

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

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: The message in today's Gospel is pretty heavy for young children, but the idea of how we make choices is accessible. To get into the story, have at hand a toy or two. You will also need several sheets of construction paper (each a different color), crayons, and glues.

Note also that if your school system is starting up this week you might have children new to your class. If so, be sure to take the time to incorporate them, getting to know their names, something about them, and making them feel welcome while helping the other children to welcome them.

Beginning: Let's figure out what a word that Jesus uses means. The word is choice. Any ideas what it means? (If they do not know, offer a sentence: I have a choice; I could read a book or watch TV.) So what would we say "choice" means (and it is OK if they use the word choose to define choice!) Then include the definition you have come up with as you pray and tell the story.

Praying: Thank you, God, for showing us how to (make good choices.) Amen.

The Story: Jesus was talking to the people. They just did not get it. Some times it is hard to be patient, when people don't understand what you are telling them. Jesus said, "I came to get you excited and you just don't get excited. You know how to understand the things that are around you. You understand that big black clouds in the sky probably mean it will rain and that the wind blowing from the south means it will be hot. BUT, you have trouble understanding what I am teaching you and making good choices."

Activity: We can make some choices about how we will treat each other. Give one of the children the toy you have brought in and say something like, "Here, (naming the child) you can play with this toy." Then ask the others, "How do you feel about this child having a toy and none of the rest of you having a toy? What could you do about it?" If no one comes up with it, ask, "Could you hit the child over the head and grab the toy away from him? That would be a choice.

Would it be an OK choice? What else could you do? What would be a good choice for the child who suddenly got a toy to play with?" (Share? Take turns?)

"Now, using our imaginations, let's pretend there is a plate of cookies on the table. What are some choices we could make? Race for the table and grab as many cookies as each of us can? Count the cookies to be sure there is one for each of us and then pass the plate. What if there are NOT enough cookies for each of us to have a whole cookie?"

Option: Spread out the construction paper on the table and tell the children to choose which one they want. What could we do if two children want the same piece of paper? (Cut it in half, see if one child would be satisfied with another color, give it to neither child. Other solutions?)

If the children write, show them the word you have come up with for choices and let them copy it on their papers. If they do not, you could write the word for them on pieces of paper they could glue onto their papers. Then invite them to illustrate the concept of choice, drawing whatever they want to draw.

Getting Closure: Invite each child to tell the rest of you about his/her drawing and affirm each creation.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for helping us make good choices. Amen.

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