

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Season after Pentecost, Proper 15
Gospel Lesson for Younger Children

Scripture: Matthew 15:10-28

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

As we continue the journey with Jesus and the disciples, we first get a lesson about what is clean and unclean. Jesus’ words are important for us all to remember – that our words come from our heart and what comes from our mouths speaks of who we are and our intentions. Following this parable, Jesus encounters a woman from Tyre and Sidon who had somehow heard of his teaching and healing. She comes to him, speaking words from her heart, showing Jesus that she truly believes even though she is not from Israel. He heals her because of her deep faith.

Theme: Words from our Heart

Before Class: Note: Because of the complicated nature of the lesson today, we will focus on the first part of the story with the younger children. You will need half-sheets of construction paper in various colors, markers, and crayons. You will need easel paper or a blackboard.

Beginning: Invite the children to gather together in a circle. Ask them how they feel when someone says something nice? Then ask how they feel when someone says something that is not nice, is mean, or is unkind?

Opening Prayer: Loving God, be with us as we explore what your words mean for us and for others. Help us to grow in our belief in you and not be afraid to tell others of your power and love. Amen.

The Scripture: Matthew 15:10-28

Our story begins today with Jesus calling the crowd to him and telling them to listen to what he is about to say, because it is important. He reminded them that they have many rules about what they can or cannot eat and many people get so worried about following those rules that they forget what is really important. He said, “What goes into the mouth (like food) is not what makes people ruined or bad, but it is what comes out of their mouth that can ruin them.”

The disciples did not understand and were worried about who might have been upset by him saying this. Jesus told them not to worry about those who were upset. Peter asked for Jesus to tell them what the story meant so that they could better understand.

Jesus said, “Whatever we eat goes into the stomach and is digested and it cannot ruin us. But the things that come out of our mouths come from the heart. These words can ruin people if they are mean or evil. The evil and mean words can ruin them and those around them.

Reflection:

In this story, Jesus was reminding the people around them that words come from our heart, from our soul. These are the things that tell others about who we are and what is important to us. Our words can tell people of love and kindness and Jesus’ power or they can be mean and rude and hurtful.

Let’s make a list of all the words that come from our hearts that tell us about who Jesus is. (Write the words up on the easel paper or white board for those children that can read. Example: Love, joy, grace, prayer, peace, friend, teacher, thank you, I like you, let me help you, etc.)

Activity: Showing our Words

Give the children the half-sheets of construction paper you have cut out and invite them to write words or draw pictures that tell about what their heart would say to Jesus. What words would they use if they were talking with Jesus? What would it look like?

Activity: Loving Words

Invite the children to sit in a circle. Tell them that we are going to practice using our words of love and kindness to show the love and kindness in our hearts. Invite each child to say one thing in love and kindness about Jesus. If you have time, you can also have them say kind words to one another.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share what they came up with in the “Showing our Words” and take their papers home as a reminder of the power of using words to profess our faith and our love to one another.

Closing Prayer: Loving God, help us to not be afraid as we encounter you in the paths of our lives. 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

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Season after Pentecost, Proper 15
Gospel Lesson for Older Children

Scripture: Matthew 15:(10-20) 21-28

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

As we continue the journey with Jesus and the disciples, we first get a lesson about what is clean and unclean. Jesus' words are important for us all to remember – that our words come from our heart and what comes from our mouths speaks of who we are and our intentions. Following this parable, Jesus encounters a woman from Tyre and Sidon who had somehow heard of his teaching and healing. She comes to him, speaking words from her heart, showing Jesus that she truly believes even though she is not from Israel. He heals her because of her deep faith.

Theme: Words from our Heart

Before Class: You will need the scripture for today. You will need half-sheets of construction paper in various colors, markers, and pencils.

Beginning: Invite the children to gather together in a circle. Ask them what it is like when someone says something nice – how do they feel? Then ask how they feel when someone says something that is not nice, is mean, or is unkind?

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

The Scripture: Matthew 15:(10-20) 21-28

Invite two children to read the lesson. The first will read verses 10-20, the second will read vs. 21-28.

Alternatively, you can have many readers and follow the script found at the end of the lesson.

Reflection Questions:

There are two stories...first let us look at the story Jesus tells us.

- The Old Testament had MANY cleanliness rules, the rules about what one should eat and not eat, I wonder what the crowd's reaction was when Jesus said that it mattered not what they ate?
- I wonder if it made them confused or angry?

- Now that Jesus caught their attention, he now tells them what does matter – and that is our words. I wonder what he means by this? (possibly those who were say bad things and treat people horribly, but make sure they abide by all the rules in the Bible?)
- Do words matter for us today?
- How does what we say tell people about who we are?

The second part of the Gospel is the story about the Canaanite woman from Tyre and Sidon who comes to him begging Jesus to heal her daughter.

- At first, Jesus tries to ignore her because she is not from Israel. His response is confusing because he does not speak to her, nor does he send her away. What might this be about? (Might he be using this moment as a teaching tool? As a way to hear the words from her heart – the same words he was just telling others about in his teaching? Might he want to know what she has to say?)
- The woman kneels before Jesus, just as people knelt before kings and royalty, showing that she recognizes his power and that she needs his help. He tries to turn her away. Why do you think he tried to turn her away? (He wanted to focus on his mission to the people Israel.)
- When she persists and shows her deep faith. She tells him that even if she only has a crumb, the smallest amount of possible, that her daughter will be healed. What does this say about her belief in Jesus' power? (even the smallest amount could take on a demon, her faith in his power was strong.)
- Jesus praises her faith and heals her daughter. This woman was brave for standing up to Jesus and showing him her faith. I wonder how we can show our faith in the same way today.
- I wonder how the words that come from our hearts are showing our faith in Jesus.

Activity: Showing our Words

Invite the children to brainstorm what they might say to Jesus to show them what was in their hearts. If our hearts reveal who we are and our words come from our hearts, what do they have to say to Jesus? Give them time to respond and brainstorm.

Give the children the half-sheets of construction paper you have cut out and invite them to write words or draw pictures that tell about what their heart would say to Jesus. What words would they use if they were kneeling before Jesus?

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share what they came up with and take their papers home as a reminder of the power of using words to profess our faith and our love to one another.

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

Script for Matthew 15:(10-20) 21-28

Narrator: Then Jesus called the crowd to him and said to them,

Jesus: “Listen and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.”

Narrator: Then the disciples approached and said to him,

Disciples: “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?”

Jesus: “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.”

Narrator: But Peter said to him,

Peter: “Explain this parable to us.”

Jesus: “Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”

Narrator: Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting,

Woman: “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.”

Narrator: But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying,

Disciples: “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.”

Jesus: “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Narrator: But she came and knelt before him, saying,

Woman: “Lord, help me.”

Jesus: “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”

Woman: “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”

Jesus: “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

Written by The Rev. Shannon Kelly

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Season after Pentecost, Proper 15
Gospel Lesson for Adults

Scripture: Matthew 15:(10-20) 21-28

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A Notation for This Week's Gospel and Reading

As we continue the journey with Jesus and the disciples, we first get a lesson about what is clean and unclean. Jesus' words are important for us all to remember – that our words come from our heart and what comes from our mouths speaks of who we are and our intentions. Following this parable, Jesus encounters a woman from Tyre and Sidon who had somehow heard of his teaching and healing. She comes to him, speaking words from her heart, showing Jesus that she truly believes even though she is not from Israel. He heals her because of her deep faith.

Theme: Words from our Heart

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 experienced the power of a kind or powerful word.

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

The Scripture: Matthew 15:(10-20) 21-28

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.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what this Gospel stirs in us?
- I wonder what questions this Gospel brings up for us?

There are two stories...first let us look at the story Jesus tells us.

- Knowing all of the cleanliness rules of the Old Testament, the rules about what one should eat and not eat, I wonder what the crowd's reaction was when Jesus said that it mattered not what they ate?
- Having caught their attention, he now tells them what does matter – and that is our words. I wonder what he may have been pointing to in talking about this? (possibly those who were say bad things and treat people horribly, but make sure they abide by all the rules in the Bible?)
- What does this mean for us today?

The second part of the Gospel is the story about the Canaanite woman from Tyre and Sidon who comes to him begging Jesus to heal her daughter.

- At first, Jesus tries to ignore her because she is not from Israel. His response is perplexing at best. He does not speak to her, nor does he send her away. What might this be about? (Might he be using this moment as a teaching tool? As a way to hear the words from her heart – the same words he was just telling others about in his teaching? Might he want to know what she has to say?)
- The woman kneels before Jesus, just as people knelt before kings and royalty, showing that she recognizes his power and that she needs his help. He tries to turn her away. Why do you think he tried to turn her away? (He wanted to focus on his mission to Israel.)
- When she persists and shows her deep faith. She tells him that even if she only has a crumb, the smallest amount of possible, that her daughter will be healed. What does this say about her belief in Jesus' power? (even the smallest amount could take on a demon, her faith in his power was strong.)
- Jesus praises her faith and heals her daughter. This woman was brave for standing up to Jesus and showing him her faith. I wonder how we can show our faith in the same way today.
- I wonder how the words that come from our hearts are showing our faith in Jesus.

Getting Closure: Invite the group to think about how they can use their words that week to profess and show their faith.

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

Matthew 15:(10-20) 21-28

[¹⁰Then Jesus called the crowd to him and said to them, “Listen and understand: ¹¹it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.” ¹²Then the disciples approached and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?” ¹³He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.” ¹⁵But Peter said to him, “Explain this parable to us.” ¹⁶Then he said, “Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? ¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”]

²¹Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²²Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” ²³But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” ²⁴He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” ²⁵But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” ²⁶He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁷She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” ²⁸Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

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