

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 6
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Luke 7:36-8:3

We remain Easter people, now with the wind of the Holy Spirit in our sails. Our task for the months ahead in this season of Ordinary Time, which extends to the end of November, is to look at what Jesus so tenaciously taught his disciples and see what is in these teachings for us as we carry out the work we have been given to do. Jesus promised his disciples a helper, an Advocate, who would stand with them making the work possible. This same helper, the Holy Spirit, hovers over us still eager to quench the fire of fear and replace it with the powerful energy of love.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

Luke's Gospel accompanies us on the rest of our journey this year. Luke fleshes out the parables and adds rich details not found in the other gospel accounts. Today, it is the story of the woman who is self-convicted of sin. Her relief at encountering forgiveness flows out of her in an extravagant display of gratitude. Are we so able to confront our transgressions, confess them, and then believe they are truly forgiven, that we, too, can dance our gratitude?

Theme: The gratitude that flows from forgiveness

Before Class: The passage for today is fairly long and has several voices. If you choose to have the children read the parts, print enough copies of the script below. Have paper and pencils ready for the Activity.

Beginning: Tell the children that if this class had been meeting at the time of today's story, life would be very different. Our story today highlights one of the things that was commonly done in that time. Lead them through a series of inquiries to help them find the answer.

- I wonder if they wore sneakers in Jesus' time?
- I wonder if they had socks in Jesus' time?
- Did they drive cars?
- Do you think the roads were paved?

No, in Jesus' time, everyone wore sandals and walked on dirt paths. Their journeys were often long, hot, and dusty. When someone arrived at your home, you or your servant would wash their feet, put on a soothing lotion, and would have offered oil to smooth the dusty hair on their heads. Tell them to keep that in mind as they hear today's scripture.

Then invite each child to think about (just think about, not have to share) a time when they blew it — did something really bad, not just a mistake, they really blew it — BUT they were not punished as they expected to be. Tell them to get in touch with the relief they felt. Tell them to be thinking about that, too, as they read the scripture for today.

Opening Prayer: Thank you God for your forgiveness when we show we are sorry. Help us remember how to treat the people around us. Amen.

The Story: Luke 7: 36 – 8:3 Some terms the children may not know:

- *Pharisee*: A religious leader of a group that worked very hard to make sure they were obeying all their many laws right down to the letter of the law. They had great difficulty with Jesus' ministry because it did not appear to them to be toeing the line.
- *Alabaster jar of ointment*: Alabaster was about as expensive a material as you could get for a jar. Usually white, shiny-looking a bit like marble. The ointment was also expensive.

Questions:

- I wonder why the Pharisee was upset that this woman had come to his party? (She clearly had not been invited, and what she was doing was embarrassing him.)
- What did the woman do? (First she cried, then she washed Jesus' feet in her tears, dried his feet with her hair, and then smoothed ointment on his feet.)
- What question does Jesus ask the Pharisee? (Verse 41-43)
- Do you think the Pharisee was beginning to get it? (Verse 43a)
- What had the Pharisee, who was so intent on getting everything right, forgotten to do for Jesus when he came into his house? (Verse 44-45)
- What does Jesus say to the woman? (Verse 48)
- How do the people sitting at the table respond to that? (Verse 49)
- I wonder how we would have responded?

Activity: Other Sides of the Story (Note: you can do this activity together or if you group is larger, you may want to divide them in half.)

Tell them that women had very little status in the time of Jesus so it is no surprise that she is given no lines in this story. Invite the group (or one of the groups) to come up with the woman's story: not so much what she had done to be considered a sinner, but the gratitude she felt at believing she was being forgiven. Perhaps she had heard Jesus speak before. Maybe he had already forgiven her before this day. Give her a voice for her gratitude.

Then invite the group (or one of the groups) to identify with the Pharisee who is just trying to do his job, and letting sinners come to his party was against his ways. Could it be the man had something he was not terribly proud of, that he was afraid someone might find out about?

Are there other perspectives this story can be told from and if so, how might the story be told?

Getting Closure: Once the groups have had time to work on the stories, invite them to share what they have come up with or what they thought the other stories might be.

Invite the children to sit for a minute and remember the event they thought about at the beginning of this session, especially the gratitude they felt at being forgiven. Ask if anyone wants to describe how the gratitude felt. And if no one offers anything, that is OK, too.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for the gift of gratitude that rushes over us when we know we have been forgiven. Thank you for your forgiveness and love. Amen.

Luke 7:36-8:3

Narrator: One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table.³⁷ And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment.³⁸ She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment.³⁹ Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself,

Pharisee: 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner.'

Narrator:⁴⁰ Jesus spoke up and said to him,

Jesus: 'Simon, I have something to say to you.'

Simon: 'Teacher, speak.'

Jesus:⁴¹ 'A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.⁴² When they could not pay, he cancelled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?'

Simon: 'I suppose the one for whom he cancelled the greater debt.'

Jesus: 'You have judged rightly.'

Narrator:⁴⁴ Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon,

Jesus: 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair.⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet.⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.'

Narrator:⁴⁸ Then he said to her,

Jesus: 'Your sins are forgiven.'

Narrator:⁴⁹ But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves,

Party Guests: 'Who is this who even forgives sins?'

Narrator:⁵⁰ And Jesus said to the woman,

Jesus: 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'

Narrator: Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him,² as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out,³ and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources.

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