

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 16**  
**Lesson Plans for Adults**

**Scripture: Luke 13:10-17**

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**

For 18 years the woman had been unable to stand upright, lift a child, or gaze at the stars. Bent over, she saw only what was on the ground. "You are free," she heard Jesus say. Jesus touched her and suddenly she could raise her arms high in the air, look at the world, and praise God. All the uptight leaders could do was grumble because Jesus had done this healing on the Sabbath.

**Theme: Set free from bondage on the Sabbath day**

**Before Class:** Bring with you a length of ribbon, yard string, a length of calculator tape, or whatever is handy to create a continuum: the two outside edges of a decision, from the most open to the most tight. Bring some tokens such as coins, game pieces, even pens or pencils to show where things are on the continuum.

**Beginning:** Spread what you have brought to represent a continuum either on the floor if you are seated in chairs in a circle, or on the table, if you meet around a table. Tell the group that after we read today's scripture, we will decide together what to name the two ends of the continuum.

Ask the group if any have ever had an injury that really slowed them down. Or a broken bone that partially immobilized them. What were some of the hard parts about it: the pain, the frustration with the inability to do what you normally did, the curious stares, or something else?

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, for the healing touch of Jesus for the woman in today's story. Amen.

**The Scripture: Luke 13:10-17** Invite someone to read the passage.

**Questions: First level: What are the facts of the story?**

- What is the source of the rules for behavior on the Sabbath? (The Israelites, coming out of years of slavery were now free. God gave Moses rules to be followed to help these people build the new life of freedom. (This specific rule about the Sabbath is in Leviticus 23:3)
- Evidently, "teaching" was not considered "work." Do you agree/disagree?
- What does Jesus notice about the woman and what does he say to her? (11-12b)
- What is the response of the synagogue leader? (Aghast that Jesus would break the Sabbath rule.)
- How does Jesus respond? (15b)

**Second level:** In front of us, we have a continuum to signify the two extremes we see today.

- What would we put at the opposite ends of our continuum as represented in this passage? (Letter of the Law vs. Spirit of the Law, Rules vs. Compassion, are a couple of options, but see what the group can come up with.)
- Where on the continuum would we put the synagogue leader? (If the decision is to put him at the far edge of the fixed end, why did he even come to this event? Could he have been at all curious about Jesus or just trying to catch him?)
- I wonder where you would put Jesus? (If the decision is to put Jesus way at the edge of open are we saying that he broke all the rules?)
- Where would the woman be at the beginning of the story? (A crippled person was considered to have sinned — or they would not be in that condition. Describe her situation beyond the obvious pain level. For instance, she was probably shunned and so therefore probably lacking basic resources upon which to live.)
- Where is she after Jesus lays hands on her?

**Optional Discussion:** We may find ourselves in situations as polarized as this one is. What are some strategies we can share with each other for balancing the need to follow rules we believe came from God with compassion we believe God has put in us? What do we do when we have listened carefully to each other and still disagree? How do we manage the tension of being in fellowship with someone we disagree with? Obviously, exact answers will not come, but a greater compassion for the difficulty and possibly a higher degree of commitment to stay in fellowship could result. What would happen to the dialog if we were able to see the face of Jesus in each person at each end of the continuum?

**Option:** The woman's gratitude for her healing takes one-half a sentence in this passage. Let's give her a longer moment on the stage by sitting in silence for a moment or two, picturing that bent-over, shunned woman and her despair after 18 years of this. Then imagine Jesus' touch on that bent back and her amazement at being able to stretch her arms up high and walk erect. Imagine what she would do to show her gratitude.

**Getting Closure:** Invite them to share an image or insight they got. I wonder what you will take away with you today.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, for the healing of this woman and for the healing you are doing in our lives. Amen.

## **Luke 13:10-17**

### **Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman**

10 Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. <sup>11</sup>And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. <sup>12</sup>When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, ‘Woman, you are set free from your ailment.’ <sup>13</sup>When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. <sup>14</sup>But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, ‘There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the Sabbath day.’ <sup>15</sup>But the Lord answered him and said, ‘You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water?’ <sup>16</sup>And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?’ <sup>17</sup>When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

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