

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 8
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Mark 5:21-43

Background: We are now in the long season known as Ordinary Time, which runs through Christ the King Sunday. 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

Jesus heals two people, an elderly woman, and a young girl, neither of whom had any status in their community. The power that was flowing out from Jesus into them can also flow into the things that need healing in our lives, but we must risk opening up to receive it. Jesus seems to insist that the most important work happens in the ordinary and that our faith makes us well.

Theme: Healing

Before Class: Collect an empty plastic medicine container for each child or if you do not have enough you could also use small Dixie cups, and tiny flowers to make bouquets. A small blanket and a scarf or shawl will help the children enact the story.

Beginning: Ask the children if they can remember a time they were sick. Do they know someone who is sick now? Perhaps there is a member of the church the children know who is sick.

Opening Prayer: Gracious and Healing God, we pray for those who are sick, [especially, _____.] We want them to get well. Uphold them in their sickness and fill them with grace, that they may know the healing power of your love. Amen.

The Story: Tell the children that Jesus helped many people get well when they were sick. Today we have a story about two people who Jesus helped get well: a little girl and an old woman. Ask for volunteers to help you tell the story. You will need someone to be a little girl, who is lying down. You will need someone to be an old woman, who has been sick for a very long time and is bent over in pain. You will also need someone to be Jesus.

Have the sick little girl lie on the floor. Cover her with a small blanket if you have one. Tell the children that the little girl's daddy was very worried about her and went out to find Jesus. "Jesus!" the daddy said when we found Jesus. "My little girl is so very sick – I am afraid she is going to die. Please come to my house and lay your hands on her so she can get well."

As Jesus was on his way to the little girl's house an old woman was in the crowd. She had been sick for a long time. She knew that if she could just sneak up behind Jesus and touch his clothes, she would get well. She didn't know how it would happen, but she just knew it would -- so she

sneaked up on Jesus and very gently touched his clothes. And immediately she could stand up straight without it hurting at all!

"Who touched me?" asked Jesus. Well, with so many people following Jesus, who knew who touched him? Jesus kept looking around until the woman came up to him and crouched down before him. She told him everything that had happened. And Jesus said to her: "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. You will not hurt anymore."

And they went on their way to the little girl's house. The little girl was still lying very still and very sick. Everyone was sure she was already dead, because she was not moving at all.

Jesus took three of his friends into the house and they prayed. Then Jesus reached out and took the little girl's hand and said: "Little girl, get up!" And she did. "She is going to be just fine," Jesus said. "Somebody get her something to eat."

(If you have more than these three children who want to be "in" the story, tell it again, with different actors playing the parts. If you are working with the older children and they tell the story, be sure the younger ones get a chance to be in the story in a second telling.)

Option: Explain to the children that God uses our prayers in ways we may not understand, but God always uses our prayers. If the children have already identified someone they know who is sick, ask them to join you in praying for that person. If they have not previously identified anyone, be ready with someone in your church who has asked for prayer for healing. Ask the children to pray with you.

You can use the opening prayer above, or this one (adapted from Prayers of the People Form IV). Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; [especially _____] give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your healing love.

Then ask, "Does anyone want to add to this prayer?" Accept what they offer, and if they offer nothing, that is OK, too. Then, simply add: "Amen."

Bouquets: Invite the children to help you make tiny bouquets so each child can take one home. Tell the children that when they look at the bouquets, they can stop and pray for the person we prayed for today. Or they can pray for someone else who is sick. If they know someone who is sick, they can give that bouquet to that person later that day.

Getting Closure: Ask the children to sit quietly for just a moment, holding their bouquets and thinking about the sick person they have prayed for.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for taking our prayers and using them. Thank you for the healing that will happen through you. Amen.

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