

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C– Epiphany 6
Lesson Plans for Younger Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Jeremiah 17:5-10

Background

In the Sundays after Epiphany, we will hear from a variety of prophets, each speaking to God's relationship with the people. Although these prophets were speaking to a particular circumstance in a specific time and place, their words are helpful reminders to us today about our own relationship with God. Prophets seek to change the minds and behaviors of their audience.

Notation for This Week This reading is a standard, blessing and curse type saying, an oracle of judgment against Judah. Although it reads like other wisdom literature, it is written after King Josiah's reform has failed and before the Exile. Jeremiah is warning the people to put their trust back in the Lord, and to stop thinking anything or anyone else can save them. Our approach for this class will be to build trust among the students and to explore the concept of placing our trust in God.

Theme: Trust in the Lord

Before Class: Gather a soft ball for High/Low. Choose the music. Gather supplies for the games - blindfolds, colored paper.

Gathering: Play a quick game of High/Low - throw a small ball, stuffed animal, or bean bag around the circle. The person throwing says either High or Low. The person catching then shares an experience from the past week. If Low, then a sad or negative experience. If High, a happy or positive one. Go until everyone has had a chance to participate. Mention that this is a safe group, where we can trust each other with our stories and experiences.

Opening Prayer: Loving God, we thank you for all the Highs in our lives this past week. We hand over to you all our Low moments. Help us to remember that you are always with us and we can always trust in you. Amen.

Sing: Seek Ye First (1982 Hymnal)

The Story: Jeremiah 17:7-8
Happy are those who trust in the Lord,
who rely on the Lord.
They will be like trees planted by the streams,
whose roots reach down to the water.
They won't fear drought when it comes;
their leaves will remain green.
They won't be stressed in the time of drought
or fail to bear fruit.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder how we can trust God when we can't see God?
- I wonder when it is easy to trust and when it is more difficult?
- I wonder how we show that we trust God?

Activities:

Play some group trust games together. Talk about the importance of trusting each other in these games. We can learn to trust God by practicing our trust of others.

ZigZag Circle – stand closely together in a circle and hold hands. Count off 1, 2, 1, 2. Keeping your feet planted firmly in one place, have all the 1's lean out of the circle and all the 2's lean in. Then switch directions.

Willow in the Wind – stand in a tight circle with one person in the middle. The person in the middle crosses their arms over their chest. Everyone else puts up their hands at shoulder height of the person in the middle. The person in the middle, the willow, plants feet firmly in place and then leans in some direction, allowing the circle to catch them. The circle gently passes the willow around and across the circle.

Back to Back Teams - sit in pairs on the floor, with backs to each other. Link elbows and push against each other until you are in a standing position. Then travel around the room with elbows still linked. At times, one partner will be walking backward, at other times, the other person will. Go up to other teams and introduce yourselves, shaking hands with each partner of the other team. Write your names on chalkboard or newsprint when you have been all around the room and have met the other teams.

Mine Field - in pairs, one person is blindfolded, closes their eyes or walks backwards. The other person is their leader. Gather everyone on one side of the room (or half on one side and half on the other). Place colored paper on the floor. Have each leader guide their partner across the floor, giving directions to make sure they do not step on the paper (mines). If they do, they must back up and start again. For more complexity (and to make it less like a race) have people start from each of the four sides of the room.

Discuss - Ask - when was it easy to trust your partner or the group, and when was it difficult? How did you feel as the person being trusted? What are some ways we can learn to trust each other more? How does this help us trust God?

Challenge for the Week: This week, look for opportunities to trust more and to be more trustworthy.

Closing Prayer: Loving God, help us to trust in you completely so that we can be like trees planted by the teams, with green leaves and fresh fruit. Amen.

Sing: Wade in the Water (Wonder, Love and Praise) or Soon and Very Soon (LEVAS)

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