

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 17**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**

**Scripture: Luke 14:1, 7-14**

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 is true hospitality? Is it inviting to dinner all those you are in with, and who will then be obligated to invite you to dinner? What if true hospitality were inviting those who would really be blessed, those in no position to return the favor? And what might the well-to-do people at the dinner table with Jesus have thought of this radical etiquette?

**Theme: The exalted humbled; the humble exalted**

**Before:** The activity suggests an imaginary dinner party, so you could bring what you have on hand: a table cloth that will fit the table you have in your class, candle sticks with candles (which you might choose not to light), a salt and pepper shaker, some paper napkins, flatware, a vase with flowers, etc. You will need: an inexpensive package of paper plates with an unglazed surface so you can color on them with crayons will help for the activity. If you cannot acquire paper plates, cut circles from construction paper to fit the flat part of the plate. You will also need crayons.

If your school system has begun classes and you expect additional children today, be sure to take time to incorporate them into your class making sure all know each other's names.

**Optional:** If you have handy a magazine with a picture of a fancy table, bring it to help the children picture what a fancy party might look like.

**Note:** There are really two teachings in this passage, only the second concept (verses 12-14) is included in the lesson for young children.

**Beginning:** Tell the children we are going to hear a story about a party that Jesus went to and then we will have an imaginary party. What's an imaginary party? It is a party where we can pretend anyone we want to invite is here at our party.

**Praying:** Thank you for Jesus for helping us to learn how to have a party like you would have a party. Amen.

**The Story:** Jesus was invited to a party. It was a very fancy dinner party. (If you brought a picture, show it.) They had used their very best dishes, pretty glasses, candles, and a vase with flowers in the middle of the table. Jesus looked around at all the people there. Hmmm. He

noticed who was NOT there. So he said to the host at the party, "Next time you give a party, invite people who will not be able to give a fancy party for you. Think about those who are too poor to give a fancy party, people who do not have a house so they could not give a party, people who are not healthy enough to give a party. Those are the people I would invite to my party."

**Activity:** In a minute we will set the table for our imaginary party. First, let's figure out who we will invite. Let's think about people in our town we would want to invite. (If they need some help ask if they think there are any people in our town who have no home to live in. If they want to invite their best friend that is okay, but help them notice who is in your town who may not be invited.)

Once you have a guest list, invite each child to pick one of the invited and make a special plate for that person. Invite them to decorate it so the person will feel welcome and then decorate a plate for himself or herself. When all the plates are decorated, set the table. Then all of you sit at the table, with your invited guests beside you.

Since it is an imaginary dinner, everyone can be served whatever it is that they want to pretend to eat. You might begin by saying please pass me the \_\_\_\_\_ (shrimp salad? steak?). And what would you like me to pass to you?

**Getting Closure:** Ask each child to introduce the person they invited. They can make up a name for the person or just say who they are. The rest of you can welcome that person with something like, "I am so glad to meet you and I am so glad you could come to our party."

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, that you love all the people in our world. Help us remember what you taught us today. Amen.

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**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 17**  
**Lesson Plans for Older Children**

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**Theme: The exalted humbled; the humble exalted**

**Before Class:** The focus of today's passage is on those who do not get invited to the banquets we attend. Be thinking of the invisible people in your community — the homeless, those who stand on street corners holding cardboard signs, the kid no one wants to play with, the shut-ins — so you can help the children bring these people to mind. And, if you are not sure what your own church is doing to help those in need in your community, check with the clergy or lay leaders in your church, so you will be able to tell the children about these ministries.

If school is beginning in your community, you might have a child new to this class and you will want to take the time to fully incorporate the child into the class, making sure all know each other's names.

If you think you will have time for the art activity, bring either a large sheet of paper, or several regular sheets of paper taped together to make a larger square, and some crayons.

**Beginning:** Tell the children that today's story describes the way Jesus would throw a party. We will look for clues in the story to help us imagine a similar party right here and now.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, for these stories that help us figure out what you want us to do and how we are called to treat others. Amen.

**The Story:** There really are two stories here, so we will read the first one and talk about it, and then read the second one.

**Part One: Luke 14: 1, 7-11** - Invite one child to read this first part of our story.

**Questions:**

- Who is giving this party? (A leader of the Pharisees — the religious leaders who were trying to help people obey all the religious laws.)
- What are people doing when they see the fancy table with some places more special than other places? (They are scrambling, pushing and shoving, to get the best seat.)
- What does Jesus do? (He notices and decides to tell them a story so they can check out their behavior.)
- What does Jesus suggest in his story? (Better to take a not-so-good seat and be asked to take a better one than to grab the best seat and then be told you have to get up and move to the less good seat.)
- I wonder how we would say verse 11 in our own words? (Something like: those who act like big shots may lose their spot. Those who wait their turn may get a better seat at last.)

**Part Two: Luke 14:12-14** - Invite a different child to read the second part of our story.

**Questions:**

- Who does Jesus say we should not invite to a party? (Verse 12b)
- Why shouldn't we invite these people we know so well? (Last part of verse 12b)
- Who should we invite, instead? (Verse 13)
- I wonder why Jesus tells us to invite these people? (Verse 14: that would be true generosity for they cannot invite you back to a fancier party.)
- I wonder what Jesus meant when he said: "you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous?" (The resurrection is when all these ways Jesus has been teaching will happen and we will fit right in if we choose this way.)

**Activity:** Invite each child to think of a type of person in our community who we would invite to a party like Jesus has suggested. Tell them not to tell us who they thought up, just remember who that person is. Then, we will play 20 questions to try to figure out who each person is. (If the child needs help, offer to consult with them, privately.) When all are ready, begin the game. (The child can answer only yes or no and the rest of you have to keep asking questions until you figure out who the person they are thinking of is.) Keep going until the group has guessed (or given up and had to ask) each thought-up person.

**Option:** Working together, using a large piece of paper (or several sheets of paper taped together) draw the party, each child drawing the person they thought up.

**Getting Closure:** Share times our own church reaches out to people who have needs and few resources. What other ministries are parts of our life together?

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, for Jesus who shows us how you want us to live. Help us to remember who to invite to the table. Amen.

## **Luke 14:1, 7-14**

14 On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath, they were watching him closely. 7 When Jesus noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. 8 ‘When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; 9 and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, “Give this person your place”, and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, “Friend, move up higher”; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. 11 For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.’

12 Jesus said also to the one who had invited him, ‘When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. 14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.’

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**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 17**  
**Lesson Plans for Adults**

**Scripture: Luke 14:1, 7-14**

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What is true hospitality? Is it inviting to dinner all those you are in with, and who will then be obligated to invite you to dinner? What if true hospitality were inviting those who would really be blessed, those in no position to return the favor? And what might the well-to-do people at the dinner table with Jesus have thought of this radical etiquette?

**Theme: The exalted humbled; the humble exalted**

**Before Class:** You will need copies of the scripture or enough copies of the Bible.

**Beginning:** Remind the group that we read these scripture passages with 20/20 hindsight. We know that Jesus accepted death on a cross and made possible the Resurrection, a whole new hope for living. As we read today's passage, aware of this new thing God is doing in our lives, let us try also to identify with those who were stunned hearing the story for the first time. Then we can look at what it says to us now.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, for your gentleness and patience with us as we try to understand what it is you call us to do. Help us to humble ourselves and remember our place on this earth. Amen.

**The Scripture:** There really are two separate stories within this passage about New Testament etiquette. We will look at them separately

**First story: Luke 14:1, 7-11** Invite someone to read the first part of the scripture for today.

**Questions:**

- Who is giving this party, which we can assume was an elegant affair? (a leader of the Pharisees.)
- I wonder how we would characterize the Pharisees? (At their best they helped people stay true to their religion, at their worst, they could get bogged down in nit picking.)
- What did Jesus "notice" as the guests assembled? (That there was obvious scrambling for the best seat in the house.)
- What did Jesus do? (He told them a "parable." A parable will have elements with which people are familiar. If we assume this group was well acquainted with scripture, they would have recognized what Jesus was telling them — a quote from Proverbs 25: 6-7)

- I wonder how you might paraphrase verse 11 in your own words?

**Second story: Luke 14:12-14** Invite another person to read the second half of the story.

**Questions:**

- I wonder what stands out for you in this portion of the story?
- This story is told to one person only. Who is that person? (12a)
- I wonder if this story would be told differently today?
- I wonder what this story says to you?

**Option: Speculation on the Story:**

Invite the group to have a discussion (no one is right or wrong, but invite all to share their view points) around these questions.

Was Jesus implying that leaders should have higher standards or was he only addressing the person who had created the situation? Does what Jesus said apply to us as we plan parties? Does it only pertain to what we do as a church? (You might also see James 2: 2-4)

Who are the people in our community that do not get invited to banquets that we would include if we were to give a party such as Jesus suggests here? (Help the group to notice with you those who tend to be "invisible." Could be the homeless, those who stand on street corners holding cardboard signs, less visible people like single parents one pay check away from homelessness, those without jobs, people from a different part of town, etc.)

Do we think Jesus' intent was to make us feel guilty if we invite a few friends over for a backyard cookout? (Probably not. But what might be the implications for the times we gather as a community in Jesus' name?)

**Getting Closure:** Discuss how we can balance the massive needs in our community with our responsibilities to our own families. In a perfect world we would share more equitably. What can we do right here and now?

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, that you invite us to stretch and grow in your love. Help us to remember to invite all of your children of God into our banquets. Amen.

## **Luke 14:1, 7-14**

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