

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

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.

Bring a candle in a safe container, and if your clergy person is comfortable with the idea, bring a few unconsecrated communion wafers to class. If you are combining groups, read the lesson plan for young children before class. You could have the young children go hunt for the "manna" while the older children are reading the passage. Then the young children can hide the "manna" (popcorn in muffin cups) for the older children to find.

Before class, read Exodus 16:1-8, and have copies of the Bible available for each child. Make copies of the script (found at the end of this lesson) if you are planning on the children reading it in parts. You might bring in a small quantity of coriander to let the children taste. If you are working with just older children, you may want to purchase a bag of popcorn to share as a treat at the end of your class.

Beginning: Tell the children Jesus is referring, in today's passage, to something all the people he was talking to would know about. Everyone would have heard the story of the Hebrew people trekking out of Egypt to their new land and how tired, discouraged, cranky, and hungry they got and how God provided what they needed.

Opening Prayer: Help us to notice, God, that you give us what we need. Thank you. Amen.

The Story: John 6:24-35 Invite the children to choose which portion of the scripture to read. If you do not have enough children to read all the parts, you can read some.

Reflection Questions: Especially if you are not meeting every week with these children, be sure they know what happened just before this passage (John 6:16-21) when the disciples rowed across the lake, but Jesus' boat stayed on the shore and Jesus walked across the lake.

- The crowd had not seen the disciples or Jesus leave the night before. What did the crowd see when they came back the next day? (Jesus and the disciples were not there, the disciples' boat was gone, Jesus' boat was still where he had left it the day before.)
- So what did the crowd do? (They got in other boats to go to the other side of the lake to see if Jesus was there.)
- What did the crowd ask Jesus when they got to the other side? (See verse 25b.)
- Do you think the answers Jesus gives the crowd are answers to their questions? Why? Why not? (You could tell the children to be on the lookout, because Jesus often knows that people are not asking the right questions, so he answers the questions he knows they need to ask.)
- Can you find other answers that are not exact answers to questions, in this passage? (See the question in verse 28 and the answer in verse 29. Also see the questions in verses 30-31 and the answer in verses 32-35.)
- What is Jesus referring to in verse 32 - a story the crowd would all know? (The experience the Hebrew people had in the wilderness when they were hungry and manna appeared.)
- What do we think manna is? (The people said it tasted like coriander, a sufficient quantity for each day appeared each day.)
- Jesus says: "I am the bread of life." How do we get this bread? (At communion)

Option: If you have unconsecrated communion wafers for the children to handle – even taste if they do not regularly go to communion – share them with the children. Invite their questions about how and why we eat these wafers. If they ask questions you are not equipped to answer, promise them that you will do your best to get more information, probably from your clergy person. Invite them to ask others and share what they find the next time you meet.

Activity: If you are meeting with the younger children, they probably have hidden cups of "manna" (popcorn) for your group to find and share with them. If you are working only with older children, you could share the popcorn you brought.

Getting Closure: If you brought a candle, light it now. Tell the children that in the next few weeks the Feast of the Transfiguration is celebrated and there will be three more weeks during which we look at Jesus trying to help the people understand what he means by the bread of life.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for loving us and being patient with us as we try to figure out just what it is that you call us to do. Amen. (Extinguish the candle.)

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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