

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 11
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

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

The passage from Mark that we have in this set of sessions seems to be telling us, amid all that shows up in our lives, to take time to breathe. Find space to just be. Perhaps it is a walk with a child, time puttering in a garden, or going fishing. We recharge our cell phones so they can keep serving us. Take a lesson from the cell phone: breathe and revitalize.

Theme: Rest and Healing

Before: If it is not possible to take the children outside for today’s lesson, seek a place inside with space for running and resting. If you are combining classes with older children, let the younger children play the game while the older children prepare the play that they will present to the younger children. Then the younger children can teach the game to the older ones.

Beginning: First, be sure you know the name of each child and that the children all know each other. If they do not, spend some time getting to know each other with fun questions, such as “Who has a dog?” “Who has a cat?” “Who has gone on a vacation this summer?”

Ask the children if they ever had to take a nap when they were little children. (Some might volunteer that they still do take naps.) Ask them to think of times when we are quiet. (With a book on a hot afternoon? When a story is read to us before bedtime?) Tell the children that Jesus understood that he needed to take time away by himself to rest, to pray, and to check in with God.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for this time we have today to be together, to hear about Jesus, to play, and to rest. Amen.

The Story: Jesus and his friends had been working hard. They had traveled all over the countryside to tell people many things about God, and they helped people who were sick to get well. Jesus was tired and the disciples were tired. Jesus said to them, "Let's go someplace where we can rest," So his friends got in a boat to go to the other side of the lake. Jesus came along later. Jesus had some time to just rest and be quiet with God.

Deep Breathing: Ask each child to claim a space big enough to stretch arms out wide without touching another person. Once each child has created a space, ask if they have ever seen a jogger

waiting at a stoplight. How does the jogger keep on “running” even though she is stuck in one place? (If they do not know, show them how to run in place.) Run in place with the children for a minute or two. Then tell them to stop and breath deeply. Have everyone sit down, legs stretched out in front with hands placed directly behind. Take a deep breath. Then hug your knees with your arms and exhale. Sit and rest a minute. Repeat, if you want, or just sit and enjoy the resting.

Imagine: If you have time, tell the children they are going to pretend they are on the very best vacation ever, and they can go wherever they want -- because it will be in their imagination. For instance, if you find want to be near the ocean, pretend to be at the beach. What will they find there? Water to play in? Sand to make sand castles with? Make some pretend sand castles. Now do more deep breathing. If you want to be in the mountains, pretend to climb a high mountain and rest at the top. While you are enjoying the imaginary view, do some deep breathing. If the children suggest imagining they are in Disneyland, be sure to help them imagine what they would do there and make time to rest and breath deeply.

If the older children have prepared the story to present, the younger children will be the audience. Then they can show the older ones how to do deep breathing.

Getting Closure: When we find a place to just be quiet and rest, we can also tell God things we want God to hear from us. We can ask God for things we need. We can thank God for things that make us glad. Invite the children to think about these things and help come up with the closing prayer.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for the times we can be still and just be with you. (Include what the children have offered in this prayer.) Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 11
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

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.

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The passage from Mark that we have in this set of sessions seems to be telling us, amid all that shows up in our lives, to take time to breathe. Find space to just be. Perhaps it is a walk with a child, time puttering in a garden, or going fishing. We recharge our cell phones so they can keep serving us. Take a lesson from the cell phone: breathe and revitalize.

Theme: Rest and Healing

Before Class: If you are combining age groups, be sure to read the lesson plans for younger children to choose what to include. If you think it would be appropriate for this group, bring a small candle (either a votive candle or a small candle in a glass jar to protect it from breezes) and matches. You can even go get one of the small battery powered candles for safety. If weather permits, you might consider taking the class outside.

Beginning: Unless the children all know each other well already, spend some time asking them questions, such as “Have any of you ever gone fishing?” “Have you ever been on a hike?” “Have you ever gone camping?” “Where would you like to go on a picnic?”

Ask them if they would like to offer any special prayers, such as for another child they know who is ill, or a family member.

Opening Prayer: (Be sure to include what the children have offered in your prayer.) “Thank you, God, for this time together to read from the Bible and to relax together. Amen.”

The Story: Invite the children to notice what is happening in the story and to think about how we can turn it into a short play. If the children will be presenting the play to the younger children, be sure to let them know. Notice that the story for today has two parts: before and after. The middle of the story comes next week!

Invite one child to read Mark 6:30-34. Then stop and discuss this portion before reading the second half.

Reflection Questions:

- If the children were in this group two weeks ago, they may remember that Jesus sent the disciples out two by two. If they were not, tell them that this is the setting for this portion of scripture.
- Why do you think Jesus said: "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest awhile?" (He knew they were tired.)
- What did the disciples decide to do? (Go to a deserted place, just as Jesus had suggested.)
- Did they get a nice long rest? (Not exactly. Crowds saw them and started gathering.)

The Story: Ask another child to read Mark 6:53-56.

Reflection Questions:

- Now what happened? (Jesus and the disciples again got away by boat for a short rest.)
- What happened when the boat landed? (People rushed up, bringing sick people with them for healing.)
- I wonder what it was like for the disciples?
- I wonder what the people wanted from the disciples.

Drama: Have the children figure out how to present this story as a play. Let them decide who will be Jesus, who will be a disciple or two, who will be the people longing to be healed. Then watch the play as it is presented, sitting with the younger children if they are there.

Deep Breathing: If you have combined the two age groups, invite the younger children to show the older ones their deep breathing exercise. If you have not combine the age groups, you may want to do this exercise with the older children.

Getting Closure: Light the candle (if you have chosen to bring one) and invite the children to be still for a minute and just breathe. Notice the sounds – especially if you are outside.

After a few minutes of silence, invite the children to share what they heard. Ask the children to remember the people you prayed for at the beginning of the session, and ask them if they would like to add any other names.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for this time when we can just be still and breathe and know you are right here with us. (Offer the prayers the children and you suggest.) Amen. (Extinguish the candle.)

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

⁵³When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. ⁵⁴When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, ⁵⁵and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 11
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

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A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

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Theme: Rest and Healing

Before Class: You will need bibles or copies of the scripture for everyone. Find a psalm or prayer to invite people into a few moments of silence, or you can use Psalm 46:10 (see below).

Beginning: Tell the group that these next two sessions invite us to step off whatever treadmill we are on and be gentle with ourselves. The Scriptures draw us more deeply into the mystery of God's love and of Jesus’ reaching out to us to experience that love. Tell the group that in addition to looking into the Scriptures, we will be spending brief times in silent prayer.

Invite them to be still for a moment using the prayer or the psalm or prayer you selected or use this Psalm 46:10, pausing for silence after each sentence as people focus on stilling their minds.

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know.

Be still.

Be.

(Leave a few minutes of silence then say the opening prayer.)

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for this time to listen to your Word in Scripture and to be still and know that you are God. Amen.

The Scripture: Tell the group that we have a "before" story and an "after" story -- and that next week we will get what came in the middle! The first part of today’s reading (Mark 6:30-34) follows the passage we had two weeks ago in which Jesus sent the disciples out two by two. Then we then jump to verses 53-56, which happens after the feeding of the 5,000 and after Jesus comes toward the disciples as they rowed their boat.

Invite someone to read the first half: Mark 6:30-34.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what stood out for you in the passage?
- How does Jesus respond to the exhausted but excited disciples? (He listens to all that they tell him and they tell him everything.)
- What does he suggest next? (A retreat – Jesus and the disciples go away to a deserted place to rest all by themselves.)
- Notice the balance between work and rest. Can you think of other places in Scripture where we see this example? (Genesis 2:2; Exodus 20:8.)
- How, in our crazy, busy lives, can we find this balance? What is our "get away" boat?
- Share ways that they have found: a long walk with the dog, fishing with a friend, looking for interludes to fill with prayer. Invite the group to experience a few minutes of silence. No agenda, just be still. You could set the tone by using a psalm you have chosen, or the brief meditation at the beginning of the lesson. You can also use a bell or chime to begin and end the time of silence. After a few moments have elapsed simply say: "Amen."

The Scripture: When the group is ready move to the next piece of scripture, invite someone to read Mark 6:53-56.

Reflection Questions:

- The disciples are mobbed again. This time by whom? (People bringing the sick)
- How does Jesus respond? (By healing them)
- If you were in this mob of people asking for healing, what would you ask Jesus to heal?
- Invite the group into another few moments of silence. Ask the group to silently reflect on what they are asking Jesus to heal in them. Invite them to share only if they want to request prayer from the rest of the group. Be sure they understand they are free to keep these prayers to themselves and Jesus.

Getting Closure: After they have had time to reflect, invite people to share as they feel comfortable. Invite the group to pray for one another for healing throughout the week.

Closing Prayer: Ask if anyone wants to request a prayer for themselves or for another. If so, include those requests in your closing prayer.

Thank you, God, for breathing room in the midst of our busy lives. We pray also for (include those to be prayed for) and entrust their care to you. Amen.

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

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