

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Older Children

Proper 18 (A)

Old Testament: Exodus 12:1-14

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

This story is interjected in the story of the plagues that were brought upon the Pharaoh and Egypt as God sent Moses to free the Israelite slaves. In this story, we hear of a ritualized meal and practice that begins the commemoration of the saving events of God. The details that are described signal to us that a new thing is beginning and the old is being left behind. A new calendar is started, the food that is used is all new, nothing from the previous year will be used and the people are to prepare for their new beginning by wearing cloaks and shoes as to be ready for their journey.

This meal not only signals the new, but puts ritual to something that God is doing for the people so they can remember it each year. This is one of the most significant rituals that is done each year by Jewish families and some Christian families.

THEME

Passover meal

BEFORE CLASS

Supplies needed for the abbreviated Passover Meal (bone, parsley, salt water, apple mixture, boiled egg, horseradish, matzo and juice or water), matzo or pita bread and juice or water for snack. If you are doing Option 2, you will need red paper, ribbons, crepe paper, etc. as outlined below. Set the table for the feast. Mark the door to the room in red paper or red ribbon.

Note: The Younger Children may also be doing the abbreviated Passover Meal. Check with the other teacher to see if you want to do it together or share supplies.

BEGINNING

As the children arrive, have them take their place around the table that is set for their feast of the day. Once they have arrived, ask them if they have ever had a special dinner and explain that you will be remembering a special dinner that God told the Israelites to have right before they left Egypt.

OPENING PRAYER

God, as we come together to hear the story of your people and the feast they had before they ran from the Pharaoh and left Egypt, help us to remember those who are suffering or hurting, that they too are able to flee into safety and freedom as the Israelites did.

THE STORY: EXODUS 12:1-14

In the Bible we hear stories of many people. These people are just like us, they eat and sleep, go to school and work. God has a plan for each of them, and in hearing the stories we learn that God's plan is for each of us too. Read Exodus 12:1-14. You can also read this from a Children's Bible.

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the LORD. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

ACTIVITIES

Option 1: Passover Meal

Celebrate an abbreviated Passover Meal with the children. When the children arrive, have the table already set. There should be a table set with candles and a larger plate at the head of the table with the following things on it: a lamb or chicken bone, parsley and salt water, horseradish, boiled egg, apple mixture (chop up apples with nuts, cinnamon and a small amount of grape juice to create a paste), to the side, have three pieces of matzo or pita bread, cups of juice or water.

For each child, have enough matzo or pita and juice to share for snack.

Explain to the children that as God was bringing plagues upon the Egyptian Pharaoh and the Egyptian people for their mistreatment of the Israelites, God paused to give the Israelites a meal that would help them remember what God had done for them, and to mark their houses so that they would be passed over or skipped from the final plague. This meal has become a yearly event that Jewish and some Christian people do to remember their freedom from Egypt and how God has acted in their lives.

Note: As you explain each thing on the larger plate, you may wish to pass each of these things around (and if you do, have them in separate dishes on the larger plate) or you may want to just have the children look at them. Having them pass it around or at least close enough to smell or see each thing will make a bigger impact on them.

The bone is to help us remember the lamb that was eaten that night as God had commanded.

The parsley dipped into the salt water symbolizes the tears of the people who were under the rule of the Egyptian Pharaoh and the suffering they had undergone.

The horseradish helps us remember the bitterness of the Pharaoh and the harsh treatment of the slaves.

The boiled egg also helps us remember the offering that was given to God and it reminds us of the cycle of life.

The apple mixture symbolizes the mortar that the Israelites had used in building the temples.

The Matzo or pita is to remember the unleavened bread, the bread that was made in a hurry by the Israelites, as they prepared for their journey.

Once you have explained the plate and the meal, you can share a simplified snack with the children which consists of matzo or pita and juice or water for them to eat. You may also want to have some of the other elements for them to taste, being aware of nut allergies with the apple mixture.

As you share snack, you can say that your snack today is to help us all remember how the Lord provided special protection and special meal for the Israelites as they were about to leave Egypt with Moses. As you are sharing the snack, you can ask the children what they do before they go on a trip to get ready, just as the Israelites put on the cloaks and shoes as they ate the meal so they were ready for their journey. You can also “wonder” with the children. I wonder what else the Israelites packed for their journey. I wonder how they felt knowing that they were to finally leave. Etc.

Option 2: Marking the doorpost

Have the children create their own “painted door posts” to tell God. You can decorate the door to the classroom in red and/or help them create things to take home with them.

Take Home Idea: Give them strips of red paper (construction paper cut into half or thirds) and let them draw pictures symbolizing their love for God. You can also give them all kinds of red things to decorate it with such as crepe paper, ribbon, pipe cleaners, etc.

GETTING CLOSURE

Invite the children to gather together again and ask them what they most remember from the story.

CLOSING PRAYER

Gracious and Loving God, we thank you for our time together as we shared in the meal that reminds us of your love and protection in our lives. Be with us as we depart and helps us remember to help others who may be hurting or enslaved as the people of Israel were. Close by saying the Lord's Prayer together.