

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Proper 20 (A)

Old Testament: Exodus 16:2-15

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

The Israelites and Moses have just walked through the Red Sea on dry ground, they have survived and witnessed a miracle and are now journeying in the wilderness areas of Shur and Elim. Our story picks up as they are in between Elim and Sinai in the wilderness, hungry and asking for bread and meat. One chapter earlier, God provided them with water, and yet now farther on their journey, they seem to forget that and be complaining again, asking Moses if he brought them out here to die. Wondering if they would have been better off in Egypt where they were at least fed and given drink. (Oh, how quickly they forget their slavery and the conditions that surrounded them. So now, they challenge Moses. The Lord responds to Moses with our scripture today.

THEME

God provides

BEFORE CLASS

You will need a Children’s Bible, costume of Moses, sand, and snacks of bread and meat. Hide the food around the room for the children to find. Map out a route for your walk in the desert. Arrange ahead of time for a person who is to start complaining on the walk.

BEGINNING

Welcome the children into the room and have them sit in your gathering area. Ask how their week was and what they had for dinner the night before or breakfast that morning.

OPENING PRAYER

God, our Creator and Sustainer, be with us as we hear your word that we might find you in the story and better understand your power and presence in our lives. Help us remember all that you give us and all that we are to give in your name. Amen.

THE STORY: EXODUS 16:2-15

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 16:2-15 from a Children's Bible.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder how the Israelites felt when they realized they didn't have food to eat?
- I wonder what they thought when they found the quails in the evening and the bread in the morning?
- I wonder what Moses and Aaron, their leaders, thought as all this was happening?

ACTIVITY: REENACT THE STORY AND HAVE A FOOD HUNT

Take the children on a walk "through the desert." Note: You can use this basic script below or ad lib as you go. If you are leading the group, it might be fun to dress up as Moses, at least by putting on a robe and carrying a stick. This will help the children imagine they are there and get into the story a bit. *Beforehand, you will need to hide things like crackers, rolls, pita bread, pepperoni sticks, vacuum packed chicken and tuna, etc.*

Please join me on a walk today. We are going on a special journey through the desert. (Begin walking)

This is like the desert that Moses and the Israelites went to when they fled Egypt. If you have ever been to the desert, you know that it can be a very hot place especially when you are out walking in the sun. Feel that sun beating down on us! Whew! (wipe your brow and fan yourself)

As we walk, feel the sand. I wonder what you notice about the sand? (have sand in a box or scattered somewhere on the ground outside. Encourage the children to feel, smell and take the time to reflect on what they are seeing or feeling or smelling. They can either walk through it or run their fingers through it. If it can be in a sunny place so it is hot, that would make it more like a desert experience.)

(Once they are done reflecting...) we must get on to our journey, so let's head out. We have the promised land to find and we have to keep going as the Lord has told us to do. I wonder what we are going to find on this journey. (let the children respond)

This is a long journey and I'm getting tired. I wonder, did any of you bring snacks with you? (This is a good time to have another teacher or volunteer in the group pipe up with complaints about being hungry, asking you where the food will come from, and complaining about you not being prepared. If you have the people power, have a few people help out with this part.)

Well, I didn't bring snack and since you didn't bring snacks, we will have to pray about it. (Stop walking and pray with the children for help finding food.)

You won't believe this, but God just told me where to find food! In the evenings, we will find meat on the ground and in the mornings, we will find bread. Since we have been traveling for so long, can you help me look around and see if we can find any meat or bread together? I wonder what kinds of meat and bread we will find! (Send everyone on a hunt to find your snack, making some easier to find than others.)

GETTING CLOSURE

Once you have gathered your snack, invite the children to come together in your gathering place in the room to share snack and reflect on your journey asking wondering questions like: I wonder what you thought of our journey. I wonder what you remember most. I wonder what it was like to be the Israelites who were starving and then God provided them with food. I wonder if you can remember a time when you felt really hungry? I wonder how you feel when you are hungry? Etc.

CLOSING PRAYER

Gracious and Loving God, we thank you for the food that you provide for us. Help us to remember those who do not have food or those who do not have enough food. Guide us on our journey as we discover how better to serve you.