

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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