

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 24
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Mark 10:35-45

Background: During the last weeks of Ordinary Time in Lectionary Cycle B, the Gospel of Mark, our primary guide, continues. The kingdom of God is open for all people. We hear this message in the readings about the rich man, the disciples jockeying for position, the blind man, the saints, the poor widow, and even Pilate as he queries Jesus about being a king. We don't have to pass an entrance exam; we are already in the kingdom. Through all the changes that occur in our lives, what will not change is God's love for each of us. The kingdom that Jesus is proclaiming is already here and yet is also still to come – the undercurrent of Advent, which is coming near.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

How in the world will we find our place, our position, our status, if we are already "in"? What if there is no top spot – no seat of honor? What if we do not have to compete for a place at the table – the place is already set, the dinner served, the wine poured? The disciples have been scrambling for position. Jesus tells them that the sign of being "in" is not about being served but in looking for whom to serve.

Theme: Servanthood

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible.

Beginning: Tell the group that you are forming a brand new corporation. The corporation is abundantly financed, its mission is environmentally sound and it will provide jobs for all those who need them in this community. Now, you are going to set up the organizational chart. Only one criteria: NO ONE is the boss, all of us are "servants." Ask the group to imagine such a corporation. Do they think we could pull it off? What would be the problems? What would be the benefits?

Opening Prayer: Dear God, we live our lives in a world that compartmentalizes almost everything. You have shown us a far more beautiful way – help us to be a part of the solution. Amen.

The Scripture: Mark 10:35-45 Ask for volunteers to read the passage. They can read it in parts, one to be the narrator, one to be Jesus, and at least one to be the disciples OR read it as a whole.

Reflection Questions:

- What do the disciples cling to as being the "greatest?" How do we see this understanding being played out in our society? Perhaps we might want to make a note of this question and explore, privately, how it affects our own motivations.
- What do you think the disciples made of Jesus' response in verses 38-40?

- Why do we think the other 10 disciples got so angry with James and John?
- Can we think of times our own anger may be a projection of something we have suppressed?
- What do you suppose was the disciples reaction to Jesus, again, (as he did in last week's scripture) telling them that the expected order has been reversed: first is last; last is first?
- A few weeks ago we heard Jesus tell his disciples that they must be "servants." Here he is saying that to be "first" one must be "slave." I wonder how the disciples took this?
- I wonder how we feel about it?

Getting Closure: I wonder the ways in which we as individuals can live into this teaching? How can we live into this as a community?

Closing Prayer: Help us to have hearts open to the new ways of being we discover as we spend time with your Word. Amen.

Mark 10:35-45

35 James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, ‘Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.’³⁶ And he said to them, ‘What is it you want me to do for you?’³⁷ And they said to him, ‘Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.’³⁸ But Jesus said to them, ‘You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?’³⁹ They replied, ‘We are able.’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized;’⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.’

41 When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John.⁴² So Jesus called them and said to them, ‘You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them.’⁴³ But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant,⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.⁴⁵ For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.’

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