

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Older Children

Proper 11 (A)

New Testament: Matthew 13:24-30, [36-43]

BACKGROUND

In this season after Pentecost, we hear stories of Jesus' ministry in the world and our call to engage in that mission. This season is also known as Ordinary Time coming from the word "ordinal" which means counted time. This time is not ordinary as in common or regular, but it is the time of counted weeks between Pentecost and Advent. The color for this season is green and it is often referred to as the green growing time as we hear stories of what God is calling us to do in the world, we join in that call, and we grow in our faith.

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK'S READING

Jesus continues to engage in parables as he explores what the kingdom of God is like. The Gospel lesson for today focuses on the empire vs. God. The key message is that we are not to be the ones judging, but that it is God's judgment in the end that matters. We are to let things grow as they will and God will sort it out in the end. In our lesson today we will focus on the first part of the Gospel lesson and let the children engage in thinking about what it means rather than listening to Jesus' explanation that was given to the disciples. You can understand Jesus' point without having to get into end-times language.

THEME

Wheat and Weeds

BEFORE CLASS

You will need pictures of wheat and weeds. There are some at the end of this lesson, but you can also search the internet for them. You will need paper and art supplies for the activity time.

BEGINNING

Invite the children to gather in a circle. Ask them if any of them have ever gardened or pulled weeds before. Is it easy or hard? Do all weeds look like weeds?

OPENING PRAYER

Loving God, we ask you to be with us as we explore what your words mean for our lives. Guide us as we seek to understand your parable today. Amen.

THE STORY: MATTHEW 13:24-30, [36-43]

You will need two readers, the first to read 24-30, the second to read 36-43.

He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" He answered, "An enemy has done this." The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" But he replied, "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.' He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!"

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder what you think about this Gospel?
- What questions does it make you ask?
- I wonder what Jesus means by the wheat? Who or what might he be talking about?
- I wonder what Jesus means by the weeds? Who or what might he be talking about?
- I wonder if weeds can be as beautiful as other plants?

ACTIVITIES

Show the children the pictures of the wheat and the weeds. Can they tell the difference? Invite them to look at how similar they look. Do they think they could tell the difference if they were all growing in a field together?

Invite the children to think about times when they have had both good and bad happening in their lives at the same time.

Maybe they have:

- Made a new friend, but the old friends are jealous
- Gotten a new bike, but miss the old one
- Found themselves excited about something and at the same time scared.

Life is often complicated and it is only for God to help us figure out. Only God knows what is wheat and what isn't. Invite them to create a picture, chart, drawing, or list about those complicated things in their lives. What might be the wheat? What might be a weed? Invite them to list anything they want to lift up to God in prayer.

GETTING CLOSURE

Invite them to share what they created and what they are asking for God to help them with today.

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God, help us understand your words and parables so that we may understand you better. Guide our ears, eyes, mouth, hands, and feet that we may engage in your mission in the world. Amen.

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