

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Eighth Sunday after Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Matthew 6:24-24

Because in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of your glory in the face of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
(Book of Common Prayer, page 378)

Accept the light we have received and shine it forth! It is not about shining the light in other's faces, blinding them, but holding the light in open hands.

A Notation for this Week's Gospel

Each decision we make, however trivial, is a choice. Our choices produce a pattern. We simply cannot serve two different bosses.

Theme: Do Not Worry about Tomorrow

Before: You will need Bibles or copies of the scripture for the each child.

For the Option that requires cookies you will need enough cookies for each child to have one. It also needs "stuff." The "stuff" could be things already in the classroom (boxes of crayons, books, etc.). It would be more fun if you could bring stuff children would want to have: CD players, a cell phone, a board game, etc. The object will be to see how much a child can hold in his/her own arms.

Beginning: Ask the children what is the difference between "I need" and "I want." (Give them time to respond.)

Opening Prayer: Help us, God, to see a difference between what we need and what we want. Help us to be thankful for what you give us. Amen.

The Story: Matthew 6: 24 – 34 You can invite each child to read one sentence and just go around the room. Alternatively, you can ask one or two children to share in reading the passage.

Questions:

- What do we think is the difference between having a job to make the money we need and "serving wealth?" (Spending all our energy to make more and more money and get more and more "stuff".)
- Do we think God doesn't want anyone to have a lot of money?
- What worthwhile things could people do, if they had a LOT of money?
- I wonder what it means to "be worried?" (Afraid you won't have what you need.)
- What special commercial brands of clothing are "in" at your school? (Accept what they offer.)
- What is the problem that "in" clothes can create? (Those who cannot afford them can be at least uncomfortable and at worst, scorned.)

Option: Scrounging “stuff”

Show the children what you have been able to acquire and ask for a volunteer to see how much they can grab and hold in their own arms. The other children can assist the child to pile it on, but not to help carry it. When the child is sufficiently burdened down with stuff, ask one child to pass the plate of cookies so each child may have a cookie. Ask the children how the burdened child will be able to take a cookie. (Probably, he/she will have to dump some of the stuff.) Then, ask the burdened child to describe what she/he had to do to be able to receive the gift of the cookie.

Option: Pile it On Relay

Divide the group into two groups. Tell one of them that their task is to see how much of the “stuff” they can carry from one end of the room to the other without dropping anything. Tell the other group that their task is to cross from one side of the room to the other with God’s word (the Bible). Once they are both ready, set them to the race.

Once they are done with the race, ask the whole group what it was like to be in the group they were in? What did they notice? What did they feel? What would they do differently if they were to do it again?

Getting Closure: Ask the children to brainstorm about what positive changes could happen in the world if people really tried to honor what Jesus is telling us today.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that you show us a better way. Help us not to be burdened by worry and objects, and guide us so we can see you and your gifts in our midst. Amen.

Matthew 6:24-34

24 ‘No one 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.

25 ‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” ³²For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

34 ‘So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

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