

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

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 will need a rock for each child, paint or markers, a roll of paper, and art supplies.

Beginning: Invite the children to gather together. Ask if they have ever been 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:

- I wonder what stuck out for you as you listened to the story?
- I wonder what questions it brought up for you?
- Why do you think Jesus wanted to know what people were saying about the Son of Man? (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)
- I wonder why Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" (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 Jesus boldly and correctly, “You are the Messiah.” I wonder if 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)

Activity: Who Do You Say that I Am Wall

Brainstorm with the children...who do they say Jesus is? If Jesus asked them that question what would they say? If someone else asked them who Jesus was, what would they say?

After brainstorming a bit, invite the children to create a mural with the roll of paper that tells people who Jesus is. They can use pictures, words, illustrations, and various art supplies to get the message across. You may want to invite one of them to write across the top, “Jesus asks, ‘Who do you say that I am?’” If you can hang it up in a place where others will see it, it will strike up some good conversation. Perhaps where you have coffee hour?

Activity: You are the Rock

Give each child a rock. Tell them that they, like Peter, are the rock upon which Jesus builds the church. Invite them to decorate their rock in a way that will remind them that they are a rock upon which Jesus builds his church. They could paint their name, words that remind them who Jesus calls them to be, they could paint Jesus’ name, etc.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to gather together and share what they created. They can take their rocks home and tell their parents about it.

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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