

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 6
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

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: There are three options for activities today.

Foot Washing: You will need pitchers of water, a place to dump the used water, towels, Try to do this outside. If not, make sure you have lots of towels and maybe set down a tarp.

Drawing Activity: You will need paper and coloring supplies.

Beginning: After you have greeted the children and checked in with them on what is going on in their lives. You might offer something from yours that would interest them. Ask them to think about something they might do that would get them into **BIG** trouble with their parents. What would get their parents so angry with them, that they would be sure they were going to get punished, big time? (If they are having trouble, ask them to think about something they **KNOW** they are not supposed to do, but that they do anyway. This is not about an accident, but something they know they should not do.)

You could also ask them to think of things (like chores or responsibilities) that they do everyday. Things like taking your shoes off when you come in the house, brushing your teeth, helping set the table for dinner. What happens if they forget to do those things?

Once they have settled on something (or you have come up with several hypothetical situations) ask them how they think they would feel if their parents, instead of punishing them said: "I can see you are really sorry about this. I can see you have learned something. No, I am not going to punish you!" Ask the children to say with you : "W H E U U U U! What a relief! Wow! I sure feel better!" (Add any motions that seem appropriate - wiping the forehead, dancing around in a circle.) Tell the children that the big fancy word for what they are feeling is **GRATITUDE**. Tell them the story we have today is about gratitude.

Praying: Thank you God for forgiving us when we do bad things or forget to do things. Amen.

The Story: Jesus was invited to a fancy party. There were lots of people at the dinner table and lots of really good food. When Jesus came in, they just said: "Hi Jesus, grab a seat." A woman who had done some really bad stuff found out that Jesus was going to be at this party, so she showed up with a jar of sweet smelling oil. Since people did not wear socks and shoes, but just sandals on their bare feet, and it was hot and dusty in town, usually a party began with someone washing everyone's feet so they would not be itchy and scratchy in the sandals. No one had done that for Jesus, so the woman started washing his feet with her tears, drying them with her long hair, and then putting the oil on Jesus feet. "Hey!" the host of the party said to Jesus: "Don't you know that woman has done some really bad stuff?" Jesus told him that the woman had told God she was sorry and God had said I can see that you are sorry and I am not going to punish you. Jesus also reminded the host of the dinner that he had forgotten to wash his feet. Jesus forgave the host. Both the woman and the host were feeling GRATITUDE!

Option: Foot Washing

If you can go outside, it will be easier to manage the splashing. If you cannot, be sure you have lots of towels, pitchers of water, and a place to dump used water – such as a trash can. If children have shoes and socks, have them stuff socks into shoes so the socks will not get lost. If they are wearing sandals, they will get an even better idea of what it was like in Jesus' time when sand got between feet and sandals and washing would feel so good. Invite the children to wash each other's feet and dry them gently with towels.

Option: Invite the children to create a movement activity to show how gratitude feels. They could crouch in a corner, feeling very bad about something, then get up and dance around, arms flying in the air to show the freedom gratitude brings. If time permits, they could sketch their dance and take the picture home with them.

Activity: If time permits (or if you chose not to do the foot washing option) invite the children to draw pictures of the grateful woman washing Jesus' feet with her tears and drying Jesus' feet with her hair.

Getting Closure: Ask the children to pretend you do not know what gratitude means. Ask them to tell you or show you in their own words.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for showing us what gratitude means. Thank you for loving us. Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 6
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Luke 7:36-8:3

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Theme: The gratitude that flows from forgiveness

Before Class: The passage for today is fairly long and has several voices. If you choose to have the children read the parts, print enough copies of the script below. Have paper and pencils ready for the Activity.

Beginning: Tell the children that if this class had been meeting at the time of today's story, life would be very different. Our story today highlights one of the things that was commonly done in that time. Lead them through a series of inquiries to help them find the answer.

- I wonder if they wore sneakers in Jesus' time?
- I wonder if they had socks in Jesus' time?
- Did they drive cars?
- Do you think the roads were paved?

No, in Jesus' time, everyone wore sandals and walked on dirt paths. Their journeys were often long, hot, and dusty. When someone arrived at your home, you or your servant would wash their feet, put on a soothing lotion, and would have offered oil to smooth the dusty hair on their heads. Tell them to keep that in mind as they hear today's scripture.

Then invite each child to think about (just think about, not have to share) a time when they blew it — did something really bad, not just a mistake, they really blew it — BUT they were not punished as they expected to be. Tell them to get in touch with the relief they felt. Tell them to be thinking about that, too, as they read the scripture for today.

Opening Prayer: Thank you God for your forgiveness when we show we are sorry. Help us remember how to treat the people around us. Amen.

The Story: Luke 7: 36 – 8:3 Some terms the children may not know:

- *Pharisee*: A religious leader of a group that worked very hard to make sure they were obeying all their many laws right down to the letter of the law. They had great difficulty with Jesus' ministry because it did not appear to them to be toeing the line.
- *Alabaster jar of ointment*: Alabaster was about as expensive a material as you could get for a jar. Usually white, shiny-looking a bit like marble. The ointment was also expensive.

Questions:

- I wonder why the Pharisee was upset that this woman had come to his party? (She clearly had not been invited, and what she was doing was embarrassing him.)
- What did the woman do? (First she cried, then she washed Jesus' feet in her tears, dried his feet with her hair, and then smoothed ointment on his feet.)
- What question does Jesus ask the Pharisee? (Verse 41-43)
- Do you think the Pharisee was beginning to get it? (Verse 43a)
- What had the Pharisee, who was so intent on getting everything right, forgotten to do for Jesus when he came into his house? (Verse 44-45)
- What does Jesus say to the woman? (Verse 48)
- How do the people sitting at the table respond to that? (Verse 49)
- I wonder how we would have responded?

Activity: Other Sides of the Story (Note: you can do this activity together or if you group is larger, you may want to divide them in half.)

Tell them that women had very little status in the time of Jesus so it is no surprise that she is given no lines in this story. Invite the group (or one of the groups) to come up with the woman's story: not so much what she had done to be considered a sinner, but the gratitude she felt at believing she was being forgiven. Perhaps she had heard Jesus speak before. Maybe he had already forgiven her before this day. Give her a voice for her gratitude.

Then invite the group (or one of the groups) to identify with the Pharisee who is just trying to do his job, and letting sinners come to his party was against his ways. Could it be the man had something he was not terribly proud of, that he was afraid someone might find out about?

Are there other perspectives this story can be told from and if so, how might the story be told?

Getting Closure: Once the groups have had time to work on the stories, invite them to share what they have come up with or what they thought the other stories might be.

Invite the children to sit for a minute and remember the event they thought about at the beginning of this session, especially the gratitude they felt at being forgiven. Ask if anyone wants to describe how the gratitude felt. And if no one offers anything, that is OK, too.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for the gift of gratitude that rushes over us when we know we have been forgiven. Thank you for your forgiveness and love. Amen.

Luke 7:36-8:3

Narrator: 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,

Pharisee: '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.'

Narrator: ⁴⁰Jesus spoke up and said to him,

Jesus: 'Simon, I have something to say to you.'

Simon: 'Teacher, speak.'

Jesus: 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?'

Simon: 'I suppose the one for whom he cancelled the greater debt.'

Jesus: 'You have judged rightly.'

Narrator: ⁴⁴Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon,

Jesus: '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.'

Narrator: ⁴⁸Then he said to her,

Jesus: 'Your sins are forgiven.'

Narrator: ⁴⁹But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves,

Party Guests: 'Who is this who even forgives sins?'

Narrator: ⁵⁰And Jesus said to the woman,

Jesus: 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'

Narrator: 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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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.

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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.

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