

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 13**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger 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.

Make or purchase a bag of popcorn, and bring a box of paper muffin liners. Alternatively, you could get Matzo bread found in the Jewish section of the grocery store. If you want, you or the teacher of the older children may also purchase a small quantity of coriander seed (this should be available in the spice section of a grocery store). If you are going to conduct class outside, and if it is possible, before the children arrive "hide" enough muffin cups filled with popcorn so that each child will have one to find (or Matzo). If you are going to be inside, "hide" the muffin cups filled with popcorn (or Matzo) around your room. Read Exodus 16:1-8 before class.

If you are combining groups, read the lesson plans for older children. While the older children are reading the scripture passage, the young children can be hiding cups of "manna" (popcorn/Matzo) for the older children to find.

**Beginning:** Tell the children we are going to go on a walk today. And we will pretend to be the people who lived a long time ago – long before Jesus. Then we will have a story about Jesus.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, for watching over us, taking care of us, and giving us what we need. Thank you for all that you give us and the nourishment you provide for us each day. Amen.

**The Story:** Tell the children that you are all going on a walk. (If you cannot go outside, walk in place.) As you walk, pretend you have been walking for a long, long time and you are getting tired, cranky, and very hungry. So as you walk, complain: "I am getting so tired. My feet hurt. I am starving. I wish I had a hot dog – a slice of pizza – some ice cream." (Invite the children to call out what they wish they had.)

Pretend that you are so tired that you all need to sit down and rest. Tell the children that Moses was the people's leader, and he said do not give up hope. He told them that God will get us what we need. Now tell the children to close their eyes and rest and when they wake up they will be able to find food. Rest a minute and then get up and see what you can find. If the children do not immediately see the little cups, help them. Be sure each child finds a cup. If you want to, show the children the coriander seed and tell them that what the people found tasted like coriander. Explain that what they found wasn't popcorn or Matzo, but was called "manna."

While the children munch on the popcorn/Matzo, tell them that the people who were listening to Jesus knew the story we just heard. These people had been following Jesus everywhere he went. This day Jesus was talking to the people – but he was on the other side of the lake and the people were trying to figure out how Jesus got there when his boat was still where he had left it. Jesus reminded the people of the time God sent manna for the hungry people. Jesus told the people they could still get the food they need, but the food is not manna; it is the bread of life.

Tell the children we can get the bread of life when we gather together and take Communion. Ask the children if they can tell you when we receive the bread of life. Especially if they are not regularly receiving Communion, be sure they make the connection.

**Activity:** If you have time, you could play a few rounds of "Hide the Popcorn/Matzo." Everyone closes their eyes while one child takes a muffin cup and hides it, then the rest of the children try to find it. Then another child takes a turn. When time is up, give each child a muffin cup.

**Option:** If you and the children like to sing, you could teach them the first verse of Hymn 335, "I am the bread of life." If the older children are with you, invite the younger children to hide cups of popcorn for the older children to find.

**Getting Closure:** Tell the children we are going to have more stories about the Bread of Life in the weeks ahead. If they are receiving Eucharist, ask them to notice what is going on and tell you about it the next time you are together.

**Closing Prayer:** Jesus tells us: 'I am the bread of life.' Thank you, God, for feeding us and sending Jesus to show us the way.

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