

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 19
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Luke 15:1-10

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

Who are these people invited to table with Jesus, grumble the Pharisees? How dare he eat with sinners! These are people who have blown it, know it, own it, and choose to go beyond it. These grateful people know the sweetness of forgiveness and its power.

Theme: Rejoice with me: the lost is found!

Before: If this is the first session with the children, you may wish to check the instructions in Proper 18 for making a cross and include that in today's session as the cross will be used in each session this Fall. If you met last Sunday, be sure the cross is in your meeting space. Bring one of the pieces of foam core or cardboard left over from cutting the cross. 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 will also need materials to make little sheep: cotton balls, and, black chenille stems, a bit of white glue diluted with water, and some transparent tape. Before class, cut the black chenille stems into halves and then again in half to make sheep legs about 3 inches long. You will need two sets of legs for each child plus at least one set for the sheep that will go on the cross. A very shiny penny will also be needed.

Beginning: If this is your first session, play the get acquainted game and make name tags for each child. Also make one for yourself with the name you want the children to use when they address you.

Praying: Thank you, God, that you love us and we are never lost from you. Amen.

The Story: Jesus was telling a story. Some people listening to the story had done bad things and they were very sorry about it. (make a sad face, hanging your head down) Some people listening didn't think they had done anything bad and they were acting very sure of themselves. (make a haughty pose nose in the air) "How come Jesus lets T H O S E people in?" asked the ones who were so sure of themselves. So Jesus decided to tell them a story.

Once upon a time there was a shepherd and he had a whole bunch of sheep. What sound do sheep make? (Baaaa Baaaa.) Well the shepherd counted his sheep (point to each child as you count: one, two, three, etc.) "Oops!" said the shepherd. "One of my sheep is missing. I must go

and find my sheep." And he looked and looked until he found his missing sheep. He picked up the tired sheep, put it on his shoulders and carried it back to the others.

And, Jesus told another story: Once upon a time there was a woman who had 10 silver coins — just enough to buy her food. One day she lost one of them. She got her broom and she swept, and she swept, and she swept until she found the missing coin. She called all her friends and invited them to come over to her house so they could celebrate that she had found what she had lost.

Activity: Two games are offered. If time is limited, play only one of them.

Lost sheep: Tell the children one child can be the lost sheep and hide someplace while the rest of you close your eyes and do not peek. One of the children can be the shepherd and go looking for the sheep. If the shepherd does not find the lost sheep quickly, the lost one can make a “baaaa baaaa” sound quietly as a clue. When the shepherd finds the sheep, he brings the sheep back to your group. Take turns until each child who wants to can be the lost sheep and/or the shepherd.

Lost coin: Taking turns, let one child hide eyes while the rest of you decide where to hide a shiny penny in plain sight but not in an obvious place. When it is safely hid, the child who had closed eyes will go looking for it. If the child does not find it fairly quickly, as the child gets closer, the group can chant "warmer, warmer." And if the child moves away, your group can chant: "Colder, colder." Take turns until each child who wants to has looked for the coin.

Question: I wonder what it felt like when you were found or when you found the penny?

Activity: A sheep to take home. Give the children two chenille stems each. Fold each stem in half over your finger to make a u-shaped stem. Bend the ends up a little bit to create "feet." Dip the tops of the stems in thinned glue and then stretch a cotton ball over the stems to make the body. Pull a bit of cotton to make the head.

Make one sheep to put on the cross and one to take home. For the sheep that stays in the classroom, you could cut a little strip of the extra foam core to make a place for the sheep to stand and secure the strip and the sheep to the cross using transparent tape.

Getting Closure: Sing to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb”:

Jesus loves the little sheep, little sheep, little sheep
Jesus loves the little sheep, but it had gone astray.
Jesus found the little sheep, little sheep, little sheep
Jesus found the little sheep, and brought it home today.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, that you go looking for those who get lost. Remind us to celebrate when we find the lost! Amen.

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