

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 22
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Luke 17:5-10

Choices: What situation do we find ourselves, right here and now, in which we have a choice? What is preventing us from making it? Are possessions, in fact, possessing us? For some of us the choice might be to rearrange our priorities, even make a career change, or maybe it is to faithfully deal with what is on our plate. For all of us, Jesus invites us to follow him.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

Slaves? Well, probably not any of us. Each of us, however, has clear duties to perform. Jesus points out that it is not a big deal to simply do our duty. Our choice is whether we grumble and whine or whether we do our work with gratitude and in faith.

Theme: Choosing To Do Our Work

Before: Awards for the children to take with them and to put on the cross are suggested. You could cut stars or award circles (2"-3" in diameter) with points radiating out from the circles and let the children decorate them with glitter. If that will be too much of a mess for your situation, cut award stars or circles from gold gift-wrap for the children. Whatever design you come up with will work. You will also need white glue or glue sticks.

Beginning: Ask the children if any of them have jobs at their houses? Does their mother or father ever tell them, "Pick up your toys, please, and put them in the toy basket?" Do any of the children put their dirty clothes in a clothes' basket? Do any of them help set the table? What other things do the children do to help at home?

Praying: Thank you, God, that we have ways we can help in our homes and in our lives. Amen.

The Story: Jesus and his friends were walking along. "Jesus," they said to him: "we want to do a better job of helping you. Will you make us be better?" Jesus listened to them and then he told them a story about people who were doing their jobs. They didn't grumble about their jobs, they didn't whine. They just did the work they were supposed to do. This is what Jesus wants us to do.

Activity: The Wheenie Whiners and the Happy Face

Tell the children we are going to act out two kinds of children: one the Wheenie Whiner who complains and whines every time his or her mother or father asks for some help. Then, we will do the same play over with a Happy Face child who says "Sure, Mom," when Mother asks for help or "Okay, Dad," when Daddy says he needs help.

Ask for a volunteer to be the Wheenie Whiner. Ask the children to help the child be the Wheenie Whiners by showing the face such a child would make, how their bodies would look, and then practice a really good whine. Ask one of the children to be the mother who asks the Wheenie

Whiner to pick up the toys and put them in the basket, please help set the table, and other chores the children think up.

Let each child who wants to play the roll of the Wheenie Whiner have the chance.

Now ask the children to each put on a Happy Face and smile and rush to do the chores you, pretending to be Mother, ask them to do. What would a Happy Face look like?

What would be the expression on their faces? How would we show it with our bodies?

If one of the children wants to be the Mother, the teacher can put on a Happy Face and "be" one of the children.

Activity: Invite the children to say how they felt doing each thing. Which made them feel more proud – whining or helping?

Because we are all such good helpers, we are going to make awards! Provide the materials you brought for the children to make awards. They can give each other the awards they make and make one award to put on the cross.

Getting Closure: Put the awards on the cross. Invite the children to name the ways in which they can become helpers this week. As you and the children look at the cross ask if anyone wants to tell any of the others stories for the symbols on the cross.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that you want us to help you. Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 21
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Luke 17:5-10

Choices: What situation do we find ourselves, right here and now, in which we have a choice? What is preventing us from making it? Are possessions, in fact, possessing us? For some of us the choice might be to rearrange our priorities, even make a career change, or maybe it is to faithfully deal with what is on our plate. For all of us, Jesus invites us to follow him.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

Slaves? Well, probably not any of us. Each of us, however, has clear duties to perform. Jesus points out that it is not a big deal to simply do our duty. Our choice is whether we grumble and whine or whether we do our work with gratitude and in faith.

Theme: Choosing To Do Our Work

Before: If you are going to do the option, you will need a candle in a holder, matches, a tablespoon, a small amount of vegetable oil (no more than a tablespoonful), and a few popcorn seeds. A bag of popped popcorn would be a welcome treat.

Beginning: Tell the children that we have two stories today: one about patience and one about whether to grumble or not.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, that you are patient with us as we figure out what you want us to do. Amen.

The Story: Luke 17:5-10 Invite one child to read verses 5 and 6, and another to read 7-10.

Questions: Verses 5-6

- I wonder why the disciples are crying out to Jesus to "increase their faith?" (We are not sure, but here are some possibilities: they have become so aware of who Jesus is that they want to be more like him and feel inadequate, they think faith is something someone can just zap you with.)
- I wonder what you think of Jesus' answer? (Do they think Jesus really meant that if you have faith you can zap trees into the ocean? Why? Why not?)
- I wonder why Jesus used the mustard seed as the example of size of faith? (A mustard seed was one of the smallest seeds the disciples would have seen, but it grows to be a big bush.)
- What helps a tiny seed grow? (Water, good soil, even some fertilizer)
- What helps a person's faith to grow? (Paying attention to it, being with people who also have faith, doing the work you have been given to do.)
- I wonder what else helps a person's faith to grow? (Patience)

Option: Tell the children we have an experiment to show that patience takes some time. Ask them if they have ever sat and watched a popcorn seed pop? Assemble the supplies, light the

candle, pour a little bit of the oil in the tablespoon and add a few kernels of popcorn. Hold the spoon over the candle and wait!

Questions: Verses 7-10

- Since none of us are slaves, how could this story also be for us? (We have work to do and doing our work is not a big deal. It is what we are expected to do.)
- In what ways might verse 10 be hyperbole (an exaggeration)? Do we think Jesus really wants us to call ourselves "worthless?" If not, what might this mean? (Not making a big deal out of doing our job.)

Activity: Invite the children to act out this story using their school as the setting. Someone volunteers to be the teacher, and another to be a Grumpy Kid. Ask the other children to help these two actors figure out their parts. The teacher asks the children for reasonable things. Perhaps it is to collect all the papers, perhaps it is arrange the books on a table, or whatever the children notice is asked of them at school. The children can help the Grumpy Kid be as obnoxious as he can. Whatever the teacher asks, the Grumpy Kid does, but as unpleasantly as possible.

Then when this skit is complete, the class teacher becomes the "teacher" and all the children become the Cooperative Crew, each one more pleasant than the other. Tell them to act as if they were glad they were going to this school, that they like their teacher, enjoy learning, and so are happy to help with things the teacher asks.

When both skits are complete, ask the children how the two skits made them feel. What was kind of fun about pretending to be Grumpy? What was kind of uncomfortable about it? What would be the benefits of putting on a happy face? What did you like about being cooperative? What didn't you like?

Option: If you are using journals, allow time for the children to write their impressions in the journals. A potential topic for them to consider would be: Here are some things I can do to help that I really enjoy doing.

Getting Closure: Ask the children if they think it takes patience to do the work we have been given to do. Why? Why not?

Closing Prayer: Help us, God, to have the patience of a popcorn seed. Amen.

Luke 17:5-10

5 The apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith!’⁶The Lord replied, ‘If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, “Be uprooted and planted in the sea”, and it would obey you.

7 ‘Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, “Come here at once and take your place at the table”?⁸Would you not rather say to him, “Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink”?⁹Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded?¹⁰So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, “We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!” ’

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 22
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Luke 17:5-10

Choices: What situation do we find ourselves, right here and now, in which we have a choice? What is preventing us from making it? Are possessions, in fact, possessing us? For some of us the choice might be to rearrange our priorities, even make a career change, or maybe it is to faithfully deal with what is on our plate. For all of us, Jesus invites us to follow him.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

Slaves? Well, probably not any of us. Each of us, however, has clear duties to perform. Jesus points out that it is not a big deal to simply do our duty. Our choice is whether we grumble and whine or whether we do our work with gratitude and in faith.

Theme: Choosing To Do Our Work

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible or copies of the scripture for today.

Beginning: Ask the group to be thinking of a time they would have liked to ask Jesus face to face for more faith. As we get in touch with our own longings we can better identify with the disciples.

Opening Prayer: Help us, God, to be open to the opportunities you present to us to increase our faith in you. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 17:5-10 It is suggested you approach this passage in two segments. Invite one person to read verses 5 and 6 and then pause for a moment for people to reflect.

Verses 5-6: Approach the disciples request from three different possibilities: (1) They are frustrated because they feel inadequate. (2) They are humbly aware of how much farther they have to go to feel confident in their faith. (3) They have become confident that Jesus can do what they ask so they are bold.

Questions:

1. Frustration (Notice verses 1- 4 of Chapter 17 to see what they had just been told.)
 - a. Invite sharing of times we have felt a bit overwhelmed by what we have agreed to do for God.
 - b. Describe the sense of inadequacy. Describe the courage that came to accomplish the task.
2. Humility
 - a. Share times we have felt the need for "outside help" to enable us to do our task.
 - b. What helped us keep on going in these times?
3. Confidence

- a. Share times we have felt bold to ask for help. What about the situation emboldened us?

Verses 7-10: Invite someone to read these verses.

Questions:

- Jesus uses a variety of teaching techniques as he works with the disciples. What might we guess is going on here? (Time is running out and Jesus is stepping up the intensity of the training? Jesus has decided to be more blunt with the disciples to get their attention? We do not know, we can only guess.)
- Since none of us is a slave and probably none of us has domestic servants, how can we bring this admonition of Jesus into our own situation? What things do we do because it falls to us to do them, and we do not expect to be thanked for doing them? (Parenting, doing the work we were hired to do, sharing in the work of our community.)
- Do we think Jesus really thinks of us as "worthless slaves?" (Could this be another piece of hyperbole — an exaggeration to grab our attention?)

Getting Closure: Invite the group to sit in silence for a few moments to notice work we do, grateful for the opportunity, willingly and not expecting praise or even much to be made of it. Notice how our faith is growing as we accept these responsibilities. Imagine Jesus telling us "No, not worthless slaves. You are beloved. Well done, faithful servant."

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that you do what is necessary to get our attention. Amen."

Luke 17:5-10

5 The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' ⁶The Lord replied, 'If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea", and it would obey you.

7 'Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, "Come here at once and take your place at the table"? ⁸Would you not rather say to him, "Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink"? ⁹Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? ¹⁰So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, "We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!" '

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