

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 13
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Luke 12:13-21

Even on a sultry summer day, the wind of the Spirit hovers — almost imperceptibly. Our lives rarely accommodate a slower pace for the summer. Yet, we are invited to notice, again, the priorities that drive us. We are invited to stop, however briefly, the manic activity and consider options Jesus offers us.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

Of course, we have needs, and so do our families. Suddenly it dawns on us. The name of our frantic acquisition is greed. Has greed begun owning us? How much is enough? How might we move to becoming more rich toward God?

Theme: Our life is not just about the abundance of possessions

Before Class: If you have time and magazines at hand, bring in an ad or two that seem to advocate greed. You will also need copies of the Bible for the group.

Beginning: Ask the group to consider how advertising plays into our tendencies toward greed. Although it is usually said somewhat in jest, what do they think about "The one who gets the most toys wins!"

Opening Prayer: Help us, God, to come closer to you so we long for the riches that come from you. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 12: 13-21 Before you read the scripture, remind the group that it was the custom for the first-born son to receive the entire inheritance.

Invite one person to read the scripture for today. If you wish, you can add silence at the end of the first reading and then invite another person to read the same scripture from a different translation.

Questions:

- The person makes a request; Jesus responds with a question. I wonder why? (The person asking the question is either trying to get a public airing for his plight or perhaps he is trying to put Jesus on the spot. Jesus, as usual, uses the opportunity to teach.)
- What is the problem Jesus has identified? (Greed — and an attachment to possessions.)
- I wonder if Jesus considered it wrong to be rich? (What was important to Jesus was what people did with their riches.)
- What do we think was the problem the rich man had not noticed? (Not just that he had made a lot of money, but that he hoarded it, was sure he deserved it, never considered sharing any of it, and had no clue he was near death.)
- What is involved in being "rich toward God?" (Among other things, an awesome sense of gratitude and a longing to share what one has with all God's people.)

Option: Consider setting the parable in our own town in our time. Brainstorm the acquisitions a fictitious rich person would strive to gather.

- How might the advertising we are bombarded with affect the decisions?
- What might the person do to change and become rich toward God?
- If the person had a conversion experience, what different choices might that person make?

Getting Closure: Invite the group to sit in silence for a moment or two to consider whether they found traces of themselves in the parable they just created. Where are we defined by our possessions? Where in our lives do we have what is sufficient? Where is it spilling over into unnecessary excess? Where are we possessed by our possessions? How might we move to becoming more "rich toward God?"

Closing Prayer: Thank you for these scriptures that invite us to grow into the people you call us to be. Amen.

Luke 12:13-21

13 Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.’¹⁴ But he said to him, ‘Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?’¹⁵ And he said to them, ‘Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.’¹⁶ Then he told them a parable: ‘The land of a rich man produced abundantly.¹⁷ And he thought to himself, “What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?”¹⁸ Then he said, “I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”²⁰ But God said to him, “You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?”²¹ So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.’

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