

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 16**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**

**Scripture: Luke 13:10-17**

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**

For 18 years the woman had been unable to stand upright, lift a child, or gaze at the stars. Bent over, she saw only what was on the ground. "You are free," she heard Jesus say. Jesus touched her and suddenly she could raise her arms high in the air, look at the world, and praise God. All the uptight leaders could do was grumble because Jesus had done this healing on the Sabbath.

**Theme: Set free from bondage on the Sabbath day**

**Before:** You will need props for the retelling of the story: head scarf, sandals, and any other costumes you think would help. You will also need crayons and paper.

Note: if your school system is starting up this week, you might have children new to your class. If so, be sure to take the time to incorporate them, getting to know their names, something about them, and making them feel welcome while helping the other children to welcome them.

**Beginning:** Tell the children we are going to have a story about a woman who was not able to stand up straight; she was bent over in pain, and Jesus made her well. Tell them we will make a play out of the story after we have heard it.

**Praying:** Loving God, thank you for noticing when we are in pain and for healing us. Amen.

**The Story:** Jesus was teaching in a synagogue, which is what they called their churches. It was the Sabbath, which is Sunday, the day of rest. Everyone was listening to him and he was looking out at all the people as he talked to them. Just then he noticed a woman was standing at the back of the synagogue. She was all bent over.

Let's see what that would be like. Let's all stand up and bend over like this. (Bend so your spine and head are flat and you can only see the floor.) How would you look up and see the stars? You couldn't. How would you pick up your baby grandchild? You couldn't. How would you reach up for your favorite book on the shelf? You couldn't. (Invite the children to be seated after you have tried the exercise.)

Jesus wanted this woman to be able to do all those things. And he didn't want her to hurt anymore. So, Jesus called out to the woman, "Lady, come up closer to me. You do not need to be

in pain anymore. You are now free from that pain." And he gently placed his hand on her back and suddenly she could stand up straight.

I wonder what she did when she was healed? (Invite the children to stand again and do the motions with you.) Maybe she thought: I wonder if I can raise my arms? YES! I can! Let's do it too. Maybe I can turn in a big circle. We can turn in a big circle. What if . . . do you suppose? . . . could I dance? Yes, she could dance.

**Activity:**

To help the children act out the story of the crippled woman, bent over in pain, a large head scarf would make a good prop. And perhaps a pair of flip-flops to be sandals for Jesus. Since the children will be invited to make up a dance, be thinking of where you could do this, if your class space is too limited. Perhaps outside, perhaps in some other space in your church.

Let's go outside (or wherever you selected) and make a dance out of this story. We will take turns until each of us gets to be the woman. A scarf will indicate which one is the woman. First, let the woman walk around all bent over and we can notice all the things she cannot do so bent over. Then, Jesus can heal her and she can discover all the cool things she can now do. (Reach arms high in the air. Pick an imaginary flower off a tall tree. Touch her toes. Twirl in a circle, arms over head. Whatever the children come up with.) And when she dances, we can dance the dance the person playing the woman thinks up — along with the woman.

**Option:** If time permits, invite the children to respond to the story through drawing.

**Getting Closure:** If you have been able to go outside and find a place with grass, suggest the children lie down on the grass, in a circle, look up at the sky, then sit up, in the circle and talk about things we can do with our straight backs. We can run and play games, carry stuff, hug our parents, etc.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, that Jesus helped the woman become free of her pain and help her see your world in a whole new way. Help us to see your world fully. Amen.

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