

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.

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 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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