

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 18
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Luke 14:25-33

Choices: What situation do we find ourselves, right here and now, in which we have a choice? What is preventing us from making it? Are possessions, in fact, possessing us? For some of us the choice might be to rearrange our priorities, even make a career change, or maybe it is to faithfully deal with what is on our plate. For all of us, Jesus invites us to follow him.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

What is the cross we are called to carry as a disciple of Jesus? What are we being called to take on? Jesus invites us to carefully consider the cost before choosing to carry this cross. We might begin by considering how our possessions get in the way.

Theme: Considering the cost of the cross

Before: The focus of this Early Fall Session is on what is involved in responding to Jesus' love. To help children see the cross as the container for what Jesus did and taught, the suggestion is that you create a cross large enough for children to carry (the cross cut from a sheet of foam core or even poster board) and decorated with the children's drawings each week. Today you can put the words "Jesus Loves All of Us" on the cross. You can cut letters from construction paper and let the children decorate the letters and then glue them onto the cross. You could position the word Jesus vertically on the top part of the cross, "Loves" positioned horizontally on the cross piece, and "All of Us," vertically on the bottom part of the cross. (If you have a Christ the King celebration on November 21, the cross could be a part of the celebration.) You will also need glue sticks or white glue.

In addition, if this is the first time you meet with the children be sure to have a get acquainted game ready. For ideas on getting acquainted, look at the Resources page for the “Get to Know You” activities (<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/lessons/resources/>) of Lesson Plans that Work. You may also choose to make name tags for the children, unless they all know each other and you know them.

Beginning: Play the get acquainted game you have chosen. Tell the children that you are going to make a cross, together, and decorate it each week.

Praying: Thank you, Jesus, that you love us and teach us how to do our work. Amen.

The Story: Jesus was walking along and a great big crowd of people came along with him. They wanted to hear what he was saying. Jesus was telling them: Out of all the things in your life one thing is the most important. And that is following Jesus. You have to find out what Jesus wants you to do and then follow Jesus. He said: you have to carry your cross and follow me. You have to put Jesus first.

Activity: In today's story, Jesus reminds us how important it is to follow in the ways he has given us. Jesus tells us to carry the cross, which is a reminder to live how Jesus taught us to live and remain faithful to God's teachings. Today, we are going to make a cross and each week we can put something about the story we hear on the cross. The cross we make will help us remember the stories we hear.

Invite the children to decorate the letters spelling "Jesus Loves All of Us" that you have previously cut out.

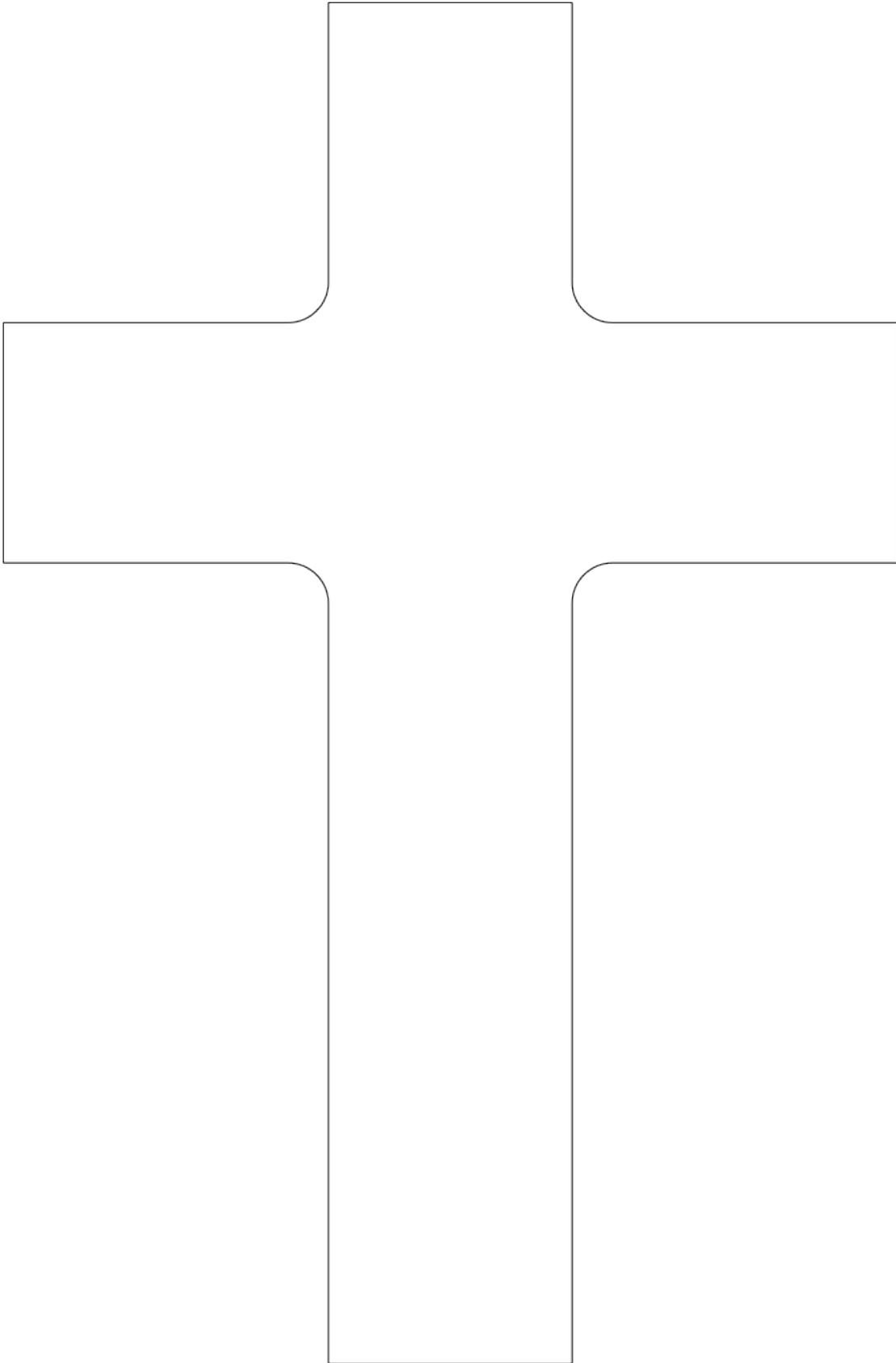
Option: If you have time, you can invite the children to make their own crosses to take home. Invite them to decorate it with things that remind them about God and Jesus. There is a template below.

Getting Closure: Remind the children that they will be decorating this cross for the weeks to come. Sing all together: "Jesus Loves Me." Work with the children to glue the letters on the cross.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for loving us and for showing us what we can do for you. Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 18
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Luke 14:25-33

Choices: What situation do we find ourselves, right here and now, in which we have a choice? What is preventing us from making it? Are possessions, in fact, possessing us? For some of us the choice might be to rearrange our priorities, even make a career change, or maybe it is to faithfully deal with what is on our plate. For all of us, Jesus invites us to follow him.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

What is the cross we are called to carry as a disciple of Jesus? What are we being called to take on? Jesus invites us to carefully consider the cost before choosing to carry this cross. We might begin by considering how our possessions get in the way.

Theme: Considering the cost of the cross

Before Class: If this will be the first time you meet with the children, have in mind a get-acquainted game to play with them. For ideas on getting acquainted, look at the Resources page for the “Get to Know You” activities (<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/lessons/resources/>) of Lesson Plans that Work.

To be sure all know each other's names, have them make "name tents" to place in front of themselves on the table or if you do not use a table, have nametags for them to make. For name tents, card stock is best, but paper will also work. Fold the paper in half — lengthwise, then fold in about an inch on both lengthwise sides. The tent will stand when placed on the table. The children can put their names and anything they want to show something about them: a soccer ball or baseball glove, or a musical instrument, for example. Whatever they choose. You need felt markers or crayons and sufficient Bibles for each child to be able to follow along. You will also need a large sheet of paper on which you can take notes.

Option: If the children in your group seem to you to be old enough to keep a journal, consider buying inexpensive spiral notebooks they can write in while in class and leave in a secure place where no one else, including the teacher, will read them. Then build time for the children to either write or sketch in their journals.

Beginning: Give the children the name tents and ask them to create their own individual name tent or nametags. If you and the children do not know each other, play the get acquainted game.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for the gift of Jesus who shows us how to do the work you give us to do. Thank you that each of us can be here today to hear what Jesus teaches us. Amen.

The Story: Luke 14: 25-33 Ask for volunteers to read a portion of the passage. One way to divide the passage is: First reader: verses 25-27, second reader: verses 28-30, third reader: verses 31-32, last reader: verse 33.

Questions:

- I wonder what Jesus is really saying to us in these first few lines of scripture?
- If Jesus is not telling us to "hate" our families, what might Jesus be saying here? (Explain the word "hyperbole" as exaggerating to make a point: "I must have raked 100 bags of leaves!")
- I wonder what priorities might Jesus be suggesting? (Not about hating your parents, but putting Jesus first in what is important to us.)
- I wonder, what is the "cross" Jesus says we need to carry? (It is about choosing what we will and will not do. It is about priorities: which things come first.)
- Can anyone think of a time they had a great idea — but could not finish what they started? (If you can share an example from your own life: a garden you planted and then did not have time to weed, a tree house you tried to build as a child, but ran out of lumber.)
- Verse 33: Jesus was talking to the adults here. Do we think Jesus is telling them they have to throw all their "stuff" in the trash? If not, what do we think he is saying here?
- I wonder, what is the difference between owning stuff and having our "stuff" own us?

Activity: Use a big piece of paper to write down all the things the children suggest during this activity.

Let's imagine a very rich person getting ready to follow Jesus. This person has the very fanciest house and car. Let's think of all the things the person would think about taking to follow Jesus. For example, the huge plasma TV, the DVD player, the CD collection, fancy clothing, etc. Encourage the children to think of all the expensive things this person would have. Take notes as they think up the items.

Ask for a volunteer to be this poor overburdened person. The rest of the children can help the overburdened person decide what can be left behind. As they think of things and the person agrees, you cross the items off the list. What, if anything, gets left on the list?

Journal Option: If you have decided to introduce journals, give each child a journal. Assure the children that what they write or draw is for their eyes only. You will not read the journals, unless a child has written something and wants to share it. And you will keep the journals in a safe place where no one else can read them. Then invite the children to write something they thought about during today's session, something they want to write to God.

Option: Invite the children to write down, draw, or find a creative way to list those things they need to leave behind in order to better follow God. You may need to brainstorm with them to get some ideas flowing. What are the things that become more important than God in their life? Gadgets, clothes, money, being cool, etc.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share what they have put on their lists. Then, invite them to name things Jesus does not say we need to give up to follow him (parents, our siblings and family, sunsets, moonlight, for example.)

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that you love us and want us to stay close to you. Help us leave behind those things that get in the way so that we might better follow you. Amen.

Luke 14:25-33

25 Now large crowds were travelling with him; and he turned and said to them, ²⁶“Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. ²⁷Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

²⁸For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, ³⁰saying, “This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.”

³¹Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³²If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace.

³³So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 18
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Luke 14:25-33

Choices: What situation do we find ourselves, right here and now, in which we have a choice? What is preventing us from making it? Are possessions, in fact, possessing us? For some of us the choice might be to rearrange our priorities, even make a career change, or maybe it is to faithfully deal with what is on our plate. For all of us, Jesus invites us to follow him.

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Theme: Considering the cost of the cross

Before Class: The beginning suggestion for this session focuses on groups that are just forming. If your group has been meeting, you will not need the get acquainted activity. You will need copies of the scripture for today or copies of the Bible.

Beginning: Getting Acquainted

As we begin our sessions for the fall, it is important to make sure everyone knows one another. For ideas on getting acquainted, look at the Resources page for the "Get to Know You" activities (<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/lessons/resources/>) of Lesson Plans that Work.

Introduction to This Fall: If you have been meeting, or if everyone already knows each other, begin by telling the group that the lectionary for the rest of this liturgical year (Year C which goes through Proper 29 in November) provides readings from Luke where we see Jesus getting his disciples up to speed. As we learn of Jesus' training techniques for his disciples, we notice how it speaks to us here now.

Opening Prayer: Creator God: you sent Jesus to show us the way. Help us to see in these scriptures the way for us. Amen.

Option: Ask the group to be thinking about this statement of Jesus as we read today's scripture: "Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."

The Scripture: Luke 14: 25-33 Invite one person to read the entire passage and then pause for quiet reflection. Then, invite another person to read just verses 25-26.

Questions:

- I wonder what Jesus might he have meant from verses 25-26? (Remind the group of "hyperbole" [exaggeration to make a point. Example: I thought I'd die laughing!])
- I wonder what this statement says about the priorities that define our lives.

- What is Jesus asking us to change in our priorities? (Following Jesus comes first, and then we can be present for the rest of our family.)

Verses 28-30

- Can you think of a time, that you are willing to share, that you plunged ahead on a project you later had to abandon? Building a tree house as a child? Organizing a program or event?

Verse 31

- Few of us (fortunately) are in positions to "wage war." Can you share a time when you were able to help turn a competition into a collaboration?
- Can you think of situations in our community where churches are sharing resources?

Verse 33 and 27

- Discuss how verse 33 fulfills verse 27.
- In what ways are our "possessions" defining us?
- I wonder if we are being called to have a huge garage sale and get rid of everything we own?
- I wonder if "the cross" we must carry consist of making decisions and sticking with them?
- What will we be giving up? (Being possessed by our possessions.)
- What will we be receiving? (The freedom to follow Jesus.)

Getting Closure: Invite the group to sit quietly for a moment or two and picture themselves no longer possessed by their possessions. Of course, we will still have to pay our bills, yet we can choose our response to our situation. Invite the group to see themselves free to follow Jesus.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for your invitation to follow you. Help us to cast off those things which get in our way and hold tight to the love and grace you so freely give to us. Amen.

Luke 14:25-33

25 Now large crowds were travelling with him; and he turned and said to them, ²⁶Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. ²⁷Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, ³⁰saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish." ³¹Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³²If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. ³³So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

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