

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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