

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 13
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Luke 12:13-21

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

Of course, we have needs, and so do our families. Suddenly it dawns on us. The name of our frantic acquisition is greed. Has greed begun owning us? How much is enough? How might we move to becoming more rich toward God?

Theme: Our life is not just about the abundance of possessions

Before: Bring a couple of trash bags stuffed with wadded up newspapers and tied up so you cannot see what is inside. You will also need paper and crayons for the children.

Beginning: Tell the children we are going to pretend that these trash bags are stuffed with all kinds of toys we wish we had. Ask them to tell you what toys they have at their houses and we can pretend those toys are in the bag. Does anyone have any dolls? Any trucks? Any computer games? What other toys do they have at their houses? Tell them we have a story about a person who had lots of stuff but wasn't happy with what he had and kept wanting more.

Praying: Thank you, God, that we have homes to live in and toys to play with, but keep us keep you in our mind and do what you ask us to do. Amen.

The Story: A person came up to Jesus. This person was not at all happy and was whining to Jesus. (In a whining voice) "Jesus, make my brother give me half of all his stuff! I want half of his." Jesus just looked at that person for a minute, hoping the person would notice what a selfish thing that was to ask. Then Jesus said, "Be careful! Greed is not a good thing. Greed makes you want stuff you do not need, stuff that does not belong to you. There are much more important things in life than just getting lots of stuff. What is important is that we are rich in our connection with God."

Activity: Tell the children we are going to go on a pretend trip. Let the children help you set up an obstacle course (a table to crawl under, a row of chairs to walk between, whatever you have at hand to make an obstacle course). Then, in single file go through your obstacle course. Now, ask for a volunteer to go through the obstacle course carrying both of the bags full of pretend stuff. If other children want to try it, make sure each child who wants to do so gets a chance to attempt the obstacle course hauling the bags of stuff.

Once people get to try the task, invite them to reflect with you. I wonder what it was like to do the obstacle course without the bags full of our stuff? (allow time for response) I wonder what it was like to do the obstacle course with the bags full of our stuff? (allow time for response) I wonder why the experiences are so different?

Activity: If time permits, give the children paper and crayons and invite them to draw a picture of what they learned today.

Getting Closure: Invite the children into a circle. Tell them, “We had a great lesson today about not wanting too much and needing to stay connected with God. I wonder if there are prayers you would like to offer to God today?” Allow time for response and write down their prayers so you can include them in the closing.

Closing Prayer: God, thank you for all you have given us and all those special people in our lives. Thank you for being with us. Today we especially pray for _____ (insert the prayers from the children or have them do it themselves). Help us to keep our minds on you. Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 13
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Luke 12:13-21

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

Of course, we have needs, and so do our families. Suddenly it dawns on us. The name of our frantic acquisition is greed. Has greed begun owning us? How much is enough? How might we move to becoming more rich toward God?

Theme: Our life is not just about the abundance of possessions

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible or copies of the script found below. If you have them, bring child appropriate magazines, paper, glue, and scissors.

Beginning: Ask the children how they would define the word greed. (If they are not familiar with the word offer an example such as: I have lots of shoes in my closet, but I wish I had a pair of shoes just like the ones you are wearing.)

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for helping us see what greed looks like so we can keep it from taking over. Amen.

The Story: Luke 12: 13-21 Invite readers to read the scripture for today.

Questions:

Note: It was the custom for the first-born son to inherit the entire family fortune, it would not be divided between all the children.

- What is the person in the crowd asking Jesus to do? (Get in the middle of a family disagreement.)
- What does Jesus say to the request — in your own words? (Basically that Jesus has not come to meddle in peoples' quarrels.)
- What does Jesus warn the person to be "on guard against?" (Greed.)
- I wonder what the man in the parable might have done to be "rich toward God?"

Option: Invite the children to tell the parable Jesus told (verses 16-21) in their own words, substituting examples from our own time. (Most of us do not have barns full of grain. What other kinds of stuff might the person in the story be accumulating? CD collections, DVD's, baseball cards, etc.) You can do this as a whole group or divide them up into groups.

Option: If you have time, you can invite the children to look through magazines and see what they find in advertisements. What messages do they receive? I wonder what is the purpose of the advertisements.

Getting Closure: Tell the children that the stories we have for the next two weeks have to do with making choices. The ads we see on television, find on our computers, and read in our magazines and newspapers are mostly trying to get us to buy more stuff. Discuss how to look at these ads and make our own choices. Do any of them offer information we find useful? (Maybe an automobile that uses less gas and so could be more economical to own.) Which ads simply lure us to get more stuff? Are there any ads that tell us the message we found in the parable?

Closing Prayer: Help us make good decisions about all the things available to us. Help us to remember what is important and to share what we have been given with those around us. Amen.

Luke 12:13-21

Narrator: Someone in the crowd said to Jesus,

Person: ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.’

Narrator: But Jesus said to him,

Jesus: ‘Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?’

Narrator: And he said to them,

Jesus: ‘Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.’

Narrator: Then he told them a parable:

Jesus: ‘The land of a rich man produced abundantly. ¹⁷And he thought to himself, “What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?”¹⁸Then he said, “I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.” ²⁰But God said to him, “You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?” ²¹So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.’

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 13
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Luke 12:13-21

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

Of course, we have needs, and so do our families. Suddenly it dawns on us. The name of our frantic acquisition is greed. Has greed begun owning us? How much is enough? How might we move to becoming more rich toward God?

Theme: Our life is not just about the abundance of possessions

Before Class: If you have time and magazines at hand, bring in an ad or two that seem to advocate greed. You will also need copies of the Bible for the group.

Beginning: Ask the group to consider how advertising plays into our tendencies toward greed. Although it is usually said somewhat in jest, what do they think about "The one who gets the most toys wins!"

Opening Prayer: Help us, God, to come closer to you so we long for the riches that come from you. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 12: 13-21 Before you read the scripture, remind the group that it was the custom for the first-born son to receive the entire inheritance.

Invite one person to read the scripture for today. If you wish, you can add silence at the end of the first reading and then invite another person to read the same scripture from a different translation.

Questions:

- The person makes a request; Jesus responds with a question. I wonder why? (The person asking the question is either trying to get a public airing for his plight or perhaps he is trying to put Jesus on the spot. Jesus, as usual, uses the opportunity to teach.)
- What is the problem Jesus has identified? (Greed — and an attachment to possessions.)
- I wonder if Jesus considered it wrong to be rich? (What was important to Jesus was what people did with their riches.)
- What do we think was the problem the rich man had not noticed? (Not just that he had made a lot of money, but that he hoarded it, was sure he deserved it, never considered sharing any of it, and had no clue he was near death.)

- What is involved in being "rich toward God?" (Among other things, an awesome sense of gratitude and a longing to share what one has with all God's people.)

Option: Consider setting the parable in our own town in our time. Brainstorm the acquisitions a fictitious rich person would strive to gather.

- How might the advertising we are bombarded with affect the decisions?
- What might the person do to change and become rich toward God?
- If the person had a conversion experience, what different choices might that person make?

Getting Closure: Invite the group to sit in silence for a moment or two to consider whether they found traces of themselves in the parable they just created. Where are we defined by our possessions? Where in our lives do we have what is sufficient? Where is it spilling over into unnecessary excess? Where are we possessed by our possessions? How might we move to becoming more "rich toward God?"

Closing Prayer: Thank you for these scriptures that invite us to grow into the people you call us to be. Amen.

Luke 12:13-21

13 Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.’¹⁴ But he said to him, ‘Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?’¹⁵ And he said to them, ‘Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.’¹⁶ Then he told them a parable: ‘The land of a rich man produced abundantly.¹⁷ And he thought to himself, “What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?”¹⁸ Then he said, “I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”²⁰ But God said to him, “You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?”²¹ So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.’

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