

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Older Children

Proper 14 (A)

Old Testament: Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28

BACKGROUND

The Season After Pentecost is the longest season of the church year, spanning almost half the calendar year. The weeks after Pentecost are called 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 liturgical color of the season is green. It is often thought of as a season of growth both in our personal faith and in the life of the church. Common themes to focus on throughout the season are:

- Our relationship with God.
- Our relationship with Jesus Christ and with one another through our prayers, the sacraments and life in the body of Christ.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- The Church and its work for God’s mission.

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK’S READING

We continue the saga of Jacob’s family today with the story of Joseph and his brothers. There was much jealousy among the brothers because of who their mothers were and their place in the family. Joseph’s brothers were very jealous of him did not approve of his dreams that tell of his greatness (which we don’t read today, but you could paraphrase for the children.) Joseph’s brothers decide to sell him rather than kill him to get rid of him.

THEME

Family and Feelings

BEFORE CLASS

You will need cloth for prayer space, Bible, (with a translation used in your congregation) and a candle. If using Option 1 - construction paper for weaving. If using Option 2 a bowl or jar with various feelings (happy, sad, angry, worried, etc.), and characters from today’s Old Testament story each written on a separate piece of paper, the song “Joseph’s Coat” from Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat and something to play it with. For closing one paper weave (see option 1).

Prepare your prayer/gathering space with a small table, or a piece of cloth, it could be green or colorful depending on your traditions. On this cloth place a candle. Near your prayer space, place the cloth or paper for weaving.

BEGINNING

Gather the children together at the prayer table, and ask some wondering questions:

- I wonder what it is like to be a part of a big family with lots of brothers and sisters.
- I wonder how all of the brothers and sisters feel when the mom or dad or grandma or grandpa “play favorites” spending time with just one of the children?
- I wonder if the brothers and sisters ever get angry with one another.
- We are all part of a family, it may have two people or six or more. We are all part of a larger family - God’s family.
- What changes have they noticed in the room? What colors should they look for in the Church? We are now in the season of growing or ordinary time. We hear stories of the family of God and how we are all a part of this story.
- I wonder what God’s family might look like?

OPENING PRAYER

Light the candle. Have the children repeat each line of the following prayer:

For family, we thank you God.

For our home, we thank you God.

For the people in our church, we ask you to be with them.

For the people outside of our church, we ask you to be with them.

For God’s family, Amen.

THE STORY: GENESIS 37:1-4, 12-28

Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. This is the story of the family of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father’s wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

Now his brothers went to pasture their father’s flock near Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, ‘Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.’ He answered, ‘Here I am.’ So he said to him, ‘Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me.’ So he sent him from the valley of Hebron.

He came to Shechem, and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, ‘What are you seeking?’ ‘I am seeking my brothers,’ he said; ‘tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock.’ The man said, ‘They have gone away, for I heard them say, “Let

us go to Dothan.” ’ So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. They said to one another, ‘Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams.’ But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, ‘Let us not take his life.’ Reuben said to them, ‘Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him’—that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. Then Judah said to his brothers, ‘What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.’ And his brothers agreed. When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder why Joseph’s brothers didn’t like him.
- I wonder what God wanted us know when Joseph was sold to be a slave.
- I wonder how Joseph felt when his brothers were not kind to him.
- I wonder what this story tells us about families.

ACTIVITIES

These options can be done within your same space or a separate area. Encourage movement after the storytelling.

Paper Weaving

Just as Joseph was given a robe, today we will weave pieces of paper to describe our family. Using patterns for weaving paper:

- <http://www.dickblick.com/lessonplans/paperweaving/>
- <http://www.origami-resource-center.com/weaving-patterns.html>

The children will use the different strips of paper to describe their family.

- Strip 1 - write their name
- Strip 2,3,4, etc - write or draw their family members
- Other strips can include: pets, and activities their family likes to do.

Be creative, and allow each child to describe their own family. When the children are finished with their weaving, gather in a circle. If they are comfortable, have the children share about their weaving. Post their weavings in your room if you are able.

Musical Chairs

Just as in the game Musical Chairs you will play the song “Joseph’s Coat” from Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat at short intervals. Encourage the children to move and dance as they listen to the words and music. When the music stops, as the leader you will choose a feeling or a character from the bowl. The children will ‘freeze in the attitude of’ and create the face, or body movement that best describes the feeling. Continue until you have gone through your feelings and characters list (feel free to repeat some of the feelings).

Then gather the children in a circle and ask the following:

- What feelings did you like to pretend the most?
- What feelings didn’t you like to pretend to do?
- Who can help you with your feelings?
- How can we ask God to help us with our feelings?

GETTING CLOSURE

Gather the children together in a circle in your prayer area. Have one more paper weave ready. Give each child an additional strip. Invite each child to think of what they would like to say to God today. Have them share their prayer aloud as they weave their piece into the mat.

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you God for feelings, and having us all be part of your family. Amen.