

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 12
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: John 6:1-21

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

"There is a child here." How interesting. The disciples do not see how a child could be much help, but Jesus does. The central aspect of our worship together – bread broken, bread shared – first happened when a little boy offered the little loaves in his picnic basket. When Jesus uses the little boy's willingness to share, abundance is the outcome. Could we choose to risk noticing abundance?

Theme: Abundance

Before Class: You may choose to have Bibles for each person. Print off the three signs (found at the end of this lesson) and hang them around the room. This might also be a good session to have a simple snack to share. (Maybe something that goes with the theme? Bagels and lox? Goldfish crackers?)

Beginning: When your group is ready to get started, show them the signs with the slogans and ask them for their reactions.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for the abundance you shower on us. Help us to have eyes to notice and hearts that know how to be grateful. Amen.

The Scripture: Tell the group that we have a long passage that contains two stories, and that you will read the first story, then discuss it, and then read the second story and discuss that part.

Invite four volunteers to read each of these sections: verses 1-4, verses 5-7, verses 8-9, and verses 10-14.

Reflection Questions:

- Why were Jesus and his disciples trying to get away? (They had been pursued by the people and they were tired.)
- What were the people following Jesus looking for? (More signs, more healings.)
- In verse 6, why do you think Jesus was testing Philip? (To see what Philip might do?) Put yourself in Philip's place, what do you think of his reaction? (Counting the cost, trying to make it work.)

- What willingness to share created the beginning of the abundance of loaves and fish? (A little boy with a lunch bag.)
- What abundance might the children in our midst offer us?
- What did Jesus do with the loaves and the fish? (He gave thanks and distributed them.)
- Could we say this is the First Eucharist? (What would make us say yes? What might make us say no?)
- What happened to the "leftovers?" (They filled twelve baskets.)
- Invite people to share times when we begged for healing and got, instead, food for the journey?

The Scripture: Invite someone to read verses 16-21. As the person is reading, invite the participants to listen with their eyes closed and after the reading there will be a few minutes of silence to reflect on the passage.

Response: Invite them to think about (not necessarily to share unless they later want to do so) a boat they are currently rowing – rowing for 3 or 4 miles, across a choppy sea, the wind blowing against them. Perhaps it is a financial struggle or stress related to parenting children, perhaps it is balancing the needs of family with the needs of elderly parents. Ask them to see Jesus – not jumping into their boat and making everything all better -- but saying to them, "It is I. Do not be afraid."

After a few moments of silence, invite them to share their response.

Getting Closure: Invite the class to hold onto what they experienced when they thought of Jesus right there beside them.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for providing the food we need for our journey and for walking along beside us. Amen.

John 6:1-21

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near.

⁵When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.”

⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, ⁹“There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?”

¹⁰Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.”

¹⁵When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself. ¹⁶When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. ²⁰But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” ²¹Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

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Expect

Abundance

Abundance

Happens

Expect the
Unexpected