

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 10
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Mark 6:14-29

Background: During this “Ordinary Time” our lives may well include exceptionally un-ordinary events, such as births and deaths. As we take this journey, nourished by the scriptures appointed for the season and empowered by our baptisms, we are invited to be on the lookout for all the blessings found in the ordinary – to see God at work here and now. And we are compelled to share our blessings with others.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

A birthday party, a fancy banquet -- Herod is having a grand time. A beautiful woman dances. Herod flamboyantly promises her whatever she wants in gratitude for her dance. She wants what? Herod is stuck with his promise; his decision has consequences. John the Baptist's death casts a shadow across the hearts of the disciples of Jesus.

Theme: Blessed

Before Class: Our focus today is a departure from the lectionary gospel, since the story of the beheading of John the Baptist is not appropriate for young children. Therefore, if you are combining young and older children, we would suggest you use this lesson plan for younger children.

You will need the paper bag with samples of craft items the children may have made during the past 6 weeks to provide you with the props for an instant review. If you have the supplies needed to make more, assemble them and have them with you. In addition, it would be good to have sidewalk chalk if you have older children with you and can go outside. If you will be outside, bring along a picnic blanket to sit on. Also, tissue paper and chenille stems will be needed.

Beginning: Invite the children to sit in a circle. Ask them if they did anything fun over the last week.

Praying: Thank you, Jesus, for the time we are having together this summer, for the friends you send us to share with and for the stories about you that we have explored. Amen.

The Story: If your group did not meet on the Sunday of any of the stories below, either skip it or briefly tell the story using the lesson plan or your own storytelling method.

(Pentecost) A Bubble Wand and a Bottle of Bubble Liquid: When we blew on the wands, we made wind to make bubbles. Can anyone remember what that "wind" reminded us about? Can anyone remember what the word “Pentecost” means? Remember that the friends of Jesus were so excited they thought they could see fire over each other's head. Take some time to play with the bubbles, especially if the older children had not had the chance. Go outside, if you can!

(Trinity Sunday) Three Chenille Rings Intertwined: Ask the children who the three circles remind us of. Tell them one is God the Father, and ask who another one is. If they guess Jesus, see if you can get them to remember that the third part of the Trinity is the Holy Spirit. If you have sufficient chenille stems, the younger children can show the older ones how to make these symbols. Then have one child clasp his or her hands out in front as if hugging a tree, then the next child links his or her arms through that child's arms and then clasps his hands. A third child completes the symbol. Keep going until each child has had a chance to participate.

(Proper 7) The Felt Pillow: Ask the children who was asleep in a boat while the other men in the boat were scared because their little boat was tossing in the storm. Who was the one who slept through it all? Ask the children to act out the story for you. If you can go outside, take a picnic blanket with you to serve as a boat.

(Proper 8) Flowers: Ask the children if they remember who was sick and then got well when they were touched by Jesus. This happened to two people: a woman, and a little girl. Ask for volunteers to act out the story of the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment and the little girl who got up and had a snack after being so sick her Daddy thought she was going to die. If you have time, the children can make flowers out of tissue paper and chenille stems. They can give the flowers to someone or keep them to remember to pray for someone who is sick.

(Proper 9) A Friendship Bracelet: Ask the children if they can remember the story about Jesus that went with the friendship bracelet. Give them the hint of "two-by-two." Ask if they can remember what Jesus told his friends to take with them when they went out to tell the story. Two children can act out the part of two friends and come to tell us the story. The rest of the group can first tell them to go away, shut the door, and choose not to listen. Ask if they remember what Jesus told them to do with their sandals if no one would listen. Then ask the two children to come again, and this time have the other children welcome them. You could also make more friendship bracelets using chenille stems and beads.

Getting Closure: Snacks would be good for closure, or the children could take the sidewalk chalk and draw pictures of stories they had explored.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for this time we have had together. Thank you for (name each child present). Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 10
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Mark 6:14-29

Background: During this “Ordinary Time” our lives may well include exceptionally un-ordinary events, such as births and deaths. As we take this journey, nourished by the scriptures appointed for the season and empowered by our baptisms, we are invited to be on the lookout for all the blessings found in the ordinary – to see God at work here and now. And we are compelled to share our blessings with others.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

A birthday party, a fancy banquet -- Herod is having a grand time. A beautiful woman dances. Herod flamboyantly promises her whatever she wants in gratitude for her dance. She wants what? Herod is stuck with his promise; his decision has consequences. John the Baptist's death casts a shadow across the hearts of the disciples of Jesus.

Theme: God is There in Good and Bad

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible or copies of the scripture for each child, paper, envelopes, and pens or pencils. If you are combining younger children with older children, we recommend you use the lesson plan for younger children.

Beginning: Invite the children to gather in a circle. Ask them if they have ever asked for a present and then been disappointed when they actually got it.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for not leaving us alone, even when our behavior is not good. Amen.

The Story: Mark 6:14-29 (see below for scripture) Tell the children that we have a difficult story today, but we will look at it together and learn from it. Invite a child to read the passage or split it into sections and invite multiple children to read.

Reflection Questions:

- Who are the characters in the story?
- How did John the Baptist die?
- Who asked for John the Baptist's head?
- What did Herodias’ daughter do to get to ask whatever she wanted?
- What was the involvement of Herodias?
- What did the disciples do when they found out what had happened?
- I wonder what questions you have about this story?
- I wonder if you have ever asked for something and then regretted it?

Activity: Ask the children if they know what “temptation” means. Brainstorm with the children to come up with temptations and then come up with strategies for dealing with them.

Examples:

- You and your friends are at a convenience store, and it would be easy to stuff a candy bar in your pocket.
- You notice you can see that brainy kid's paper as you are taking a test.
- You are at a discount store and an especially attractive toy would slip into a backpack.
- Some friends have a pack of cigarettes and offer you one.

What can we do to help each other when we have tempting trouble in our face? How can having a friend we share good times and hard times with help us when we face temptations?

Option: If your church has a mentoring program, you may want to use this option. Sometimes it helps to have an adult, in addition to our parents, to talk things over with. Invite the children to think about someone in their church they really like and trust who could be a mentor. Tell them they do not need to tell you who that person is, just to think about it. Most parents are pleased if their children want another adult to talk to about things.

Getting Closure: Give each child a sheet of paper, an envelope, and a writing utensil. Invite them to write down (for their eyes only) strategies they think would help them avoid temptation. Make sure each child has sufficient privacy.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for always giving us someone we can turn to when we have to make hard decisions. Amen.

Mark 6:14-29

King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 10
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Mark 6:14-29

Background: During this “Ordinary Time” our lives may well include exceptionally un-ordinary events, such as births and deaths. As we take this journey, nourished by the scriptures appointed for the season and empowered by our baptisms, we are invited to be on the lookout for all the blessings found in the ordinary – to see God at work here and now. And we are compelled to share our blessings with others.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

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Theme: God is There in Good and Bad

Before Class: You will need copies of the scripture and copies of the Books of Common Prayer for the group. Talk with the teachers for the younger children and older children to find out their plans for this lesson.

Beginning: Tell the group (especially if they have young children in a class today) that this is a hard passage to read and the younger children will be doing a review of past stories rather than dealing with this one. Older children will read the passage and look for strategies to help overcome temptations that confront them. If there is a mentoring program, especially connected to a confirmation program in your church, the older children have been asked to think about an adult friend to talk with in addition to talking with their parents.

Opening Prayer: Grant us the wisdom, Dear God, to avoid temptation. Guide us today as we discuss and wonder about your word. Amen.

The Scripture: Mark 6:14-29 Invite volunteers to read the parts of the narrator, King Herod, and Herodias.

Reflection Questions:

- What stands out for you in this passage?
- Verses 14-16 clearly happen after verses 17-29, something of a flashback. I wonder if Herod had misgivings about the death of John the Baptist or whether he simply is frightened.
- Why did Herod want John the Baptist dead? (See verse 18.) Notice the conflict Herod was experiencing. (See verse 20.)
- What do you think caused Herod to make this incredible offer to Herodias? (Pompousness? A bit too much wine? Confidence in his position?)

- What do you think went through the head of the girl who was told to ask for the head of John the Baptist?
- When the disciples came to get the body of John, what did they do with it?
- In today's headlines, it is easy to find examples of people taking advantage of their political power. In what ways do each of us use our power to get what we want?
- What are the ways in which we can use the power we might have?

Getting Closure: Pass out copies of The Book of Common Prayer and direct the group to pages 447–452, which contains a process for unloading indiscretions that may be weighing on our hearts. (The purpose is not to conduct the rite of reconciliation, but to make sure people are aware of its presence.)

Closing Prayer: Our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive us our sins by the grace of the Holy Spirit and direct us in all we do that we may serve you today and always. Amen.

Mark 6:14-29

Narrator: King Herod heard of Jesus, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it, he said,

King Herod: "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

Narrator: For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl,

King Herod: "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it. Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom."

Narrator: She went out and said to her mother,

Herodias: "What should I ask for?"

Mother: "The head of John the baptizer."

Narrator: Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested,

Herodias: "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

Narrator: The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

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