

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Season after Pentecost, Proper 9
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

In this season after Pentecost, we hear stories of Jesus' ministry in the world and our call to engage in that mission. This season is also known as Ordinary Time coming from the word "ordinal" which means counted time. This time is not ordinary as in common or regular, but it is the time of counted weeks between Pentecost and Advent. The color for this season is green and it is often referred to as the green growing time as we hear stories of what God is calling us to do in the world, we join in that call, and we grow in our faith.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel and Reading

Today's lesson comes from a section in Matthew where John the Baptist and Jesus are talking about what Jesus' ministry is going to be. John the Baptist had a different picture of what Jesus' ministry would bring to the world. People are comparing what John had said and what Jesus was doing and wondering about their ministry. We hear Jesus' response in our passage today. Jesus recognizes John's ministry and at the same time, he tells people that his ministry is different. John's ministry was filled with austerity (no food and drink) as it is a period of waiting and repentance, and Jesus' ministry is filled with celebration (eating and drinking) as it is the time of fulfillment. The final verses lead us to see that Jesus' ministry is also full of compassion and mercy.

Theme: My Yoke is Easy

Before Class: You will need Bibles or copies of the scripture for each child. You will need strips of cloth and markers. You will need two small buckets filled halfway with water, rope, and a piece of wood or something else that can serve as a yoke to tie the buckets to for the children to carry. Since water may be spilled, you may want to do this outside. Alternatively, you could fill the buckets with something else that is heavy (rocks, bricks, etc.) but make sure it is not too heavy so they can lift them without getting injured.

Beginning: Gather the children ask them if they have ever carried anything really heavy. What did that feel like?

Opening Prayer: Loving God, we ask you to be with us as we explore what your words mean for our lives. Guide us as we seek to understand your ministry among us and how you can ease our burdens. Amen.

The Story: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Today we have a story about Jesus telling the crowd about a new kind of life that involves following him. Jesus was in a crowd of people who were wondering how Jesus and John the Baptist could have been talking about living the same kind of life with God because John and Jesus did very different things. Jesus told them that John called them to fast and to do things very simply as a way to prepare for Jesus' coming. Now that Jesus was here among them, he was

showing them God's promise and God's way of life that included things like eating with all people, talking with everyone, and including everyone.

Jesus began to pray to God saying, "Thank you God for showing us how to live and how to celebrate our life with you. We know that you like to work in different ways than we are used to."

Jesus told the crowd around him, "What I am showing you and what I am doing comes directly from God. You cannot know me as well as God knows me, but you can know God through me and because of the things I teach you. If you are tired and if you feel like you are carrying heavy things in your heart or on your body, come to me. If you follow me, I will show you a different life where you can rest. Come with me, work with me so you can learn how I do it. I will show you how I help you when you are carrying heavy things or things that are difficult for you. I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Questions:

- I wonder what you heard in today's lesson?
- I wonder what Jesus meant when he told them that they should come with him to learn how to carry heavy things.
- I wonder what how Jesus helps us find rest in our souls.
- Do you know what a yoke is? (see picture)

Activity: Being Yoked

Ask the children if they have ever carried anything that is really heavy using just their hands. What happens to your hands when you are carrying something heavy? They get tired, cramped, sweaty, and blistered.

Invite them to try to pick up the bucket filled with water (without the yoke) and carry it across the room. Ask them if they think they could carry it a long distance.



Then, attach the buckets of water to the yoke/board. Invite one of the children to try to carry that across the room. Was that easier or harder than just carrying the bucket alone?

A yoke is something that helps lighten our load and that helps us carry heavy things. In our reading today, Jesus said that "his yoke was easy and his burden was light."

- I wonder what that means.
- I wonder what it means that Jesus helps us carry our heavy burdens?
- How might Jesus help us do that?
- What burdens does Christ help us carry?

The stoles that a priest wears has the symbol of being yoked, reminding us of the burdens that Christ helps us carry. Give each child a strip of cloth to symbolize their yoke. Invite them to write or draw what things Jesus helps them carry.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share what they created.

Closing Prayer: Loving God, thank you for helping us carry our burdens and for showing us celebration, compassion, and mercy. Guide our ears, eyes, mouth, hands, and feet that we may engage in your mission in the world. Amen.

Written by The Rev. Shannon Kelly

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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Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Season after Pentecost, Proper 9
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

In this season after Pentecost, we hear stories of Jesus' ministry in the world and our call to engage in that mission. This season is also known as Ordinary Time coming from the word "ordinal" which means counted time. This time is not ordinary as in common or regular, but it is the time of counted weeks between Pentecost and Advent. The color for this season is green and it is often referred to as the green growing time as we hear stories of what God is calling us to do in the world, we join in that call, and we grow in our faith.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel and Reading

Today's lesson comes from a section in Matthew where John the Baptist and Jesus are talking about what Jesus' ministry is going to be. John the Baptist had a different picture of what Jesus' ministry would bring to the world. People are comparing what John had said and what Jesus was doing and wondering about their ministry. We hear Jesus' response in our passage today. Jesus recognizes John's ministry and at the same time, he tells people that his ministry is different. John's ministry was filled with austerity (no food and drink) as it is a period of waiting and repentance, and Jesus' ministry is filled with celebration (eating and drinking) as it is the time of fulfillment. The final verses lead us to see that Jesus' ministry is also full of compassion and mercy.

Theme: My Yoke is Easy

Before Class: You will need Bibles or copies of the scripture for each child. You will need strips of cloth and markers. You will need two small/medium buckets filled halfway with water, rope, and a piece of wood or something else that can serve as a yoke to tie the buckets to for the children to carry. Since water may be spilled, you may want to do this outside. Alternatively, you could fill the buckets with something else that is heavy (rocks, bricks, etc.) but make sure it is not too heavy so they can lift them without getting injured.

Beginning: Gather the children ask them if they have ever carried anything really heavy. What did that feel like?

Opening Prayer: Loving God, we ask you to be with us as we explore what your words mean for our lives. Guide us as we seek to understand your ministry among us and how you can ease our burdens. Amen.

The Story: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Invite someone to read the lesson for today. If you have time, you can read it from two different translations and note how they are different.

Questions:

- I wonder what you heard in today's lesson?
- I wonder if you know what Jesus meant when he said, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
- Do you know what a yoke is? (see picture)

Activity: Being Yoked

Ask the children if they have ever carried anything that is really heavy using just their hands. What happens to your hands when you are carrying something heavy? They get tired, cramped, sweaty, and blistered. Invite them to try to pick up the bucket filled with water (without the yoke) and carry it across the room. Ask them if they think they could carry it a long distance.



Then, attach the buckets of water to the yoke/board. Invite one of the children to try to carry that across the room. Was that easier or harder than just carrying the bucket alone?

A yoke is something that helps lighten our load and that helps us carry heavy things. In our reading today, Jesus said that "his yoke was easy and his burden was light."

- I wonder what that means.
- I wonder what it means that Jesus helps us carry our heavy burdens?
- How might Jesus help us do that?
- What burdens does Christ help us carry?

The stoles that a priest wears has the symbol of being yoked, reminding us of the burdens that Christ helps us carry. Give each child a strip of cloth to symbolize their yoke. Invite them to write or draw what things Jesus helps them carry.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share what they created.

Closing Prayer: Loving God, thank you for helping us carry our burdens and for showing us celebration, compassion, and mercy. Guide our ears, eyes, mouth, hands, and feet that we may engage in your mission in the world. Amen.

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Jesus said to the crowd, "To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

`We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;

we wailed, and you did not mourn.'

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, `He has a demon'; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, `Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Written by The Rev. Shannon Kelly

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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Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Season after Pentecost, Proper 9
Gospel Lesson for Adults

Scripture: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

In this season after Pentecost, we hear stories of Jesus' ministry in the world and our call to engage in that mission. This season is also known as Ordinary Time coming from the word "ordinal" which means counted time. This time is not ordinary as in common or regular, but it is the time of counted weeks between Pentecost and Advent. The color for this season is green and it is often referred to as the green growing time as we hear stories of what God is calling us to do in the world, we join in that call, and we grow in our faith.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel and Reading

Today's lesson comes from a section in Matthew where John the Baptist and Jesus are talking about what Jesus' ministry is going to be. John the Baptist had a different picture of what Jesus' ministry would bring to the world. People are comparing what John had said and what Jesus was doing and wondering about their ministry. We hear Jesus' response in our passage today. Jesus recognizes John's ministry and at the same time, he tells people that his ministry is different. John's ministry was filled with austerity (no food and drink) as it is a period of waiting and repentance, and Jesus' ministry is filled with celebration (eating and drinking) as it is the time of fulfillment. The final verses lead us to see that Jesus' ministry is also full of compassion and mercy.

Theme: My Yoke is Easy

Before Class: You will need two different translations of today's reading.

Beginning: Invite everyone to gather and paraphrase for them the Notation for This Week's Gospel so they can understand what comes before this and that Jesus is really framing his ministry in light of John's preparation and witness, even though it is different than what John thought it would be.

Opening Prayer: Loving God, we ask you to be with us as we explore what your words mean for our lives. Guide us as we seek to understand how you are to live and move among us. Amen.

The Scripture: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

You will be reading the lesson today twice and will need two different readers. Think about having two very different voices read this such as male or female, young or old. Before reading the lesson the first time, invite people to listen for a word or phrase that stood out for them.

Invite the first reader to read the lesson.

After a few moments of silence, invite the group to say what word or phrase stood out for them.

When you feel everyone has shared, invite the group to listen once more and to listen for what Jesus is saying to them. Invite the second reader to read the lesson.

After a few moments of silence, invite the group to say what they heard Jesus saying to them.

After everyone has shared, you can begin with the questions or go to the activity.

Questions:

- I wonder what this Gospel stirs in us?
- I wonder what questions this Gospel brings up for us?
- One of Jesus' famous sayings is at the end of this Gospel, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." What does this mean for you? If they do not understand what a yoke is, tell them that it is a piece of wood that you put over your shoulders and attach heavy things (like buckets of water) to either side. It helps distribute the weight and make things easier to carry long distances. A yoke is also used to tie two animals together. (see Older Children's Lesson for illustrations)
- If this is part of Jesus' ministry, how are we also living into this as Christ's hands and feet in the world?
- I wonder how we are taking on Jesus' yoke?

Activity: Compare and Contrast

From what we know about John the Baptist and Jesus, I wonder how we can compare and contrast them to one another? Take some time to look at their birth, life, and ministry. Where are their ministries the same, where are they not, and where do they intersect?

Getting Closure: Invite them to share what stood out for them in our discussion today.

Closing Prayer: Loving God, help us understand how you work differently in the world and to see you in the celebration, compassion, and mercy we encounter. Help us to hear and see your messengers in our midst. Guide our ears, eyes, mouth, hands, and feet that we may engage in your mission in the world. Amen.

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Jesus said to the crowd, "To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,
'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not mourn.'

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"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

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