

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Proper 18
Lesson Plans for Older Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Jeremiah 18:1-11

Background

As we continue to walk through “Ordinary Time” it is hard to imagine the lessons from our Old Testament scriptures as “ordinary” days. We hear fantastical accounts of kings, prophets, and courts and they sound so far away. But we are called to remember these stories of times past and to consider how ordinary days of ancestors relate to the ordinary days we face here and now.

A Notation for This Week’s Scripture

We are still in the midst of hearing many lessons from the prophet Jeremiah. Today’s reading is from God’s instruction to Jeremiah to ‘pluck up, break down, and destroy’ and to then ‘build up and plant.’ This is an interpretation of God’s call to Jeremiah. This is what God has sent him to do in this world. We will explore what it means for us.

Theme: Build and Plant

Before Class: You will need clay or play doh for the children to sculpt with. You will also need a beautiful broken pot, small and glue pots for them to create a mosaic on. It would be good to have extra pieces of tile or multiple pieces of broken pots so they can mix up the colors. If you are using a broken pot, make sure the pieces aren’t too sharp or ask them to wear gloves as they handle the pieces.

Beginning: Gather the children around you and invite them to name things that they know can be plucked up, broken, or destroyed. Also invite them to name those things they know can be built and planted.

Opening Prayer: Gracious and loving God, help us to know when to pluck up, break down, or destroy those things that keep us from you. Help us also to turn toward you in order to build up and plant those things that are life-giving and loving. Amen.

The Story: Jeremiah 18:1-11

Invite a child to read the story or tell the story yourself.

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: "Come, go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him.

Then the word of the Lord came to me: Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the Lord. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck

up and break down and destroy it, but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it. And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, but if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will change my mind about the good that I had intended to do to it. Now, therefore, say to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: Thus says the Lord: Look, I am a potter shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you. Turn now, all of you from your evil way, and amend your ways and your doings.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what Jeremiah thought of God inviting him to go to a potter's house.
- I wonder how Jeremiah felt when God said the same can be done with us.
- I wonder how God might change us? Change our world today?
- I wonder how we could help build things up or change things?

Activity:

Creating a Pot

Invite the children to take clay and create a pot in five minutes. Time them. Tell them when to stop. Ask them to reflect on what they created. Are they happy with it? Do they think they can do better? For those who say they can do better, invite them to smash what they had created, and start over, taking their time in creating a pot.

Mosaics

Invite the children to gather around a table. Open up your bag with a smashed pot and tell them that you broke the pot and are sad you can't use it anymore. Ask them if they think we can turn this broken pot into anything else. Have small pots there to hand out to the children. Invite them to decorate their pots with pieces from the broken pot, as well as other pieces of mosaic tile.

Getting Closure: Share what you have created. What did it feel like to create something new?

Closing Prayer: God a beauty and Creator of all things, thank you for reminding us that we have the power to create from what is damaged, and that with your help, we can create a beautiful world around us. Amen.

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