

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 14
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Luke 12:32-40

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 if the abundance of possessions — all this stuff we are accumulating — is, in fact possessing us? Find a stash of treasure, and our hearts will not be far away. What if truly getting the readiness Jesus calls us to is about streamlining for action? What IS this kingdom that is God's "good pleasure to give?"

Theme: An invitation to choose the unfailing treasures

Before Class: You will need either enough Bibles or enough copies of the scripture for everyone. Make a couple of simple signs using felt markers on large sheets of construction paper that you feel capture some of the scripture from today. Here are a couple of suggestions:

Where your treasure is,
There your heart will be also.
Help! I am possessed by my possessions!
Be ready!

Beginning: Place the signs in the center of your meeting area. Invite comments from your group.

Opening Prayer: Dear God, Jesus tells us it is your good pleasure to give us the kingdom. Help us to notice what the kingdom is and to not be distracted by other things. Amen.

Option: How would we define the kingdom? Since kingdoms are not a part of our current experience, is there a way we would choose to paraphrase this? What would our lives look like if we were really living with God in the center of all we do?

The Scripture: Luke 12: 32-40 Instruct the group how you are approaching the reading today. We will read the entire passage once, and pause for quiet. We will then read the passage in three separate sections and take some time to respond to each section.

Invite one person to read the passage. Pause of a few moments of quiet.

The Scripture (cont.): Luke 12: 32-34 Then ask a different person to re-read verses 32-34 and maintain a few moments of quiet.

Questions:

- I wonder what struck you about his passage? What stood out for you?

- How does it make you feel that Jesus has to say, again, "Do not be afraid?"
- I wonder how "fear" might interfere with our accepting the kingdom? (A clear sign of being "in" the kingdom is being able to trust God.)
- What does Jesus imply is the problem with a batch of possessions? (We tend to become possessed by our possessions.)
- What might be "purses that do not wear out?"

The Scripture (cont.): Invite someone to read Luke 12:35-38.

Questions:

- I wonder what struck you about his passage? What stood out for you?
- I wonder what "dressed for action" might look like for us in our culture? "Lamps lit?" (How might "trust" help us with some of our control issues?)
- None of us have slaves, probably none of us have servants, but we might be in a position where people work for us in some capacity. Notice the way the "master" in Jesus story treats those who work faithfully for him. Imagine verse 37 happening where you work.

The Scripture (cont.): Invite someone to read Luke 12:39-40.

Questions:

- I wonder what struck you about his passage? What stood out for you?
- I wonder if you have experienced a time when you left a prized possession (car, house, computer, special picture from your family, etc.) and came back to find it gone or destroyed. What was that experience like for you?
- I wonder if you have had the experience of having a warning of some kind, and safely securing those things that are prized possessions?
- What if we had a clear indication that Jesus was returning, say, next Sunday? What changes might we make in how we live our lives?

Option: Invite the group to close their eyes and picture themselves sitting in their living room, or cooking a meal, or working away at their place of work. Then picture a gentle knock on the door. You go to the door and there stands Jesus. Visualize what you would do!

After a few moments of quiet, invite the group to share what they would do if they feel comfortable doing so.

Getting Closure: If your church is using this curriculum for older children, tell the adults that these children may have made bumper stickers on today's themes. Consider how this group can encourage each other as we seek to live "in" the kingdom and meet our responsibilities in this world.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that you patiently wait for us to notice you in our midst. Amen.

Luke 12:32-40

32 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

35 'Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; ³⁶be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. ³⁷Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

39 'But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.'

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