

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Season after Pentecost, Proper 16
Gospel Lesson for Adults

Scripture: Matthew 16:13-20

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

After much instruction, story-telling, miracles, encounters, and prayer, Jesus finally asks two big questions to his disciples – Who do people say the Son of Man is? And Who do you say that I am. Whenever Jesus asks questions in the Gospels, it often has a way of marking an important teaching or an important moment, so we better pay attention. Questions are how Jesus can gauge how his mission in the world is going. Are the disciples and the people understanding who he is? What do they say about him and what he is doing? Who do they say he is?

Theme: Who Do You Say That I Am?

Before Class: You will need copies of the script below for today's reading. You may also want to have a rock for each person in the class for the Closing.

Beginning: Invite the group to gather together. Ask them to think about the ways we describe people when we are asked by someone, "Who is that?" Invite them to share the descriptors that come to mind for them.

Opening Prayer: Loving God, we ask you to be with us as we explore who you are for us and for the world. Help us to grow in our belief and not be afraid to speak of your power and love. Amen.

The Scripture: Matthew 16:13-20

You will need four readers today for each of the parts in the script below.

Reflection Questions:

- Jesus begins to question the disciples today, asking first, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" Why do you think he wants to know this? (it is good to know what people are thinking and hearing when you are trying to get a message across, Jesus was probably curious, or he wanted to hear them say it)
- Then he drops the big question, "Who do you say that I am?" I wonder why he wanted to hear the answer to this question? (to see their response, maybe to see who would answer, to see if all his teaching was possibly getting through to his disciples)

- Simon Peter answers boldly and correctly, “You are the Messiah.” Do you think it was hard for him to say that? Why or why not?
- I wonder what we would say if Jesus asked us the question, “Who do you say that I am?”
- Jesus tells Peter that his is the rock upon which he will build the church. What do you think that means? (Jesus trusts Peter to take the message forward because he has heard what Peter believes and professes)

Getting Closure: Invite the group to think about how each of them might we also be the rock upon which Jesus builds the church. Give them each a rock to remind them that they are a part of the church Jesus is building.

Closing Prayer: Loving God, help us to not be afraid to profess who you are so that we can be the rocks upon which you build the church. Guide our ears, eyes, mouth, hands, and feet that we may engage in your mission in the world. Amen.

Matthew 16:13-20

Narrator: Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples,

Jesus: “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

Narrator: And they said,

Disciples: “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

Jesus: “But who do you say that I am?”

Narrator: Simon Peter answered,

Simon Peter: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus: “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Narrator: Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

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