

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 14
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: John 6:35, 41-51

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

Those entrusted with keeping the faith are getting nervous. “Hold it,” they say. “Isn't this Joseph and Mary's kid? We know them well and have watched their child, Jesus, grow up. How can he say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’ How are we to understand this Jesus to be the ‘living bread’?” Each of us today is also on a journey into trusting this bread of life.

Theme: Living Bread

Before Class: If you will be combining ages and including the older children, be sure to look at the Lesson Plan for Older Children. Consider offering a snack for the young children if you will not be joining the older children’s class.

Beginning: Ask the children if any of them have a family member who lives in another town that is not close by. Ask the children how they stay in touch with that person – by phone, e-mail, photos, letters? These things help us to stay close to these people.

Tell the children that Jesus really loves the people who help him, come to listen to him, and follow him. So Jesus figures out a way to keep those people close to him. Jesus did not have e-mail; he did not even have a computer. Jesus did not have a telephone. He did not even have a mailbox. He did not even have paper! We will have a story today about what Jesus came up with to keep the people he loves close to him.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for loving us and figuring out a way to keep us close to you. Amen.

The Story: Jesus is telling the people what God wants them to know. God has given Jesus a job to do and that job is to be sure everyone has the chance to come to Jesus. Anyone who chooses Jesus will belong to Jesus forever. "I am the bread of life," said Jesus. "Anyone who eats this bread will be with me forever."

Activity: If you can go outside, define the boundaries of where you will play this game. Tell the children that each child is going to get the chance to "be" Jesus and each child will get the chance to be "chosen" by Jesus. A child, who is playing Jesus, will take another child, gently, by the arm, and walk with that child to a place you have designated (over to the door and back, for

instance). Then the child that was led will be Jesus and lead the other child over and back. Keep going until each child gets to be Jesus and each child gets to be led by Jesus. If everyone has lots of energy, they can hop over to the place and back, or skip, or take two great big steps and one tiny step. If it is a hot, lazy day, they could tiptoe or walk very slowly.

Option: If you are working with the older children as well, be sure the younger ones are invited to participate in the closing activity with bread and honey outlined in the lesson plan for older children.

Getting Closure: If you are not working with the older children, close with a snack, such as sweet bread and juice.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for figuring out how to help us stay close to you all our lives. Amen.

John 6:35, 41-51

³⁵Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”⁴¹Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.”⁴²They were saying, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”⁴³Jesus answered them, “Do not complain among yourselves.”⁴⁴No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day.⁴⁵It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.⁴⁶Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father.⁴⁷Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life.⁴⁸I am the bread of life.⁴⁹Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.⁵⁰This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

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