

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Adults

Proper 10 (A)

New Testament: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

BACKGROUND

In this season after Pentecost, we hear stories of Jesus' ministry in the world and our call to engage in that mission. This season is also known as Ordinary Time coming from the word "ordinal" which means counted time. This time is not ordinary as in common or regular, but it is the time of counted weeks between Pentecost and Advent. The color for this season is green and it is often referred to as the green growing time as we hear stories of what God is calling us to do in the world, we join in that call, and we grow in our faith.

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK'S READING

We skip from Chapter 11 in Matthew to Chapter 13. Chapter 12 is important because this is where Jesus is being challenged over and over by various groups of people. What we are reading today is some of the response to those ongoing challenges. Jesus uses parables to teach as well as deal with conflict that is around him. The parable of the sower has many layers and much to discuss with no easy answers for us, and that is where we will begin our discussion today.

THEME

Seeds and Soil

BEFORE CLASS

You will need two different translations of today's reading.

BEGINNING

Invite everyone to gather and paraphrase for them the Notation for This Week's Gospel so they can understand what comes before this and that this parable is a response to Jesus being challenged.

OPENING PRAYER

Loving God, we ask you to be with us as we explore what your words mean for our lives. Guide us as we seek to understand these words and how to sow the seeds you have given to us. Amen.

THE STORY: MATTHEW 13:1-9, 18-23

You will be reading the lesson today twice and will need two different readers. Think about having two very different voices read this such as male or female, young or old. Before reading the lesson the first time, invite people to listen for a word or phrase that stood out for them.

Invite the first reader to read the lesson.

After a few moments of silence, invite the group to say what word or phrase stood out for them.

When you feel everyone has shared, invite the group to listen once more and to listen for what Jesus is saying to them. Invite the second reader to read the lesson.

After a few moments of silence, invite the group to say what they heard Jesus saying to them.

After everyone has shared, you can begin with the questions or go to the activity.

Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!"

"Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder what this Gospel stirs in us?
- I wonder what questions this Gospel brings up for us?

- Speaking for yourself, think about the various kinds of soil, what do you think those things would represent for you today? (What would be the rocky ground, the path, the good soil?)
- Where or how does the seed take root for you?
- I wonder if there are ways in which we can help the seeds find good soil?

GETTING CLOSURE

Invite them to share what stood out for them in our discussion today.

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God, help us understand your words and parables so that the seeds can be planted and grow in us. Guide our ears, eyes, mouth, hands, and feet that we may engage in your mission in the world. Amen.

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