

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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