

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 22
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Luke 17:5-10

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

Slaves? Well, probably not any of us. Each of us, however, has clear duties to perform. Jesus points out that it is not a big deal to simply do our duty. Our choice is whether we grumble and whine or whether we do our work with gratitude and in faith.

Theme: Choosing To Do Our Work

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible or copies of the scripture for today.

Beginning: Ask the group to be thinking of a time they would have liked to ask Jesus face to face for more faith. As we get in touch with our own longings we can better identify with the disciples.

Opening Prayer: Help us, God, to be open to the opportunities you present to us to increase our faith in you. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 17:5-10 It is suggested you approach this passage in two segments. Invite one person to read verses 5 and 6 and then pause for a moment for people to reflect.

Verses 5-6: Approach the disciples request from three different possibilities: (1) They are frustrated because they feel inadequate. (2) They are humbly aware of how much farther they have to go to feel confident in their faith. (3) They have become confident that Jesus can do what they ask so they are bold.

Questions:

1. Frustration (Notice verses 1- 4 of Chapter 17 to see what they had just been told.)
 - a. Invite sharing of times we have felt a bit overwhelmed by what we have agreed to do for God.
 - b. Describe the sense of inadequacy. Describe the courage that came to accomplish the task.
2. Humility
 - a. Share times we have felt the need for "outside help" to enable us to do our task.
 - b. What helped us keep on going in these times?
3. Confidence
 - a. Share times we have felt bold to ask for help. What about the situation emboldened us?

Verses 7-10: Invite someone to read these verses.

Questions:

- Jesus uses a variety of teaching techniques as he works with the disciples. What might we guess is going on here? (Time is running out and Jesus is stepping up the intensity of the training? Jesus has decided to be more blunt with the disciples to get their attention? We do not know, we can only guess.)
- Since none of us is a slave and probably none of us has domestic servants, how can we bring this admonition of Jesus into our own situation? What things do we do because it falls to us to do them, and we do not expect to be thanked for doing them? (Parenting, doing the work we were hired to do, sharing in the work of our community.)
- Do we think Jesus really thinks of us as "worthless slaves?" (Could this be another piece of hyperbole — an exaggeration to grab our attention?)

Getting Closure: Invite the group to sit in silence for a few moments to notice work we do, grateful for the opportunity, willingly and not expecting praise or even much to be made of it. Notice how our faith is growing as we accept these responsibilities. Imagine Jesus telling us "No, not worthless slaves. You are beloved. Well done, faithful servant."

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that you do what is necessary to get our attention. Amen."

Luke 17:5-10

5 The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' ⁶The Lord replied, 'If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea", and it would obey you.

7 'Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, "Come here at once and take your place at the table"? ⁸Would you not rather say to him, "Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink"? ⁹Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? ¹⁰So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, "We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!" '

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