

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Season after Pentecost, Proper 14
Gospel Lesson for Adults

Scripture: Matthew 14:22-33

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 Gospel lesson comes on the tails of the feeding of the 5,000. Imagine being a disciple and having fed that many people, having seen the miracle of the loaves and fishes, and now being in a boat going to the other side of the lake. Jesus stayed behind to dismiss the crowds and then went up the mountain to pray. This story has many important things for us to take away as we grow in becoming disciples.

Theme: Do Not Be Afraid

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

Beginning: Invite the group to gather together and talk about a time when they may have encountered God.

Opening Prayer: Loving God, we ask you to be with us as we explore what your words mean for our lives. Help us to grow in our belief and to not be afraid of the things you call us to do. Amen.

The Scripture: Matthew 14:22-33

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.

Tell them that this is a well-known story, and invite them to listen with new ears.

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?
- Was there something new you heard in this story this time?
- Notice that Jesus dismisses the disciples to go on ahead of him as he dismisses the crowds and then goes up the mountain to pray. What can we take away from that?
- The phrase, “do not be afraid” is said many times throughout the Gospels. Why do you think that is? What might people have feared?
- I wonder if each of you feels like you would have been like Peter who tried to walk on water and lost faith or like the other disciples who stayed in the boat? Where would you have fit into this story?

Activity: Modern Retelling

Split the group into smaller groups and invite them to think about how this story may be told if it were told in today’s culture. If this was a modern retelling, what would be different? What would be the same.

Getting Closure: Invite the group back together and let them share the modern stories they came up with or their ideas about what might be different and the same in the story.

Closing Prayer: Loving God, help us to not be afraid as we encounter you in unexpected places in the world. Guide our ears, eyes, mouth, hands, and feet that we may engage in your mission in the world. Amen.

Matthew 14:22-33

²²Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.” ²⁸Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” ²⁹He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” ³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

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