

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 13
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: John 6:24-35

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

The crowd continued looking for Jesus. Maybe they were curious as to how Jesus got to the other side when his boat remained behind. Perhaps they were looking for more miracles. They were drawn to the gentle charisma of this man even though they were struggling to understand what he was saying. They were looking for a sign, missing the message. From our vantage point – 2,000 years later – we still struggle to grasp the message: "I am the bread of life."

Theme: Bread of Life

Before Class: Check with your clergy person to determine whether the Feast of the Transfiguration, celebrated August 6, will actually be celebrated today using its associated readings. If it is, use the online lesson plans for the Feast of the Transfiguration today. If not, use these lessons.

You will need copies of the Book of Common Prayer and copies of the scripture reading below that is broken into parts. Be sure the adults who may be interacting with the children are aware that they are eating popcorn pretending it is manna. Children, especially the older children, may be asking questions about the meaning of Eucharist, so adults need to think about how they want to talk with the children about what we believe. The next four sessions will all be from the Book of John, Chapter 6, in which Jesus explains "the bread of life." If you have enough time in your session, you might want to use a different Eucharistic prayer each week. These prayers are found in the Book of Common Prayer, pp. 361-363, 367-375.

Beginning: Remind the group that we will be reading from John 6 for four more weeks. Jesus struggled to convey huge eternal concepts and continued patiently reaching out to those who listened to him. Invite the group to notice Jesus' teaching mechanism of answering the question that could have been posed, rather than the one that was posed. Notice how Jesus refused to be deflected from his message by going off on tangents.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for loving us, understanding us, and finding new ways to help us grasp the immensity of the gift of your grace. Amen.

The Scripture: Make sure each person has a copy of the scripture. If your group did not meet last week or if there are people in your group who were not with you last week, make sure they know the passage immediately preceding this one (John 6:16-21).

Reflection Questions:

- What stood out for you in this reading?
- In verses 22-25, what has the crowd noticed? (Jesus' boat still on the shore, Jesus, the disciples and their boat on the other side.)
- How did Jesus get to the other side? What does the crowd ask Jesus about this? What is his answer? (See verse 25b and verse 26.)
- What is Jesus referring to when he says: "You ate your fill of the loaves?" (See John 6:11.)
- Notice the questions and Jesus' responses from Jesus: question – verse 28, response – verse 29; question – verses 30-31, response – verses 32-33; question – verse 34, response – verse 35.

Option: Make copies of the Book of Common Prayer available and tell people to go to page 361. Over the next four weeks we will look at all four of the Eucharistic Prayers. Today, we will look at Prayer A, probably the most familiar and in most churches the most frequently used of the four prayers. All four prayers begin identically, then each goes to praise and thanksgiving, a bit of history, then the words said to call down consecration of the elements, an acclamation from the congregation, and finally a few more prayers to get hearts and minds ready to receive the body and blood of Christ. You could read through the Eucharistic Prayer – or simply invite people to notice the various sections.

Getting Closure: Invite the group get into a comfortable sitting position and take a couple of really deep breaths. Then say something like this: "Get in touch with where you are hungry – a hunger that calories will not fill. Perhaps it is for recognition; perhaps it is longing to feel worthy. You decide what it is. Stay there a few minutes: being needy." (After a pause, continue.) "Now, picture Jesus coming to you – just you – and saying to you: 'I am the bread of life. Come to me – and you will never be hungry. Believe in me -- and you will never be thirsty. I am the bread of life.'" (Pause.) "Amen."

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for always being larger than our ability to completely grasp, yet always being there for us to seek. Amen.

John 6:24-35

Narrator: ²⁴So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. ²⁵When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him,

Disciples: “Rabbi, when did you come here?”

Jesus: “Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. ²⁷Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.”

Disciples: ²⁸“What must we do to perform the works of God?”

Jesus: ²⁹“This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”

Disciples: ³⁰“What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? ³¹Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

Jesus: ³²“Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

Disciples: ³⁴“Sir, give us this bread always.”

Jesus ³⁵“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

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