

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 17
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

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.

The Pharisee in each of us wants to "get it right." In the gospel passages for Propers 17-22 from the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is concerned that we "get it." So Jesus takes the ordinary things of life, from washing hands to attending to a child, and meets us where we are and helps us to "get it," finding blessings in the ordinary.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

Temple security guards, those responsible for guarding the purity of the religion, are getting hung up on rules that seem urgent to them but they are missing what is important. Jesus dismisses their concerns about who washed what and insists that these concerns are reducing the ability to hear and do God's word. What is important is not what goes into the body, it is what comes out of our hearts.

Theme: What Does Defile?

Before Class: If this is your first session with the group, make sure you have nametags for everyone and open with a Get to Know You activity. Find Get to Know You Resources: <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/lessons/resources/>

Begin by making a large name tag for yourself out of construction paper (at least 6" by 9") with the name you want the children to call you in the middle and decorations around your name that illustrate things about you (little faces for your own children if you have them, something to indicate what you do during the week, a hobby, a pet, etc.). Create similar nametags for the children, leaving space for them to decorate it themselves.

Beginning: As the children arrive, have your name tag hanging around your neck and invite the children to decorate the nametags you have for them. Do they have a pet at their house? If so, ask them to draw it on their nametag. Do they go to daycare? If so, ask them the name of the place. Are they in a school? If so, ask them to draw the school. If it is your first time with these children, you may want to use one of the "Getting to Know You" exercises.

Option: If music is one of the gifts you bring to this class, select a very simple tune and create new words for it. For example, using the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” you could sing: "Here we are at church today, church today, church today. Here we are at church today, And God is here with us." Each week you could add new words that the children can help you compose.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for letting us be here in church today. Thank you for letting (name each child) be here today. Amen.

The Story: Tell the children that the story today is about some people who really wanted to get it right. These people were in charge of the temple, the place people went to worship God. These people always washed their hands before they ate and they had special ways to wash each of the cups and pans in their kitchens. Jesus tells these people that they are worrying about the wrong things. Jesus tells these people that it is much more important to God what we say and what we do. Washing hands is good, and washing cups and pans is good. But being careful about what we say and what we do is more important. Things we do and things we say to other people can really hurt them.

Activity: Let each child select a piece of construction paper and some crayons or markers. Invite the children to help you illustrate some class rules so we can do and say things that will help us work together. Ask the children what some rules might be. Suggest, “How about ‘Listen to each other’ and ‘Share with each other’”? Try to get the children to give you examples of these types of behavior. Ask the children, “What can we do when we goof up?” Suggest, “How about if we say, ‘I’m sorry’?”

When the children have completed drawing the rules of behavior on their construction paper, hang the posters where you and the children will be able to see them.

Getting Closure: If the children did not know each other before today, you could do another one of the getting acquainted activities from the beginning of class to make sure the children do know each other's names. If the children did know each other, and you began with a song, you could end your time together with the same song.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for letting us be together today. Thank you for (and name each child), and thank you for being right here with us. Amen.

Basic Supply List

1 ream copier paper
1 package construction paper, various colors, 500 sheets
Crayons
Masking tape (one roll 60')
Transparent tape (108' roll)
Glue - 4 oz. bottles Or .88 oz. glue sticks
Scissors (enough for each child to have one)
Glitter

Optional:

Fluorescent BioColor Paint
Paint
Paint brushes
Tissue paper - 50 sheets -- assorted colors

You can find many of these things at a discount at the following places online:

www.discountsschoolsupply.com

<http://www.swww.com/>

<http://www.orientaltrading.com/>

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 17
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

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.

The Pharisee in each of us wants to "get it right." In the gospel passages for Propers 17-22 from the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is concerned that we "get it." So Jesus takes the ordinary things of life, from washing hands to attending to a child, and meets us where we are and helps us to "get it," finding blessings in the ordinary.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

Temple security guards, those responsible for guarding the purity of the religion, are getting hung up on rules that seem urgent to them but they are missing what is important. Jesus dismisses their concerns about who washed what and insists that these concerns are reducing the ability to hear and do God's word. What is important is not what goes into the body, it is what comes out of our hearts.

Theme: What Does Defile?

Before Class: If this is your first session with the group, make sure you have nametags for everyone and open with a Get to Know You activity. Find Get to Know You Resources: <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/lessons/resources/>

You will need Bibles for each child, scraps of paper, markers, construction paper, pencils, and at least four copies of the script if you are reading the lesson with parts. Look the “Basic Supply List” page found below, which lists the materials you will need for crafts for the next six sessions. For this week’s class, bring materials to make fancy bookmarks: laminating sheets, scraps of colored tissue paper, felt markers, and plain paper.

Beginning: Once you have done a Get to Know you activity, then tell the children that for the next six weeks you will look at what the writer of Mark’s Gospel has to say in his gospel, and you will get more familiar with the Bible and look for what the Bible has to say to you all – right where you are today.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for bringing us here together today and for being with us as we hear and wonder about your story. Amen.

Option (Bible Scavenger Hunt): Make sure each child has a Bible and scraps of paper to serve as bookmarks (at least 4 or 5 per child) and pencils.

- Ask the children to look for the index, and place a bookmark at the index.
- Ask the children to find the beginning of the New Testament and insert a bookmark.
- Ask them find the beginning of the Old Testament and insert a bookmark.
- Ask them to find the Gospel According to Mark and insert a bookmark.
- Ask them to find Mark, chapter 7, verse 1.
- Ask the children to write on the paper scrap serving as a bookmark: Mark 7:1-6, 14-15, 21-23. Tell the children that this is the passage we will be reading today.

The Story (Mark 7: 1-8, 14-15, 21-23): If the children would like to volunteer to read different parts, you will need someone to read the lines of the narrator, the Pharisee, and Jesus. (It is outlined in script form below. If you are going to use the script, make sure you have at least four copies and the other children can follow along in their bibles)

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what stands out for you in the reading?
- As we begin the story today, The Pharisees are following the letter of the law and being very careful with how they wash cups and even pans. I wonder what you think Jesus finds wrong with this? (The Pharisees, who are the leaders of the Hebrew people, are focused on the details of the washing, and they complain that the disciples are not following these rules. The Pharisees do not notice the more important things that they are doing that are wrong.)
- Does anyone know what defile means? (To defile is to make dirty or pollute.)
- I wonder what Jesus means when he says "the things that come out are what defile"? (He means that the actions we take and the things we say are what matter.)
- I wonder if you have had a time in your life when what you said really mattered.
- I wonder if there are times you can think of that what you or someone you know had done or said has had an impact on others.

Class Rules: Invite the children to help you illustrate some class rules so we can do and say things that will help us work together. Ask the children what some rules might be. Suggest, "How about 'Listen to each other' and 'Share with each other'?" Try to get the children to give you examples of these types of behavior. Ask the children, "What can we do when we goof up?" Suggest, "How about if we say, 'I'm sorry'?"

When the children have completed drawing the rules of behavior on their construction paper, hang the posters where you and the children will be able to see them.

Bible Bookmarks: Tell the children that over then next year, we will be finding things in the Bible that will help us on our journey with God. As we explore the Bible, it would be helpful if each of us had a distinctive bookmark. Invite the children to make bookmarks.

Using the materials you brought, let each child design and create a bookmark. Tell the children they will be leaving these bookmarks in the classroom so they will be available each time you meet. (If there is sufficient time and materials, they could also make a bookmark to take home with them.)

Getting Closure: Tell the children that one of the ways we live as a community is to share our concerns and our thanksgivings together. Tell them that each time we meet, we can ask for prayers for someone we are concerned about and thanksgivings for someone who got well or if we got a happy surprise. If no one has anything to offer, you can begin by asking their prayers for someone you are praying for and sharing something you are thankful for.

Closing Prayer: Dear God, thank you for letting us come to you with our prayers of concern and our offerings of thanks, especially for (add what the class suggests). Amen.

Basic Supply List

1 ream copier paper
1 package construction paper, various colors, 500 sheets
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Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Narrator: Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him,

Pharisees and Scribes: ‘Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?’

Jesus: ‘Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,
“This people honors me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines.”
You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.’

Narrator: Then Jesus called the crowd again and said to them,

Jesus: ‘Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.’ For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.’

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 17
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

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Theme: What Does Defile?

Before Class: If this is your first session with the group, make sure you have nametags for everyone and open with a Get to Know You activity. Find Get to Know You Resources: <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/lessons/resources/>

For class you will need a Bible and a Book of Common Prayer for each participant. If you are going to use the “script” found below as a way of reading the scripture, make sure to have enough copies for the group.

Beginning: If you are not well acquainted with each other, do one of the activities suggested in the "Getting to Know You Resources" at the end of this lesson. If you know each other well, simply begin by going around the room and inviting a response to this statement: "We have a God who loves us unconditionally. Yet sometimes I find myself obsessing with ‘getting it right,’ and so I miss ‘getting it.’ "

Opening Prayer: Loving and patient God, thank you for bringing us to this day. Help us to hear your words and come to know you more as we meditate on your word. Amen.

The Scripture (Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23): You may have one person read the scripture or use the script found below and have people volunteer to read the different parts found in the piece scripture.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what stood out for you most in this scripture.
- The concern voiced by the Pharisees appears to have two levels. What would you say those are? (They have noticed that the disciples do not follow all the rules about hand-washing and the Pharisees see it as their job to enforce these rules. And the Pharisees are genuinely concerned that this Jesus is usurping their power as leaders.)
- Jesus' condemnation of them in verse 8 is pretty harsh. Why do you think Jesus says this? (Jesus clearly recognizes the fact that the Pharisees are selectively applying the laws.)
- Why would verses 14 and 15 have been so shocking to the Pharisees? (They had very strict rules about which foods were OK to eat and which were not. Jesus was saying that ALL foods are clean.)
- Is the meaning unclear of any of the "evils" listed? (Some of the more difficult to define are: "avarice," an obsession with amassing wealth; "licentiousness," straying from a moral path; and "folly," not using good sense.)

Getting Closure: What do we do when we discover a serious flaw in ourselves? Invite the group to look at the Rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent on pages 447-452 in the Book of Common Prayer. Some of rite requires the ministration of a priest or a bishop, but much of it can provide a mechanism for two Christians to help each other – or for one to make a confession to God. You may wish to read psalm at the top of page 449 together.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for being here in our midst, for sending Jesus to show us the way, and for giving us each other as we continue this journey together. Amen.

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

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