

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

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: Bring a small basket and enough brown paper lunch bags to have one for each child. Put a handful of goldfish crackers in each bag. If you will be working with older children in your group, be sure to read the Lesson Plan for Older Children. You will also need newspapers, at least one large sheet for each child. As with all the lessons this summer, this session will be better if you can go outside.

Beginning: Explain to the children what will happen today. If the older children will act out the story, tell them. Tell them we have a story about sharing. Be sure you know the name of each child and that each child knows everyone else.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for this time we have together on a summer day. Thank you for each person who is here today: (name each child). Amen.

First story: Jesus was trying to get some rest with his friends. And the people who had heard Jesus talk, wanted to hear him talk some more, so they went looking until they found Jesus. Jesus said to the people, ‘OK, sit down. I will talk to you some more.’ And he did. For the whole entire day Jesus talked about God and many other things. Jesus looked out at all the people and he could see that they were really getting hungry. What do we look like when we are getting hungry? (Make a face, rub your tummy, invite the children to show you what they do.)

Jesus turned to Philip and said: ‘These folks are really hungry. Where can we get some food for them?’ Philip said: ‘Wow, it would take all the money people make in six months to buy enough food for all these people.’ Just then, Andrew said: ‘There is a child here who has a lunch bag. I don't know what good that is going to do, but the child has said he would share.’

"Hmm." (You can say as you select one of the bags.) Ask one child: "Show us how you could share if everyone were hungry, and you had a lunch bag." Give the child a lunch bag and encourage the child to give a cracker or two to each child (make sure there are sufficient crackers in the bag so the child still has a few crackers left.) Then give another child a bag and ask her to show how she could share. Keep on going until each child has had the chance to share from a separate bag.

"When everyone had had something to eat, there was food left over, so Jesus told them to gather what was left over in a basket."

Second Story: While the children are snacking, tell this second story.

Later that very same day, after the people had heard Jesus and had their picnic, they all went home and Jesus and his friends at last were going to get some rest. Jesus told his friends to go on and get into the boat, and he would be along soon.

Ask the children: "Does anyone here know how to row a boat?" If someone does, ask him or her to show you, if not, you can show them. "Let's make a boat large enough to hold all of us." Tell each child to take a piece of newspaper and help us build a boat by overlapping the pieces of paper in a straight line. "Now, let's get into our boat, all face the same direction, and row across the lake. This is not too hard, is it? Whoa! The wind is starting to blow and it is harder and harder to row. But we will keep on rowing. Wow! I am getting tired, aren't you? Let's rest for a minute.

As Jesus' friends were trying to get to the other side of the lake, they looked out because they saw something. They saw SOMEBODY. It was Jesus, walking across the lake. It really scared them until Jesus said: 'Hey, don't you know who this is? It is Jesus. Don't be afraid.' Just then they all got to the other side.

Activity: Everyone can take a piece of newspaper and pretend it's an inner tube. Climb in and just drift down the river. Stretch out on the "tube" and just let your hands dip into the water. If there are clouds in the sky, see what the children see in the clouds. If you are inside, pretend to see clouds – you can begin by saying that big fluffy cloud looks just like your dog. Can anyone find an elephant? A bird? An angel?

If the older children are going to present their play, you and the younger ones can watch it and then share more goldfish crackers with the older children.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to come sit in a circle with you. Ask the children what we had to eat today. (If you have crackers left over and want another snack, pass the basket.)

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for food and people who share. Thank you for time to rest, and pretty clouds to enjoy. Thank you for our time together today. Amen.

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

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: If you are combining classes, be sure to look at the Lesson Plans for Young Children so you can decide which group will do which activity. Like all the sessions this summer, this one will be better if you can go outside. If you cannot, you will simply need to do a bit more pretending. A bag of goldfish crackers would be good to have for snack.

In today’s story the disciples row 3 or 4 miles across a lake. If you have such a large lake near you, you could mention it when you tell the story. If you do not, check out a 3- to 4-mile distance the children will know, such as from a convenience store to the post office.

Beginning: Tell the children that in today's story, the disciples of Jesus row across a lake. They row for 3 or 4 miles. Have the children think of places that are about 3 to 4 miles apart. If you have a map of the area, it might be fun to hang it up and mark distances that are 3 or 4 miles apart.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for this time we have together and for the stories you give us in the Bible. Help us to remember that we all have something to give, and that Jesus is with us always. Amen.

The Story: Tell the children this is a long story, so you will tell part of it and invite the children to read parts. Tell the children to notice the details of the story so they can act it out after they read it. If the children are going to produce the play for the younger children, be sure to tell them. Begin by telling the children that Jesus and his disciples were getting really tired and were hoping to find a place where they could rest for a day or so.

Ask for readers for the parts marked on the script at the end of the lesson Then ask the children what they think is going to happen next when there are lots of hungry people and one child with a lunch bag.

You read verses 10-14. Verses 15-21 are optional.

Reflection Questions:

- Why did large crowds follow Jesus? (They were fascinated with what he was saying.)
- What were they looking for? (Healing, and someone they could trust.)
- How do you think Jesus knew the people were hungry? (They had been out there all day.)
- What did Jesus do? (He asked Philip how he thought they could feed all these people.)
- What was Philip's response? (Impossible! Not enough money to buy enough food.)
- Why do you suppose Andrew noticed the young boy? (The boy was offering to help.)
- How do you think Jesus got enough food for everyone from the little boy's lunch bag? (Invite the children's response and accept what they come up with by saying, "Perhaps that is how it happened.")

Drama: Ask the children to decide who should play which part and then rehearse it and then act it out.

Reflection and Snack: If the older children are in their own group, without the younger children, they might like to take a break and snack on goldfish crackers. While you are snacking, you can sit in a circle and play a game.

Tell the children that there is a big imaginary body of water just over there. (If you live near an ocean, make it the ocean. If you are near a river, make it a river.) Tell them we can go out on that body of water in whatever vehicle we can describe. You might start by saying you are out there on the water in an inner tube, and you are letting your fingers trail in the water. Perhaps someone else will want to go water skiing, or fishing, or riding in a motor boat -- or even an ocean liner. Let each child create the vehicle they choose to use in the water.

If time allows, tell the children to bring their vehicles back to the shore and think about this next story we have for today. While they are sitting in a circle, tell them the story.

The day was over; the people had all gone to their homes. The disciples and Jesus could finally go across the lake and get some rest. Jesus told his disciples to go on ahead of him. So they got into the boat and began to row. Now that lake was 3 or 4 miles across. (Be sure they have a picture of a 3- to 4-mile distance using the image you have prepared ahead of time.) the disciples were getting really tired; rowing is hard work, especially when the wind is blowing against you, as it was for them. Suddenly, they looked out across the lake and they could see someone. Someone walking. Walking on the lake! Kind of scary. "It is I," said Jesus. Do not be afraid."

Invite the children to wonder what they would do or how they would react. Accept the children's response to this story. It is more important that they feel entitled to wonder what did happen than that they simply accept someone else's interpretation. It is good if they find themselves, along with the disciples, wondering just who this Jesus really is.

Getting Closure: If you have combined classes, be sure the older children had a chance to perform their play for the younger children and that the younger children were able to share bags of goldfish crackers with the older ones.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for making sure there is always enough. We have enough to eat. We have enough to think about. We have enough love from you. Amen.

John 6:1-21

Teacher: 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.

Reader 1: 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.

Reader 2: ⁷Philip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.”

Reader 3: 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?”

Teacher: 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.”

[Optional]

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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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.

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Expect

Abundance

Abundance

Happens

Expect the
Unexpected