

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 15
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: John 6:51-58

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

Nutritionists will assure us that we are what we eat. Jesus, long before nutritionists, told us that we become what we eat. And so Jesus invites us to become one with him by eating his flesh and by drinking his blood. Our task is to trust that "whoever eats this bread will live forever."

Theme: We Become What We Eat

Before Class: If you are working with older children as well as young children, be sure to look at the Lesson Plan for Older Children.

Beginning: Tell the children we are going to play a game using our imagination. Explain that imagining something means thinking about something we cannot see. Ask the children to imagine the things that you list.

I wonder what you think a dog looks like.
I wonder what you imagine a bird looks like.
I wonder how you picture a star shining in the night.
I wonder what you think an apple tastes like.
I wonder how it feels to pet a soft fluffy dog or a furry kitten.
I wonder how it feels to hold a smooth rock.
I wonder what it feels like to splash around in water.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for giving us minds that can imagine things we cannot see. Amen.

The Story: Jesus is talking to the people who come to hear him, and he tells them things that are very hard for them to understand. He tells the people they need to eat his body and drink his blood, and then they will have "life" in him. And if they do this, they will be in Jesus and Jesus will be in them. Jesus says that people who eat this bread will live forever. The people had to work hard to imagine the things Jesus was saying to them.

Activity: Tell the children that you are imagining something they would see in church. Have them ask yes-no questions to try to figure out what it is. For example: “Is it bigger than I am?” If they are having trouble, you could give them hints or help them think of questions. You might start by imagining the altar, then the wafers or bread, or the chalice of wine. The object is for the

children to figure it out, so be generous with clues. Then see if a child wants to think up something for the others to guess.

Option: If you can go outside, before you go, ask the children to imagine what they might see once they are outside. Make a list of the things they suggest, then go outside and see how many things on the list you can find together. If the older children are with you, the younger children could work with an older child on the scavenger hunt the older children are assigned in their lesson plan.

Getting Closure: Suggest that the children sit in a circle with space between them. Tell them to imagine Jesus sitting in the middle of the circle. What things would we want to say to Jesus? If they are not sure, you could begin by thanking Jesus for the time you had together, and thank Jesus for imagining a way to stay close to us and keep us close to him.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for giving us your body in the bread and your blood in the wine so that we can be with you and you with us. Amen.

John 6:51-58

⁵¹ “I 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.” ⁵²The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” ⁵³So Jesus said to them, Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; ⁵⁵for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.”

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 15
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: John 6:51-58

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.

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Nutritionists will assure us that we are what we eat. Jesus, long before nutritionists, told us that we become what we eat. And so Jesus invites us to become one with him by eating his flesh and by drinking his blood. Our task is to trust that "whoever eats this bread will live forever."

Theme: We Become What We Eat

Before Class: You will need a Bible, paper, pencils, and some ideas of things to look for on a scavenger hunt. It would be good to go outside, if at all possible, for this session. A simple snack would be good with lemonade or fruit juice.

Beginning: Ask the children if any of them have been to a place the rest of us have not visited. To get them started, tell them of a place you have been that they might not have been -- a place you went on a vacation, another town you have lived in, for example. See if you can get each child to tell of a place he or she has been that the rest of you have not visited. Maybe it was a place they used to live or a place they went on vacation. It can be as simple as a home in your town that no one else in the group has been in. The idea is to show how hard it is to describe a place to those who have not seen it. Tell the children that now they have a better idea of how hard it was for Jesus to describe – in ways people could really understand – what it was like to be with God and to know what heaven is like.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for loving us and for sending Jesus to help us understand that you love us and want to be in our lives. Amen.

The Story: Read John 6: 51-58 to the children. (see below for text)

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what you heard in this story.
- How does it sound to us when Jesus tells us to "eat his flesh"? (Accept what they offer.)
- Why do we suppose Jesus did this? (Jesus knows that if we choose to stay connected to him, Jesus can work in us, to help us and strengthen us.)
- Ask the children what they would say to this statement: "You are what you eat." (Draw out of them the difference between eating nothing but junk food and eating a balanced diet.)

- What do we think Jesus meant in verse 38: "The one who eats this bread will live forever"? Does he mean we will live to be thousands of years old? If not, what do we think he means? (We will die, yes, but go on to live forever with Jesus.)
- Ask the children if they know how the mother sheep knows her own lambs – even when there are many in the flock? (She recognizes the smell of her own milk on her lamb.) Tell the children Jesus uses very ordinary things to explain things to us. Here he uses bread and wine. Can anyone think of other very ordinary things that show up in Jesus' stories? (Water, fish, food at a party, etc.)

Activity: Especially if you can be outside, invite the children to go on a scavenger hunt – one where you look, but don't touch. If you have sufficient numbers, send the children out in teams of three with a pencil and a pad of paper. Invite them to notice as many "ordinary" things as they can (for example: a flower blooming, a tree growing, a weed growing in a crack in the sidewalk). If you cannot go outside, ask the children to "be" some of these ordinary things: show us what a flower looks like when it blooms, for example.

Getting Closure: Bring the children together in a circle. Ask wondering questions so the children can reflect. (I wonder what ordinary things you found? I wonder what those ordinary things said to us about Jesus? I wonder what they said to us about being a part of God's creation?) A snack would be nice as you wonder with the children.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for sending Jesus and for the stories we have to better understand your love for us. Amen.

John 6:51-58

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 15
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: John 6:51-58

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

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Theme: We Become What We Eat

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible or copies of the scripture from below and enough copies of the Book of Common Prayer.

Beginning: Invite the group to try to imagine hearing the words of today’s scripture reading for the very first time. Imagine following Jesus, being fed with the loaves and fishes, seeing incredible healings, and having the Word come alive for you. Then put yourself in their sandals as they heard these words that appear to have been offered, at least in part, for their shock value.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for your infinite patience with us as we struggle to understand what you are calling us to understand. Amen.

The Scripture (John 6:51-58): Invite people to read the parts outlined in the script below.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what stood out for you in the reading?
- If you hadn’t ever heard this passage before, what questions might you have?
- What about verse 52 was so difficult to understand? (It must have sounded like cannibalism.)
- What are the three ways Jesus says basically the same thing in verses 53 to 56? (Eat my flesh. Drink my blood. Have life in you.)
- How might the saying "You are what you eat" help us here?
- What is the significance of the "living Father" in verse 57? (Jesus "lives" because of the Father, and we live because of Jesus.)
- How might this impact the ways in which we live our lives?

Getting Closure: Invite your group to get comfortably seated and close their eyes. Ask them to breathe deeply and put aside worries and concerns. Then ask them to reflect silently on what you are about to say. (Pause between each phrase.)

A wind from God swept over the face of the waters.
Then the Lord God breathed into the man, breathed the breath of life.
And the word became flesh and lived among us.
I am the bread of life.
The one who eats this bread will live forever.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for sending us food, drink, and the promise that you will lift us up on the last day. Amen.

John 6:51-58

Jesus: ⁵¹“I 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.”

Narrator: ⁵²The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying,

Religious Leaders: “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

Narrator: ⁵³So Jesus said to them,

Jesus: “Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; ⁵⁵for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.”

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