

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 15
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Luke 12:49-56

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

Not everyone chooses the fire of change. God does not drag us kicking and screaming into the kingdom. God appears to be amazingly patient. The sting of divisions pains us; we yearn for peace. How are we to interpret the present time? What will we choose?

Theme: Risking the choice to change

Before Class: We live in a time when divisions within our church bring significant suffering to many. Be aware of which ones your class is in a position to discuss and which ones might best be left alone, for now. You will need copies of the Bible or copies of the scripture for today.

Beginning: We have a pretty hard passage today. Jesus presents us with some pretty significant choices, once again showing us that a Gospel message almost two thousand years old is disturbingly contemporary.

Opening Prayer: Dear Patient God, you offer us choices, you help us as we struggle with the choices, and you love us through all of it. Thank you. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 12: 49- 56. Invite one person to read the entire passage. Others may follow along in their Bibles.

Questions:

- I wonder what stood out for you in this passage?
- I wonder, what is the "fire" Jesus brought?
- I wonder what would our world look like if each of us were "on fire" with Jesus' message? How would we manage disagreements and turf battles? How would we manage the resources of the earth?
- What is the "baptism" Jesus awaits? Didn't John already baptize him? (He knows he must go to Jerusalem. He probably suspects he will be killed — that in his death, death will also be conquered and the resurrected life will be available to all.)
- The divisions Jesus delineates: to what extent do they sound like a bad soap opera? To what extent do they describe the world we live in?
- Jesus was annoyed that the people could not interpret "the present time." I wonder what he meant? (Jesus was bringing a radical interpretation of what God was calling God's people to do and so many were trying to cut and paste these teachings into the strict interpretation of the law — and, so, missing the point.)

Invite someone to read again Luke 12: 49-50, and then sit quietly with it for a moment or two. Then invite each person, silently, to picture a world where everyone believes God is right in our midst, that we can turn to God, be forgiven and move on, and we see the face of Christ in everyone we meet?

Getting Closure: Invite anyone who chooses to do so to share what they pictured. If you have time, invite them to share what they will take away from today.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that Jesus brought fire to the earth. Help us to find the courage to choose that fire in our lives each day. Amen.

Luke 12:49-56

49 ‘I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! ⁵¹Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! ⁵²From now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; ⁵³they will be divided: father against son

and son against father,
mother against daughter
and daughter against mother,
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.’

54 He also said to the crowds, ‘When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, “It is going to rain”; and so it happens. ⁵⁵And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, “There will be scorching heat”; and it happens. ⁵⁶You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

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