**Shooting Gallery**

**Topic: Acceptance**

**John 4:1-34**

Supplies:

* 4 squirt guns that look identical
* White t-shirts for all the kids (they can wear one of their own if they have one, but they may get stained)
* 4 five gallon buckets of water, dyed four different colors to fill guns
* Water balloons filled with the same colors of water
* Signs to designate an area for each of the four colors

Directions:

1. Fill the squirt guns and balloons up with different colored water.
2. Give every player a white t-shirt.
3. Designate a safe area for each of the four colors. Put your signs there.
4. Pick 2 shooters or throwers per round.
5. A shooter will choose one gun and one balloon (they cannot know what color they are choosing).
6. On go the non-shooters will race to other side of area and go to a designated safe color location.
7. While these students are running, the shooters will try to hit the running players, coloring the runners’ shirts.
8. If a runner has been hit by a shooter, they are not permitted to enter that color’s safe area.
9. If a runner is hit buy all four colors they are out of the game.
10. Play until everyone has had a turn to be a shooter or until there is only one person left running.

Say: How awesome was that? You all look like you have been through a cool-aid thunderstorm. As I was watching you run back and forth and trying to figure out what color group you still were able to join, it made me think about the world we live in and how hard it can be not to be accepted by others. In the game, you were not accepted into a color group if you had been hit with that color. There are times just like that in life when we may not be accepted by others for some reason. Let’s take a look at this topic today, accepting others.

Ask:

* What are some reasons people are told they can’t be part of a group?
* What are some things that you may not accept others?
* Has someone ever not accepted you? Why?
* How did you feel, and how did you deal with it?
* Have you ever been part of a group that has not accepted someone?
* How do you think that person felt, and did you do anything about it?
* Do we, as followers of Jesus, have to accept everyone?

Say: When we look at the life of Jesus, we see He was the most accepting person that ever lived. There was never a person that Jesus did not accept and love. He did not have to accept the choices they made in their life, but He accepted them. There is a story in the Bible where Jesus talked to a woman that had lived a life that was not acceptable. It wasn’t acceptable back then and still is not acceptable today. But Jesus accepted her as a person; He didn’t accept her lifestyle or some of the choices she had made in life. Let’s read this story and discuss what we can learn from it.

Read: John 4:1-34

Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself didn’t baptize them—His disciples did). So He left Judea and returned to Galilee. He had to go through Samaria on the way. Eventually He came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime.

Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Please give me a drink.” He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans.

She said to Jesus, “You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?”

Jesus replied, “If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water.”

“But sir, you don’t have a rope or a bucket,” she said, “and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? And besides, do you think you’re greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?”

Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.”

“Please, sir,” the woman said, “give me this water! Then I’ll never be thirsty again, and I won’t have to come here to get water.”

“Go and get your husband,” Jesus told her.

“I don’t have a husband,” the woman replied.

Jesus said, “You’re right! You don’t have a husband for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!”

“Sir,” the woman said, “you must be a prophet. So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?”

Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about Him, for salvation comes through the Jews. But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship Him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, He will explain everything to us.”

Then Jesus told her, “I Am the Messiah!” Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, “What do you want with her?” or “Why are you talking to her?”

The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could He possibly be the Messiah?”

So the people came streaming from the village to see him. Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, “Rabbi, eat something.”

But Jesus replied, “I have a kind of food you know nothing about.”

“Did someone bring him food while we were gone?” the disciples asked each other.

Then Jesus explained: “My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing His work. You know the saying, ‘Four months between planting and harvest.’ But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! You know the saying, ‘One plants and another harvests.’ And it’s true. I sent you to harvest where you didn’t plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest.”

Say: There are a few things we can learn or take away from this story. First thing is that Jesus knows you, He knows everything you do, and He knows all your actions and the reason for those actions. Second thing is even with all this knowledge, Jesus still accepts you and loves you. This is how we as followers need to live our lives. We need to love and accept everyone, not his or her choices necessarily but accept him or her as God’s creation.

Close: Have your students find a place to spend a few moments with God by themselves. Let them know they need to talk to God about becoming like Jesus and accepting everyone. Ask Him for strength and patience and most of all to love and not judge others. Jesus loved everyone no matter what; we should work to be the same way.