the resurrection.
- ☞ Put a bean and a wet cotton ball in a Ziploc bag and tape it to a sunny window. Watch new life grow before your eyes.

- ☞ Go for a walk somewhere and watch for signs of new life in plants and animals.
- ☞ Count all the money you have collected and send it off to a water project. Remember to stay water conscious for the rest of the year.
<https://catalogue.worldvision.ca/Gifts/Forms/Category.aspx?name=water>
<http://www.cbmin.org/cbm/GiftCatalogue1>

The woman at the well was thirsty for more
Jesus had a surprise for her in store
Living water that never runs out
Now that is something worth shouting about
Christ is alive and living today
Water for us and to share every way
Let us remember this gift from above
And let us help others and give water with love

Helpful websites:

- ☞ <https://catalogue.worldvision.ca/Gifts/Forms/Category.aspx?name=water>
- ☞ <http://www.cbmin.org/cbm/GiftCatalogue1>
- ☞ <http://www.samaritanspurse.ca/ourwork/water/faq.aspx>
- ☞ <http://www.biblegateway.com>
- ☞ <http://www.fisheaters.com>
- ☞ <http://www.worldwaterday.org/page/107>

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* <http://www.fisheaters.com>
† idem
‡ idem