

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 17
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Luke 14:1, 7-14

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

What is true hospitality? Is it inviting to dinner all those you are in with, and who will then be obligated to invite you to dinner? What if true hospitality were inviting those who would really be blessed, those in no position to return the favor? And what might the well-to-do people at the dinner table with Jesus have thought of this radical etiquette?

Theme: The exalted humbled; the humble exalted

Before: The activity suggests an imaginary dinner party, so you could bring what you have on hand: a table cloth that will fit the table you have in your class, candle sticks with candles (which you might choose not to light), a salt and pepper shaker, some paper napkins, flatware, a vase with flowers, etc. You will need: an inexpensive package of paper plates with an unglazed surface so you can color on them with crayons will help for the activity. If you cannot acquire paper plates, cut circles from construction paper to fit the flat part of the plate. You will also need crayons.

If your school system has begun classes and you expect additional children today, be sure to take time to incorporate them into your class making sure all know each other's names.

Optional: If you have handy a magazine with a picture of a fancy table, bring it to help the children picture what a fancy party might look like.

Note: There are really two teachings in this passage, only the second concept (verses 12-14) is included in the lesson for young children.

Beginning: Tell the children we are going to hear a story about a party that Jesus went to and then we will have an imaginary party. What's an imaginary party? It is a party where we can pretend anyone we want to invite is here at our party.

Praying: Thank you for Jesus for helping us to learn how to have a party like you would have a party. Amen.

The Story: Jesus was invited to a party. It was a very fancy dinner party. (If you brought a picture, show it.) They had used their very best dishes, pretty glasses, candles, and a vase with flowers in the middle of the table. Jesus looked around at all the people there. Hmmm. He

noticed who was NOT there. So he said to the host at the party, "Next time you give a party, invite people who will not be able to give a fancy party for you. Think about those who are too poor to give a fancy party, people who do not have a house so they could not give a party, people who are not healthy enough to give a party. Those are the people I would invite to my party."

Activity: In a minute we will set the table for our imaginary party. First, let's figure out who we will invite. Let's think about people in our town we would want to invite. (If they need some help ask if they think there are any people in our town who have no home to live in. If they want to invite their best friend that is okay, but help them notice who is in your town who may not be invited.)

Once you have a guest list, invite each child to pick one of the invited and make a special plate for that person. Invite them to decorate it so the person will feel welcome and then decorate a plate for himself or herself. When all the plates are decorated, set the table. Then all of you sit at the table, with your invited guests beside you.

Since it is an imaginary dinner, everyone can be served whatever it is that they want to pretend to eat. You might begin by saying please pass me the _____ (shrimp salad? steak?). And what would you like me to pass to you?

Getting Closure: Ask each child to introduce the person they invited. They can make up a name for the person or just say who they are. The rest of you can welcome that person with something like, "I am so glad to meet you and I am so glad you could come to our party."

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that you love all the people in our world. Help us remember what you taught us today. Amen.

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