

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 20
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Luke 16:1-13

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

We simply have to choose. Will we do as God desires us to do, or will we cheat God (and ourselves) by ignoring what God expects of us? Will we give to God what is rightly God’s? What are we doing to work toward serving God more fully?

Theme: Choosing Whom We Will Serve

Before: If this is the first session you have with the children, you may choose to look at the Lesson Plan for Proper 18 and include time to make the cross suggested. 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.

The focus of today's lesson is verses 10-13. In the beginning activity, feel free to substitute other examples that might be more appropriate for the children: a special book, a video game, skates, or whatever would resonate with them. In the classroom, display the cross the children have made.

You will need pieces of tissue paper, cut in squares about 3 inches square in whatever colors you have available. Green tissue can be cut in the shape of leaves.

Beginning: Talk with the children about what it means to make a choice. If you had a glass of orange juice and a glass of apple juice in front of you, which one would you choose? If you could color with a red crayon or a blue crayon, which one would you choose?

Here's another kind of choice: let's say your friend loaned you a special video. What if you enjoyed the video and then just left it on the floor where people might walk on it. Or what if you dropped it on some newspapers and in doing so it might get thrown away. What would be a good choice to make about the video? Today we have a story Jesus tells us about making choices.

Praying: Thank you, Jesus, that you help us make good choices. Amen.

The Story: Jesus was telling his friends about a man who was making very bad choices. He was not doing his job. And when the boss asked him to show what he had been doing, the man did not want to be in trouble and lose his job. He wanted to be in good favor with the boss and with the others that the boss dealt with. So he quickly tried to do what he had not been doing for a

long time. He figured a way to give his boss not all of what he owed him in work, but part of what he owed him, and the boss was impressed with what he had done.

Jesus said you cannot serve God, if all you are thinking about is yourself and not what God wants of you.

Activity: Choices Game

Tell the children to show a bad choice and a good choice in the game. Make sure to invite them to think up situations as you go along.

We are going on a trip in a car (everyone gather in the center of the room, arrange yourselves in a car or van, and fasten seat belts. Open a pretend picnic basket and pass out all kinds of pretend food: big paper cups of juice, sandwiches wrapped in lots of paper, etc. OK. When we have finished our snack what would be a bad choice to do with all our trash? (Toss it out the window.) What would be a good choice? (Put it all in a bag to put in the trash when next we stop.)

Let's go on a hike. (Walk around the room, or even outside, if weather permits.) Let's pretend that there are beautiful wild flowers growing all over the place. All kinds of colors. What would be a bad choice? (to pick them) What would be a good choice? (Enjoy them, remember what they looked like, maybe take a picture, and leave them to grow in peace.)

Add other choices that you and the children think up.

Activity: Making our own flowers

Experiment with making the flowers before class so you can show the children that by sticking your finger in the center of the square and pinching the tissue, it looks like a flower. The children can stick the flowers on the cross by using little dabs of white glue.

Show the children how to make flowers from the tissue paper squares and then glue them onto your cross. If you want to add green leaves, do so.

Getting Closure: Gather in a circle, with the cross in the center. Notice together what is on the cross. Invite them to name the things that they like best about the cross. Invite them to share how items on the cross make them think about God.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for giving us stories that help us make right choices. Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 20
Lesson Plans for Older Children

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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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We simply have to choose. Will we do as God desires us to do, or will we cheat God (and ourselves) by ignoring what God expects of us? Will we give to God what is rightly God’s? What are we doing to work toward serving God more fully?

Theme: Choosing Whom We Will Serve

Before Class: If this is the first session you have with these children, you may choose to look at the Lesson Plan for Proper 18 and use the name tent activities suggested. 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 need copies of the scripture (found below) and if you have easy access to some play money, bring it. If not, bring lined paper and pencils.

Beginning: Tell the children that today's passage describes poor choices. To help decide what a bad choice looks like and what a good choice looks like, here are some examples.

- You go to a fast food place, order a sandwich and there is a little bin full of ketchup packets. How many is a good number to take? Two or three, because you really like ketchup, or a whole pocket full to take home and use at home? (Good choice or Bad choice? Why?)
- You are walking home, and there are some really pretty flowers by the sidewalk at someone's home. You pick a few to take home to your mother. (Good choice or Bad choice? Why?)
- You go to the library and there are little pencils and pieces of paper to take notes on where to find books. You stick a batch of the pencils in your pocket. (Good choice or Bad choice? Why?)
- Can anyone else think of a choice like these?

Opening Prayer: Gracious God, we thank you for helping us make good choices. Help us to keep in mind those things the good choices. Amen.

The Story: Luke 16:1-13 See below for a script of today’s scripture. You will need 5-6 readers and people can read more than one part if necessary.

Questions: In order to discuss today’s story, we are going to focus on different sections.

Luke 16: 1-4

- Describe the two people in this story. (A rich man who had a manager he thought he could trust. The manager who has been doing such poor work that the man is going to fire him.)
- What is the manager worried about? (Finding a way to survive without this job.)

Luke 5-7

- What does the manager decide to do? (Get on the good side of all the people who owe his boss.)
- How does he do that? (He cuts each bill in half or a portion of the total so people will be grateful to him.)

Luke 8-9

- What does the rich man say about his manager's plan? (He notices that the manager is pretty clever.)
- I wonder why the rich man thought this was a clever plan? (That the manager was able to collect a portion of what was owed, which was more than what he had collected which was nothing.)

Luke 10-13

- What does Jesus say about a person who is "faithful in very little" and who is "dishonest in very little?" (What you do with "very little" will show how you will act with a lot.)
- What does Jesus say, in verse 12, about taking care of stuff that does not belong to us? (If we cannot take care of those things, how could we be trusted with something of our own?)
- I wonder what Jesus means that "no slave can serve two masters?" (They will have to make a choice between two things.)
- We are not slaves, so what does this story say to us? (We, too, have to make choices. What influences our choices?)
- Do you think Jesus is saying that it is wrong to be wealthy? Why? Why not? (It is about making choices: which is more important: God — or making a ton of money?)

Activity: Making choices

Ask the class to decide which child is going to be the very rich person. All the rest of you can be financial advisors: some of you offering good advice and some of you offering selfish advice. If you have the play money, give it to the rich person. If you do not, ask someone to keep the ledger: writing down the amount of money you decide the person has and then keeping track of each expense. The rest of you can advise the person on what she or he should do with the money. How much of the money needs to go to maintain the person's business, housing, food, transportation, etc. How much should be given to his or her church. What other things could the person pay for: fixing playgrounds at the school, helping someone get to college. What extravagant things could the person buy: a new car, fancy clothes, etc. When you have put together the budget for the rich person, ask the class what they think of the choices.

Activity: Parable for Today

Invite the children to rewrite the parable for today. Who would the people in the story be and what would the debts be? What kind of person is the rich man? What kind of person is the manager? Etc.

Option: Journal. If your group is keeping journals, allow time for them to write in their journals. You could offer this topic for journaling: Here are some choices I am making to serve God.

Getting Closure: Ask the children if they know a person who has lots of money and is generous with it doing things they think are what God wants. If you know someone like this in your community, tell the children about that person. Invite them to think about ways in which they can be generous with whatever they have.

Closing Prayer: Thank you for good choices people make; help us to make good choices, too. Amen.

Luke 16:1-13

Narrator: Then Jesus said to the disciples,

Jesus: ‘There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. ²So he summoned him and said to him,

Rich Man: “What is this that I hear about you? Give me an account of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.”

Jesus: ³Then the manager said to himself,

Manager: “What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.”

Jesus: ⁵So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first,

Manager: “How much do you owe my master?”

Debtor 1: ⁶“A hundred jugs of olive oil.”

Manager: “Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.”

Jesus: ⁷Then he asked another,

Manager: “And how much do you owe?”

Debtor 2: “A hundred containers of wheat.”

Manager: “Take your bill and make it eighty.”

Jesus: ⁸And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. ⁹And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes. ¹⁰ ‘Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. ¹¹If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹²And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 20
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Luke 16:1-13

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

We simply have to choose. Will we do as God desires us to do, or will we cheat God (and ourselves) by ignoring what God expects of us? Will we give to God what is rightly God's? What are we doing to work toward serving God more fully?

Theme: Choosing Whom We Will Serve

Before Class: Today's Scripture is broken up into different "voices" for the reading (found below), so make enough copies for everyone in your group.

Beginning: Ask the class what they think of this statement: "The person who dies with the most toys wins." Our consumer culture blurs the distinction between need and want. Today's Scripture helps us notice what goes into choices.

Opening Prayer: Help us, God, to balance the needs we have and our desire to serve you. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 16:1-13 Invite individuals to read the passage for today.

Questions:

- What has the rich man discovered about his manager? (The manager is squandering the man's property.)
- What is the manager's response at being found out? (Panic. Unemployment insurance is not an option. He must find ways to ingratiate himself in his community so he does not have to dig ditches.)
- What is the scheme he has come up with? (Cutting each bill owed his boss in half or a portion thereof, thus gaining the gratitude of the various debtors.)
- Why do you think the rich man "commended" his manager? (He admires clever dealings — it is better to have collected some of what was owed rather than nothing at all.)
- In verse 9 Jesus is saying we could take a lesson from the dishonest manager. I wonder what lessons do you think he means for us to take? (To be as tenacious about our faith journey as the manager was about getting what he thought he needed.)
- I wonder whom else might Jesus have been addressing with this story? (Verse 14 indicates that the Pharisees were listening to this story.) Jesus says we will not be able to serve two

masters. "You cannot serve God and wealth." Discuss how you have found this to be true. Discuss how it might be possible to be wealthy and still serve God.

- I wonder how this story would be the same or different if Jesus told it today?

Getting Closure: Discuss what being tenacious about our faith looks like. What part do the outward signs play (praying for others, commitment of time and talent, showing up regularly for church, pledging a portion of our means, etc.)? What part do the inward signs play (staying in communication with God, noticing behavior modifications needed, etc.)?

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for your help as we set priorities in our lives. Be with us as we continually try to do what you call us to do in this world. Amen.

Luke 16:1-13

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