

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 22**  
**Lesson Plans for Older Children**

**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:** If you are going to do the option, you will need a candle in a holder, matches, a tablespoon, a small amount of vegetable oil (no more than a tablespoonful), and a few popcorn seeds. A bag of popped popcorn would be a welcome treat.

**Beginning:** Tell the children that we have two stories today: one about patience and one about whether to grumble or not.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, that you are patient with us as we figure out what you want us to do. Amen.

**The Story: Luke 17:5-10** Invite one child to read verses 5 and 6, and another to read 7-10.

**Questions: Verses 5-6**

- I wonder why the disciples are crying out to Jesus to "increase their faith?" (We are not sure, but here are some possibilities: they have become so aware of who Jesus is that they want to be more like him and feel inadequate, they think faith is something someone can just zap you with.)
- I wonder what you think of Jesus' answer? (Do they think Jesus really meant that if you have faith you can zap trees into the ocean? Why? Why not?)
- I wonder why Jesus used the mustard seed as the example of size of faith? (A mustard seed was one of the smallest seeds the disciples would have seen, but it grows to be a big bush.)
- What helps a tiny seed grow? (Water, good soil, even some fertilizer)
- What helps a person's faith to grow? (Paying attention to it, being with people who also have faith, doing the work you have been given to do.)
- I wonder what else helps a person's faith to grow? (Patience)

**Option:** Tell the children we have an experiment to show that patience takes some time. Ask them if they have ever sat and watched a popcorn seed pop? Assemble the supplies, light the

candle, pour a little bit of the oil in the tablespoon and add a few kernels of popcorn. Hold the spoon over the candle and wait!

**Questions: Verses 7-10**

- Since none of us are slaves, how could this story also be for us? (We have work to do and doing our work is not a big deal. It is what we are expected to do.)
- In what ways might verse 10 be hyperbole (an exaggeration)? Do we think Jesus really wants us to call ourselves "worthless?" If not, what might this mean? (Not making a big deal out of doing our job.)

**Activity:** Invite the children to act out this story using their school as the setting. Someone volunteers to be the teacher, and another to be a Grumpy Kid. Ask the other children to help these two actors figure out their parts. The teacher asks the children for reasonable things. Perhaps it is to collect all the papers, perhaps it is arrange the books on a table, or whatever the children notice is asked of them at school. The children can help the Grumpy Kid be as obnoxious as he can. Whatever the teacher asks, the Grumpy Kid does, but as unpleasantly as possible.

Then when this skit is complete, the class teacher becomes the “teacher” and all the children become the Cooperative Crew, each one more pleasant than the other. Tell them to act as if they were glad they were going to this school, that they like their teacher, enjoy learning, and so are happy to help with things the teacher asks.

When both skits are complete, ask the children how the two skits made them feel. What was kind of fun about pretending to be Grumpy? What was kind of uncomfortable about it? What would be the benefits of putting on a happy face? What did you like about being cooperative? What didn't you like?

**Option:** If you are using journals, allow time for the children to write their impressions in the journals. A potential topic for them to consider would be: Here are some things I can do to help that I really enjoy doing.

**Getting Closure:** Ask the children if they think it takes patience to do the work we have been given to do. Why? Why not?

**Closing Prayer:** Help us, God, to have the patience of a popcorn seed. Amen.

## **Luke 17:5-10**

5 The apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith!’<sup>6</sup>The 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”?<sup>8</sup>Would 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”?<sup>9</sup>Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded?<sup>10</sup>So 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!” ’

*Printed by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.*

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