

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 24
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Luke 18:1-8a

In the final 6 weeks of this Lectionary Year C, a firm and hopeful tone soars in Jesus' teachings in a rich symphony of themes. The background music of the Hebrew Scriptures holds the notes of the new covenant — a law written in our hearts rather than codified in legal structures — The Spirit poured out, a vision for the appointed time, God with us, a new heaven and a new earth, and a branch from the tree of David — the remnant gathered. We can believe that Jesus heard this cosmic music as he distilled his huge message to the disciples.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

Distilling the message of being faithful, Jesus seeks a way to teach his disciples: Do not give up! Do not lose hope! Perhaps Jesus, knowing the scope of God's abundance says, to himself, "Ah, here it is: a story about a stubborn judge and a woman who does not give up hope."

Theme: Pray Hopefully and Constantly

Before: You will need copies of the scripture for today or enough copies of the Bible. The Hebrew Scriptures (Track 1) for this season are so rich; you may want to include reading them in your session. You will also want to have copies of the Book of Common Prayer or copies for everyone of the "Devotions for Families and Individuals" section of the BCP, paper, and pens.

Beginning: Invite the group to think of a time that they hung in there, praying constantly and hopefully, for what may have seemed a long amount of time, and then realized their prayer had been answered.

Opening Prayer: Gracious God, we thank you for your presence and your love as we persistently come to you with petitions and thanksgivings. Guide us in our time today as we discover more about you and our prayers. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 18:1- 8a Invite someone to read the passage and then sit in quiet for a few moments.

Questions:

- I wonder what stood out for you in this passage?
- What is remarkable about the woman in this story? (Her courage, her tenacity, her insisting on being heard in a society that allotted women no rights.)
- Do you think Jesus is comparing the judge to God? Why? Why not? (The judge does hear and does change his mind. Yet, surely God is more accessible to the woman than the judge was. And if even this cruel judge can change his mind, so much more would we expect God to offer a different face than we expected.)
- Why do you think Jesus thought his disciples needed to hear this story? (Perhaps he wanted his disciples to believe that they could pray ceaselessly and not lose heart.)
- What was the prayer in this story? (For justice; a cause we believe God calls us to notice.)

- I wonder what might change when we pray?
- When what we pray for is not granted in the way we wanted, what might that mean?
- I wonder how we might change when we pray ceaselessly? How does God use our tenacity and our hope?

Option: The Hebrew Scripture appointed for today (for Track One) is Jeremiah 31:27-33. Read verse 33, which Jesus and possibly his disciples would have known, for insight into the Gospel.

Questions for Jeremiah 31:27-34:

- Since "I will be their God" has been the promise and "they shall be my people" the assurance, what insight does this passage provide? (Could it be that our God is as accessible as Jesus is trying to show his disciples?)
- I wonder what this might mean for us today?

Getting closure: Invite the group to reflect on prayer in their own lives. If they are not familiar with the *Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families* (Book of Common Prayer, pages 136-140) you might want to point these out for their use. If you have time, pass out paper and pens and invite them to create a prayer list of people, concerns, thanksgivings, etc. that they can keep at home to help in their prayer time. Suggest that the group keep notes, at home, for their eyes only, of things they are noticing about themselves that are changing as a result of consistent prayer.

Closing prayer: Thank you, God, for your assurance that you choose to be our God and claim us as your people. Help us to be prayerful and keep you close as we walk this journey. Amen.

Luke 18:1-8a

18Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. ²He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. ³In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, "Grant me justice against my opponent." ⁴For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, "Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, ⁵yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming." ' ⁶And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? ⁸I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?'

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