

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 16
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

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: You will need props for the retelling of the story: head scarf, sandals, and any other costumes you think would help. You will also need crayons and paper.

Note: 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: Tell the children we are going to have a story about a woman who was not able to stand up straight; she was bent over in pain, and Jesus made her well. Tell them we will make a play out of the story after we have heard it.

Praying: Loving God, thank you for noticing when we are in pain and for healing us. Amen.

The Story: Jesus was teaching in a synagogue, which is what they called their churches. It was the Sabbath, which is Sunday, the day of rest. Everyone was listening to him and he was looking out at all the people as he talked to them. Just then he noticed a woman was standing at the back of the synagogue. She was all bent over.

Let's see what that would be like. Let's all stand up and bend over like this. (Bend so your spine and head are flat and you can only see the floor.) How would you look up and see the stars? You couldn't. How would you pick up your baby grandchild? You couldn't. How would you reach up for your favorite book on the shelf? You couldn't. (Invite the children to be seated after you have tried the exercise.)

Jesus wanted this woman to be able to do all those things. And he didn't want her to hurt anymore. So, Jesus called out to the woman, "Lady, come up closer to me. You do not need to be

in pain anymore. You are now free from that pain." And he gently placed his hand on her back and suddenly she could stand up straight.

I wonder what she did when she was healed? (Invite the children to stand again and do the motions with you.) Maybe she thought: I wonder if I can raise my arms? YES! I can! Let's do it too. Maybe I can turn in a big circle. We can turn in a big circle. What if . . . do you suppose? . . . could I dance? Yes, she could dance.

Activity:

To help the children act out the story of the crippled woman, bent over in pain, a large head scarf would make a good prop. And perhaps a pair of flip-flops to be sandals for Jesus. Since the children will be invited to make up a dance, be thinking of where you could do this, if your class space is too limited. Perhaps outside, perhaps in some other space in your church.

Let's go outside (or wherever you selected) and make a dance out of this story. We will take turns until each of us gets to be the woman. A scarf will indicate which one is the woman. First, let the woman walk around all bent over and we can notice all the things she cannot do so bent over. Then, Jesus can heal her and she can discover all the cool things she can now do. (Reach arms high in the air. Pick an imaginary flower off a tall tree. Touch her toes. Twirl in a circle, arms over head. Whatever the children come up with.) And when she dances, we can dance the dance the person playing the woman thinks up — along with the woman.

Option: If time permits, invite the children to respond to the story through drawing.

Getting Closure: If you have been able to go outside and find a place with grass, suggest the children lie down on the grass, in a circle, look up at the sky, then sit up, in the circle and talk about things we can do with our straight backs. We can run and play games, carry stuff, hug our parents, etc.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that Jesus helped the woman become free of her pain and help her see your world in a whole new way. Help us to see your world fully. Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 16
Lesson Plans for Older Children

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: You will need copies of the scripture script for each child (found below.) If you do the newspaper option, you will also need paper, markers, pens, and pencils.

Note: If school is beginning in your community, you might have a child new to this class and you will want to take the time to fully incorporate that child into the class.

Beginning: Invite the children to brainstorm what makes a good news story? Action? Something being solved? An interesting argument? Well, today we have it all!

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for stories we have of Jesus that help us figure out what is the right thing to do. Amen.

The Story: Luke 13:10-17 Ask for volunteers to read: Jesus, the Leader, Narrator 1 and 2.

Questions:

- What is wrong with the woman? (She has been bent over, unable to stand up straight, for 18 years.)
- What does Jesus do about it? (He calls her to him, tells her she is free from the ailment, and lays his hands on her.)
- What happens to the woman next? (She stands up straight and begins to thank God.)
- What is the problem with this for the leader of the synagogue? (The Hebrew people understood that God had given Moses many rules to be followed. One of those rules was that no work of any kind was to be done on the Sabbath. (Leviticus 23:3))
- What is Jesus' response to this concern? (Surely you would do the "work" of getting water for your animals on the Sabbath, so why shouldn't he do the work of setting this woman free on the Sabbath?)
- What was the crowd's response? (They liked what Jesus said.)

- I wonder what you think the leader's response would be?

Activity:

As a way to help the children get into this story, we suggest that after they have read it and discussed it, they develop a TV interview of the woman and of the leader of the synagogue and then "do" the TV show.

Invite the children to figure out how to make a TV newscast out of this story. Suggest they identify the reporter, the woman, and the leader of the synagogue. They can decide whether the reporter would have been able to catch up with Jesus to interview him. When they have figured out how to present this newscast, watch it as if it were on television.

Invite them to “perform” the newscast once they have put it together.

Option: If you have a larger group, you can divide them into two groups. Have one work on a TV Newscast and another on a Newspaper/Blog Post about the event.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share what they noticed about the story as they presented it. I wonder what stood out for you?

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God for healing us. Help us to be mindful of those in our lives that need healing. Amen.

Luke 13:10-17

Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman

Narrator 1: Now Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. ¹¹And 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. ¹²When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said,

Jesus: ‘Woman, you are set free from your ailment.’

Narrator 2: ¹³When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. ¹⁴But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd,

Leader: ‘There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the Sabbath day.’

Narrator 1: ¹⁵But the Lord answered him and said,

Jesus: ‘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? ¹⁶And 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?’

Narrator 2: ¹⁷When 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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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. ¹¹And 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. ¹²When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, ‘Woman, you are set free from your ailment.’ ¹³When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. ¹⁴But 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.’ ¹⁵But 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?’ ¹⁶And 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?’ ¹⁷When 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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