

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Younger Children

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 pictures of a dirt path, rocky ground, thorny ground, and good soil; seed packets, paper, markers, glue, and copies of the scripture lesson. If you are doing the planting seeds activities, you will need seeds, small seed containers or paper cups, soil, and water. Make sure you get seeds that grow quickly such as herbs, grass, etc.

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

Jesus left the house and went to sit on the beach. Soon a crowd of people were gathered around him. There were so many people there that he was forced to get into a boat and from the boat, he taught the crowd of people telling them this story.

A farmer went out to plant seed. As the farmer scattered the seed, some fell onto the dirt road and the birds ate it. Some fell on the gravel where it grew quickly, but the roots of the plant couldn't put down roots, so it withered and died. Some of the seeds fell among the weeds and when the seed sprouted, the weeds did not let it grow. Some seeds fell on good soil and made a harvest bigger than we can imagine.

Jesus asked those around him, "Are you listening? Really listening? This is what the story is about." Then Jesus explained to them that the seeds are God's word falling in various places. When the seed falls on the dirt path, or the gravel, or the thorny ground, the seed does not take root and thrive because it is not nourished. When God's word is heard but not nourished in us, those words may also wither like the seeds. But when our hearts are ready to hear God's word, they are like the seeds that fell on good soil and grew and created many, many plants. When God's word is in our hearts and souls, we will grow and so will those around us.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder if you have ever planted seeds?
- Is it easy or hard?
- What do we have to do to take care of the seeds after they are planted?
- If the seeds are God's word, I wonder what we can do to take care of them?

ACTIVITIES

Sowing Seeds

Invite the children to create a picture of the path, rocky ground, thorny ground and good soil. They can glue the seeds in various places and then draw that they think it will look like from the parable story we heard.

Planting Seeds

Show the children pictures of a dirt path, rocky ground, thorny ground, and good soil. Talk about which ones might help seeds grow. Which ones won't? Why? Invite the children to use the containers, soil, and seeds to plant their own seeds to take home.

GETTING CLOSURE

Invite them to share what they learned about seeds today or to share the pictures that they created.

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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