

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Adults

Proper 13 (A)

New Testament: Matthew 14:13-21

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

Today's Gospel lesson is one version of the well-known story about the feeding of the 5,000. It is so well known, we may not pay attention to it, but we have much to learn from it. The feeding of the 5,000 is more than a story about fishes and loaves. It is about Jesus' compassion. It is about Jesus teaching the disciples how to feed people. It is about the generosity sharing what was there and being overwhelmed with the abundance. It is a foreshadowing of the last supper where Jesus also takes bread, breaks it, and shares it. What can we learn anew from this well-known story? Where can we feed others and where are we being fed?

THEME

Being Fed and Feeding Others

BEFORE CLASS

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

BEGINNING

Invite the group to gather together. Invite them to share an example of being fed when they were hungry.

OPENING PRAYER

Loving God, we ask you to be with us as we explore what your words mean for our lives. Help us to understand how we are fed by you and by those around us each day. Amen.

THE STORY: MATTHEW 14:13-21

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.

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder what this Gospel stirs in us?
- I wonder what questions this Gospel brings up for us?
- This is a well-known story, what did you hear differently this time?
- Did anything stand out for you?
- This story about Jesus feeding us out of abundance is at its heart a miracle story. Where do you see Jesus feeding you today?
- What miracles have you witnessed in your life?
- Where are you being fed that you did not expect to be fed?

GETTING CLOSURE

Invite them to brainstorm where they are being fed unexpectedly AND how they can feed others from what they already have.

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God, help us understand your words and stories so that we can hold onto the gift of your message. Guide our ears, eyes, mouth, hands, and feet that we may engage in your mission in the world. Amen.

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