

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 11
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

Background: During this “Ordinary Time” our lives may well include exceptionally un-ordinary events, such as births and deaths. As we take this journey, nourished by the scriptures appointed for the season and empowered by our baptisms, we are invited to be on the lookout for all the blessings found in the ordinary – to see God at work here and now. And we are compelled to share our blessings with others.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

The passage from Mark that we have in this set of sessions seems to be telling us, amid all that shows up in our lives, to take time to breathe. Find space to just be. Perhaps it is a walk with a child, time puttering in a garden, or going fishing. We recharge our cell phones so they can keep serving us. Take a lesson from the cell phone: breathe and revitalize.

Theme: Rest and Healing

Before: If it is not possible to take the children outside for today’s lesson, seek a place inside with space for running and resting. If you are combining classes with older children, let the younger children play the game while the older children prepare the play that they will present to the younger children. Then the younger children can teach the game to the older ones.

Beginning: First, be sure you know the name of each child and that the children all know each other. If they do not, spend some time getting to know each other with fun questions, such as “Who has a dog?” “Who has a cat?” “Who has gone on a vacation this summer?”

Ask the children if they ever had to take a nap when they were little children. (Some might volunteer that they still do take naps.) Ask them to think of times when we are quiet. (With a book on a hot afternoon? When a story is read to us before bedtime?) Tell the children that Jesus understood that he needed to take time away by himself to rest, to pray, and to check in with God.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for this time we have today to be together, to hear about Jesus, to play, and to rest. Amen.

The Story: Jesus and his friends had been working hard. They had traveled all over the countryside to tell people many things about God, and they helped people who were sick to get well. Jesus was tired and the disciples were tired. Jesus said to them, "Let's go someplace where we can rest," So his friends got in a boat to go to the other side of the lake. Jesus came along later. Jesus had some time to just rest and be quiet with God.

Deep Breathing: Ask each child to claim a space big enough to stretch arms out wide without touching another person. Once each child has created a space, ask if they have ever seen a jogger

waiting at a stoplight. How does the jogger keep on “running” even though she is stuck in one place? (If they do not know, show them how to run in place.) Run in place with the children for a minute or two. Then tell them to stop and breath deeply. Have everyone sit down, legs stretched out in front with hands placed directly behind. Take a deep breath. Then hug your knees with your arms and exhale. Sit and rest a minute. Repeat, if you want, or just sit and enjoy the resting.

Imagine: If you have time, tell the children they are going to pretend they are on the very best vacation ever, and they can go wherever they want -- because it will be in their imagination. For instance, if you find want to be near the ocean, pretend to be at the beach. What will they find there? Water to play in? Sand to make sand castles with? Make some pretend sand castles. Now do more deep breathing. If you want to be in the mountains, pretend to climb a high mountain and rest at the top. While you are enjoying the imaginary view, do some deep breathing. If the children suggest imagining they are in Disneyland, be sure to help them imagine what they would do there and make time to rest and breath deeply.

If the older children have prepared the story to present, the younger children will be the audience. Then they can show the older ones how to do deep breathing.

Getting Closure: When we find a place to just be quiet and rest, we can also tell God things we want God to hear from us. We can ask God for things we need. We can thank God for things that make us glad. Invite the children to think about these things and help come up with the closing prayer.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for the times we can be still and just be with you. (Include what the children have offered in this prayer.) Amen.

Published by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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