

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