

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Proper 5
Lesson Plans for Younger Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: 1 Kings 17:8-16

Background

“Ordinary Time” is upon us and the name really says it all. “Ordinary Time” is another name for the season after Pentecost when we walk through the lectionary without many holidays on the horizon and are able to experience the “ordinary” days of walking with God.

A Notation for This Week’s Scripture

The widow in today’s Old Testament lesson was certainly walking through an “ordinary” day when Elijah called upon her. Our lesson from this morning is a great reminder that ordinary days quickly become extraordinary when they are spent with faith in the Lord.

Sometimes it is hard to trust that there will be enough for everyone. It is easy for many of us to identify with the widow’s plight – even if not personally. She works tirelessly to provide for her family, yet, at the end of the day it feels like she will never have enough. We are conditioned in our society to always desire more and to feel like what we have will not sustain us. The widow’s plight is different as she is in real danger of starvation. Oftentimes it takes seeing a situation like this to remind us where we stand in the world. When Elijah comes to the widow and delivers his request from God, he is asking something that sounds impossible. But as we know from the miracle of the loaves and fishes, God has the power to make abundance from scarcity for those with faith. That abundance can come from simply a shift in perception or even, as with the widow, from a physical transformation of resources.

Theme: Abundance

Before Class: You will need to gather (and premeasure) the following ingredients:

- large mixing bowl
- Wooden Spoon
- 1 cup water (Put this in a regular drinking glass)
- 4 cups flour (put this in a mason jar)
- 2 to 4 tablespoons of cooking oil (Canola or the like) (put this in a mason jar and bring a measuring spoon)
- 1 1/2 cups of salt (add this to the jar of flour)

You will also need parchment paper and extra flour and oil.

Beginning: Welcome each of the children back to class today. For snack, have a single sweet bread that you can “tear off” a section for each child. (keep in mind food allergies) Use this as an opportunity to talk about sharing with one another from what we have.

Opening Prayer: God of Love, you provide for us each day our daily bread. Help to sustain us with your word and grace while we travel through our lives of faith. Amen.

The Story:

**While you tell the story today, use the jars of water, oil, and flour you've prepared for the activity as props to illustrate the story.*

God sent a man-of God named Elijah to a town called Zarephath. God told Elijah to find a woman there who was going to feed him. When Elijah arrived in Zarephath he found the woman God told him about. She was gathering sticks to build a fire at her house. The woman looked sad and sick. Elijah said to the woman, "Bring me a glass of water, I am very thirsty." When the woman turned to go get the water, Elijah called after her, "Bring me some bread also; I am very hungry." But the woman turned around and said to Elijah, "Sir, I am sorry but I have no bread to eat. I only have a little bit of flour and oil left at home – not even enough to make food for one person. I am collecting these sticks to build a fire so I can bake the food I have left."

But Elijah told her not to worry. He told her to go make him some food and bring it back because God promised that her food and oil would not run out for a very long time. The woman listened to Elijah and went to make him some food. When she returned to her house after feeding Elijah she was amazed to see that her food jars were full again! God kept God's promise and continued to refill the woman's food jars so that she and her son would have enough food to eat.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder how the widow felt when Elijah asked her for food.
- I wonder why the woman trusted Elijah's word.
- I wonder if Elijah worried that he was going to eat all of the widow's food.
- I wonder why God chose this woman for Elijah to find.

After some time of reflection, help the children to see the connection between the trust the widow put in God and the abundance God gave in return.

Activity: Today we will make "cakes" for Elijah using play dough.

First, the class will need to make the dough. Take the jar of dry ingredients, "glass" of water, and jar of oil and put them in the middle of the table. Remind the children that the widow had only a bit of flour and oil at her house. The "glass" of water is symbolic of the water she got for Elijah. Follow the instructions below to make the dough with your glass.

1. **Pour water** into a large mixing bowl.
2. **Add the dry ingredients** (flour and salt) to the mix. You can stir a little at this point to begin blending the ingredients.
3. **Next add 2 to 4 tablespoons of oil.** You can add more oil later if the mix seems to dry. Oil is the secret to keeping this "no cooking required" recipe soft! If you don't add enough oil, the mix will be very crumbly.

4. **Knead the ingredients together** until a soft dough is formed.

After the dough is ready, give each child a piece of parchment paper and a handful of dough. Invite the children to each “make a cake” for Elijah. While the children are working on their “cakes” have a classroom helper re-fill the jar of flour and oil out of view from the children.

Getting Closure: After the children make their cakes, invite them to share them with the class. When they are finished sharing reveal to the children the refilled jars of oil and flour. Talk to them about God’s promise to provide to the widow and her son if she was kind to God’s messenger, Elijah. How does God provide for all of us?

Closing Prayer: God of Plenty, remind us to look with joy on the blessings of our lives and to share what we have with those who are in need. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

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