

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Season After Pentecost, Proper 21
Lesson Plans for Older Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Exodus 17:1-7

The Season After Pentecost is the longest season of the church year, spanning almost half the calendar year. The weeks after Pentecost are called Ordinary Time coming from the word “ordinal” which means counted time. This time is not ordinary as in common or regular, but it is the time of counted weeks between Pentecost and Advent. The liturgical color of the season is green. It is often thought of as a season of growth both in our personal faith and in the life of the church. Common themes to focus on throughout the season are:

- Our relationship with God.
- Our relationship with Jesus Christ and with one another through our prayers, the sacraments and life in the body of Christ.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- The Church and its work for God’s mission.

Notation for this Scripture

In the previous chapter the Israelites faced the hardship of not having enough food and God provided for them. Now they are thirsty and don’t know where they will get their water for themselves and their livestock. They once again complain to Moses. It would be easy for us to see them as a whiney bunch of people who did not have faith. But let us remember that these are people who have just been freed from slavery, and they are wondering what this journey is all about. They are thirsty, and if you have ever been REALLY thirsty or if you have been dehydrated, you know that it is not something that you can just “power through.” This is a life and death situation not only for the people, but also for their livestock and their well-being.

They complain against Moses, wondering again what his plan is or if he brought them out here to die. Moses appeals to the Lord realizing what a tense situation they are in and God, once again provides for them.

This is one of the many times in Exodus where it is brought to light that the Israelites have trouble trusting in Moses and God. Through God’s acts of bringing them water and food and water (again), trust is being built. Remember, these are freed slaves. Why would they trust in their leaders when their previous leaders and rulers has been cruel to them and made them work in horrid conditions. Through Moses and through God’s actions, they can see that God can be trusted even in the most dire circumstances.

This also teaches us, the people of God past, present and future, that God is faithful, we can trust God, and we as people of God (like Moses) can make a difference in other people’s lives if we act on what God has called us to do. If nothing else, we see God meeting the people where they are (again) and providing for their journey. O come, o come Emmanuel.

Theme: Water

Before: You will need copies of the Clean Water Cards, quiz, or audit, crayons or markers, and any supplies that you would want to have at the learning stations (see ideas below).

Prepare: Set up each Water Learning Station with items that will help the children learn about each thing. You can use all or just some of the cards. Some of the children will not be able to read these, but their parents can! Put out markers or crayons at each station so they can color the cards after you talk about each thing that the card says. If you are going to show a video, make sure that you have the equipment set up.

Beginning: Welcome the children into the room and have them sit in your gathering area. Ask how their week was and what they had for dinner the night before or breakfast that morning.

Prayer: Almighty God, thank you for showing us your love in all that you have given us. Be with us as we learn more about you and how to care for the gifts you have given us. In your name we pray. Amen.

The Story: In the Bible we hear stories of many people. These people are just like us, they eat and sleep, go to school and work. God has a plan for each of them, and in hearing the stories we learn that God's plan is for each of us too.

Read Exodus 17:1-7 or invite one of the children to read it.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder why the people are so upset? (they are thirsty and think they are going to die)
- Why do they start taking it out on Moses? (because he led them there)
- I wonder if you have ever been thirsty? What was that like?

Reflecting on Water:

Water is a gift from God and we want to make sure that we are using it in a responsible way.

- Why is water so important?
- When do we use water?
- Is it a need or want?
- What are different ways people use water?

Videos:

A great way to educate everyone about some of the aspects of clean water and water needs around the world is by showing them this short video from El Porvenir (<http://elporvenir.org/>) an agency that helps bring clean water to Nicaragua.

YouTube Video about creating clean water in Nicaragua (http://youtu.be/86IgSUWZ_rU)

Option 1: Personal Water Audit

Have each child take the Personal Water Audit found below. Read each item aloud and give them time to respond and put their points to the right.

Option 2: Water Stations:

Set up stations around the room. Each station will have one or two of the cards from the Clean Water Cards Set below. At each station, set up items for the children to learn from and give them a card as they learn about each item. Examples of what you might have at the stations:

- Dishwashing and Washing Machine: have dishes or dirty clothes
- Flushing the Toilet: have examples of things that you shouldn't be flushing like Kleenexes and such
- Shower vs. bath: a bath scrubber or soap
- Human body: Two Liters of water (how much an adult is supposed to drink each day to be healthy)
- Tooth brushing: Tooth brush
- Tap water: glass full of water and maybe a bottle of water
- Fresh water: bowl of fresh water and/or ice cubes
- 1/6 of people live without access to clean drinking water: things that could help you demonstrate what 1/6 would look like, be it cutouts, beads, 6 glasses of water with one that is empty, etc.
- Purifying water: water purifier, tablets to make water clean or a pot of water
- Water-borne disease: pot of dirty water, pictures of water-borne diseases that are killed when water is purified

The cards are done in black and white so the children can color them in if they wish. You can use all or some of the cards for your classroom. If you want to make it more challenging, you can give the children the cards, go to a station together and then have them try to guess what the station is about.

For more information about clean water you can use the following:

Clean Water and Sanitation Program from Episcopal Relief and Development:

<http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploaded/files/Church-In-Action/Youth/ActOut-Clean-Water.pdf>

Option 3: Clean Water Quiz

Have the children take the Clean Water Quiz from Episcopal Relief and Development:

<http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploaded/files/Church-In-Action/Youth/Water-Quiz.pdf>

This is a great resource to use with the children that has some amazing facts and learning pieces for all ages. You can simply read out the question and have them answer or you can create flashcards or a power point with the questions and answers.

Option 4: Create a water pledge

Have each child create a water pledge – a pledge of how they can start using water differently. Some examples would be:

W - Water is important to be healthy

A - Always turn off the water when brushing teeth

T - Take short showers or only fill your bath up 1/3 of the way

E - Everyone needs clean water to keep from getting sick

R - Remember that water is a gift from God.

W – watch how much water you use in your house and at school
A – actively try to save water
T – teach others about conservation and clean water needs
E – enjoy and give thanks for what God has given us, including water and food
R – reduce, reuse, recycle

W – water is a gift from God that should not be wasted
A – Agua (water in Spanish) makes us healthy, so drink water from the tap all day long
T – turn off the water when brushing teeth
E – enjoy bath time and take shorter showers or only fill the tub up 1/3 of the way
R – run washing machine and dishwasher only when full

Closure: Have the children help you put the supplies away and clean up. Invite them to gather together and share one thing they learned today.

Closing Prayer: Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of water. It brings us life, abundance and health. We pray that we keep in mind the best use of this gift and find ways in our own lives to help those who do not have access to clean water. Amen.

Resources on Clean Water, Water Scarcity and Water Usage

- From the UN: <http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/scarcity.shtml>
- Episcopal Relief and Development: (this is a curriculum for youth, but has some great ideas, links and information about Clean Water that can be used with children.)
<http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploaded/files/Church-In-Action/Youth/ActOut-Clean-Water.pdf>
- El Porvenir: <http://elporvenir.org/>
- YouTube Video about creating clean water in Nicaragua
http://youtu.be/86IgSUWZ_rU

Personal Water Audit

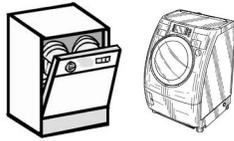
For each activity, please put a checkmark in the boxes for “Often,” “Sometimes,” or “Never.”
When you are done, please total up your points and check your score!

	Often	Some- times	Never	Does not apply
Keep Showers to under 5 minutes				
Use only a little water in the bathtub				
Turn off the water while brushing your teeth				
Put water in the sink when washing up				
Flush the toilet only when necessary. Don't use it to flush tissues.				
Use a broom to clean the driveway or sidewalk.				
Use a bucket when washing the car.				
Use a turn-off nozzle on the end of the hose to adjust the water flow and turn the water off and on.				
Turn water faucet off tight.				
Put water in the kitchen sink to wash and rinse dishes.				
Run the dishwasher only when it's full.				
Run with washing machine only when it's full.				
TOTAL				

Note the areas in which you are doing well and the areas that might need improvement.

Where can you make changes to help conserve water?

Did you know...



To help save water it is best to run the dishwasher and washing machine only when full?

Did you know...



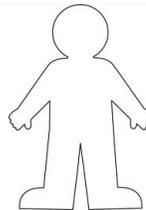
You can save a lot of water if you only flush the toilet when necessary?

Did you know...



Taking a five minute shower or only filling your bathtub 1/3 full can save gallons and gallons of water each day?

Did you know...



About 66% of the human body is made up of water. Water helps our organs and physical functions. The average adult has 10 gallons of water in their body?

Did you know...



By turning off the water when you are brushing your teeth, you can save as much as 5 gallons of water?

Did you know...



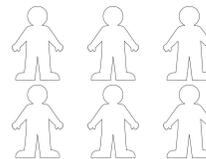
By drinking tap water rather than bottled water you are saving money, gas, water and our environment?

Did you know...



Only 1% of the world's fresh water is accessible for human use?

Did you know...



One out of every six people live without access to clean drinking water?

Did you know...



Water that is dirty can be purified by boiling it, treating it with chemicals or using a water filtration system?

Did you know...



That water-borne diseases make up 80% of all the illness in the world? About 1/2 of people in developing nations are suffering from water-borne disease that is preventable?

W

A

T

E

R

Exodus 17:1-7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

Written by The Rev. Shannon Kelly

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