

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

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: This activity would be good outside, especially if your church has trees or flowers you can walk to with the children. Both suggested activities invite the children to use their imaginations, so it is more important to honor what they come up with than get right answers. It is suggested that you tell the first part of the story and then do the activity. If you have time, do the second part of the story and that activity.

Beginning: Tell the children that today we are going to use our imaginations. Do they know what that means? If they are not sure, offer that we are going to think about things we may not be able to see. For example, you may be able to think about a friend who is not here in this room, but you can still imagine that friend being right here with us.

Praying: Thank you, God, for all the beautiful things in our world and for the imaginations you have given us. Amen.

The Story: Jesus was talking to the people who came to listen to him. Jesus said, “God wants you to be with God in the kingdom. In the kingdom, people sell stuff they don't need and give the money to people who need things. The very best things are things you cannot buy or sell. Can you buy the sunshine? Nope. Can you buy a star in the night? Nope. Can you buy a very best friend? Nope. Can you buy the rain? Nope. Can you buy God’s love? Nope.”

Activity: Jesus told the people to make imaginary bags to hold those best things. Let's stand up and take hold of a huge imaginary bag. Let's open the flap of the bag and look inside. What do we see? Wow! I have a rainbow in mine! (Pretend to pull out a huge rainbow and spread it around the room.) What do you have in your imaginary bag? Did anyone find a butterfly? A bird that flies through the sky? A puppy to lick your nose? (Accept whatever the children have found in their purses.)

If it is possible to go outside, tell the children to drag their huge imaginary bags with them and look for things we can see and then make imaginary so they can go in our bags. A flower? A tree? Green grass? A sidewalk to run on?

The next part of the story: Jesus then told the disciples that one day he will come back. It will be a time we do not expect him, and we will be completely surprised. So, since we do not know when he will come, let's practice what we would do if he came today.

If we heard a knock, knock, knock on our door, what would we do? Sure, we would go open the door. What would we do if we saw it was Jesus? (Invite the children to share their responses.) Then he would sit down with us and ask us what we have in our imaginary bags that we could tell him about. So, we could open our bags and take out all the wonderful things we have found today.

Activity: Who wants to pretend to be Jesus, go outside our door and knock three times? We can pretend we do not know who is knocking on our door. What might we say? ("Who's there?") What might Jesus say? ("It's me, Jesus, can I come in?") What would we say? ("Of course, Jesus, come right in.") Jesus would know each of our names and he would say hi to each of us. Then, he would say, "I see you have made bags for yourselves. Will you tell me about what is in them?" And we can take turns telling Jesus about the things we found to put in our imaginary bags. When we have finished, Jesus will need to go talk to some other people, so we can say goodbye to him and tell him he can come back anytime he wants.

Getting Closure: Tell the children you are going to take your imaginary bags home with you and keep looking for things you can put in it. Tell them they can do the same thing.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for all the things we found to put in our bags. Help us to remember that the best things that we have are from you. Amen.

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

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. For the activity, you will need both large pieces of paper and long narrow strips of paper (either construction paper or white paper) and felt markers or crayons.

Beginning: Ask the children how they would define the word, kingdom. Accept what they offer. Then ask them what they think Jesus might mean when he says God wants to give us the kingdom. What is it that God wants to give us? Then tell them we can look for clues in today's passage.

Opening Prayer: Dear God, you want to give us the kingdom. Help us to be able to notice what it is and to say 'Yes' when we do. Amen.

The Story: 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.

Read through the entire passage and pause for quiet.

The Story: Luke 12: 32-34 Then invite one of the children to read the first section of the scripture for today.

Questions:

- I wonder why Jesus starts by saying: "Do not be afraid?" (Jesus has to say that a lot. People always seem to be afraid they are not doing things right.)
- I wonder, what is "the kingdom" God wants to give us? (People trusting God, taking care of each other, looking out for people who do not have enough.)

- What does Jesus say, in verse 33 that we should do? (If everyone were sharing, why would any of us need "possessions" — things that are MINE and not YOURS?)
- I wonder if we should go home and have a huge yard sale and get rid of everything in our houses? (Probably not.)
- I wonder if you have something that is so treasured by you or someone else, that you could say that their heart was right there with the treasure? (If they do not come up with something, consider sharing something you got very involved with - perhaps a new CD, maybe a piece of jewelry. They do not have to share WHAT the item was, but think about it.)

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

Questions:

- I wonder why Jesus is telling the people to be so alert? (Jesus has told us he will come back. He could come back at any time.)
- We don't have any slaves, so what could this passage be saying to us, now? (The people Jesus was talking to understood that slaves had to be loyal and ready for whenever their master came back.)
- I wonder, if we were "dressed for action" today what might we be doing? (Acting as if we believed Jesus could show up at any moment, so behaving the way we would want to be behaving if he were right here.)

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

Questions:

- If we had heard that robbers were coming into our neighborhood with the idea of robbing our house, what might we do? (Probably lock all the doors, have the cell phone ready to call 911, warn all our neighbors so they would be prepared also.)
- I wonder what we would do if we heard that Jesus was coming into our neighborhood to see if we wanted him to come in, what might we do? (Unlock all the doors, call our friends and neighbors, and be waiting at the door for Jesus to come in.)

Activity: Tell the children to pretend that we have it on reliable authority that Jesus is coming back very soon. Invite the children to think up bumper stickers or T-shirt Designs and create samples to advertise Jesus' coming. Let them decide what suggestions they want to make on the bumper stickers.

Option: If the children are satisfied with what they have come up with, fasten the designs where people coming out of church will see them.

Getting Closure: Ask the children what benefit they see in any of their suggestions, even if it is clear that Jesus is not coming back in the foreseeable future? How might our lives be better (or others' lives be better) if we tried any of the things they came up with?

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that you keep inviting us to come into the kingdom you have ready for us. 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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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.

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