

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 6
Gospel Lesson for Adults

Scripture: Luke 7:36-8:3

We remain Easter people, now with the wind of the Holy Spirit in our sails. Our task for the months ahead in this season of Ordinary Time, which extends to the end of November, is to look at what Jesus so tenaciously taught his disciples and see what is in these teachings for us as we carry out the work we have been given to do. Jesus promised his disciples a helper, an Advocate, who would stand with them making the work possible. This same helper, the Holy Spirit, hovers over us still eager to quench the fire of fear and replace it with the powerful energy of love.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

Luke's Gospel accompanies us on the rest of our journey this year. Luke fleshes out the parables and adds rich details not found in the other gospel accounts. Today, it is the story of the woman who is self-convicted of sin. Her relief at encountering forgiveness flows out of her in an extravagant display of gratitude. Are we so able to confront our transgressions, confess them, and then believe they are truly forgiven, that we, too, can dance our gratitude?

Theme: The gratitude that flows from forgiveness

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible. If you think your group would resonate to the Option suggested, bring plain paper and pencils, markers, or crayons.

Beginning: Tell the class that gratitude comes in many flavors and that today we are going to be looking at the gratitude that comes from forgiveness from something that has weighed heavily on our hearts. Invite them to think about a time when you received forgiveness you did not expect, let alone think you deserved, and the rush of gratitude you experienced. Invite them to hold this memory in mind as you study the scripture today.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for the gift of gratitude that flows from forgiveness. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 7: 36 – 8:3 Ask for a reader to read verses 36 - 38. Then allow a moment or two for reflection. Then ask for a reader to read verse 39, and then pause. The third reader can read verses 40 - 43 and pause. A reader can read verses 44 - 46, and pause. The next reader can read verses 48 - 50. Finally, have a reader for verses 8:1-3.

Questions:

As a group, come up with a working definition of a "Pharisee." (Note they were usually deeply religious and concerned with keeping the fine points of the law observed — which made Jesus a very difficult problem for them.)

What was the hospitable custom this Pharisee had overlooked in inviting Jesus to his table? (Verses 44b- 46)

Such hospitality was usually offered by a slave or at least a servant. How does that fact make this action of the woman even more over the edge in the eyes of the Pharisee? (Stickler for detail, this detail got past him. "Sinners" would not get a dinner invitation.)

Why did Jesus' declaration that the woman's sins had been forgiven so unnerve the dinner guests? (Believing that only God could forgive sin, who could this Jesus possibly be?)

What, says Jesus, is it that has saved this woman? (Her faith.)

Option: Pass out paper and the pencils, markers, or crayons. Invite the group to sketch, write words, or create a response as you read the entire passage, once more, to the group.

Getting Closure: Invite the group to share what they created and/or invite the group to give feedback about today's reading.

Closing Prayer: Dear God, be with us this week as we go into the world and help us be mindful of others, remind us to be grateful, and call us to show our gratitude to others. May our gratitude and faith flow through our lives and be present as we serve our communities. Amen.

Luke 7:36-8:3

36 One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. ³⁷And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. ³⁸She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment.

³⁹Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner.'

⁴⁰Jesus spoke up and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' 'Teacher,' he replied, 'speak.'⁴¹'A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²When they could not pay, he cancelled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?' ⁴³Simon answered, 'I suppose the one for whom he cancelled the greater debt.' And Jesus said to him, 'You have judged rightly.'

⁴⁴Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. ⁴⁵You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.'

⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.' ⁴⁸Then he said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.'⁴⁹But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' ⁵⁰And he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'

8 Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, ²as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, ³and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources.

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