

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Younger 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.

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

Jesus told this story. “The kingdom of God is like a farmer who planted good seed in the field. At night, while all were asleep, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat and then left before anyone saw him. When the first plants started to appear and take shape, the weeds grew too. The farmer’s helpers asked the farmer where the weeds came from and the farmer said, ‘Some enemy did this.’ The helpers asked, ‘Should we remove the weeds?’ The farmer said, ‘No, if we remove the weeds, you will pull the good wheat too. Let them grow together until it is time for harvest. Then, when we are harvesting, we will separate the wheat from the weeds. We will separate the good from bad. We will keep the wheat, and burn the weeds.’

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? I wonder what Jesus means by the weeds?

ACTIVITY

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.

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.

Written by the Rev. Shannon Kelly.



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