

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Adults

Proper 12 (A)

New Testament: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

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

Today, we have a series of parables from Jesus. All of them tell us that the Kingdom of Heaven is not what we would expect, that God does amazing things with the small, that God does the unexpected, that God is doing a new thing with both the old and the new.

THEME

Have You Understood All This?

BEFORE CLASS

You will need two different translations of today's reading.

BEGINNING

Invite the group to gather together. Invite them to try to name any parable that they can think of in order to get them thinking about multiple parables and expand their idea of parables.

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 parables and words today. Amen.

THE STORY: MATTHEW 13:31-33, 45-52

You will be reading the lesson today twice and will need two different readers. Think about having two very different voices read this such as male or female, young or old. Before reading the lesson the first time, invite people to listen for a word or phrase that stood out for them.

Invite the first reader to read the lesson.

After a few moments of silence, invite the group to say what word or phrase stood out for them.

When you feel everyone has shared, invite the group to listen once more and to listen for what Jesus is saying to them. Invite the second reader to read the lesson.

After a few moments of silence, invite the group to say what they heard Jesus saying to them.

After everyone has shared, you can begin with the questions or go to the activity.

Jesus put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.” He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder what this Gospel stirs in us?
- I wonder what questions this Gospel brings up for us?
- Which parable stood out for you the most?
- Which parable made you have the most questions?

ACTIVITY: EXPLORING THE PARABLES

Break the group up into smaller groups and give each of them a parable to explore. Invite them to explore what the parable might mean and what it might mean for their lives today.

- The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.
- The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.
- The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.
- The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.
- The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad.

GETTING CLOSURE

Invite them to share what their group came up with as they explored their parable.

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God, help us understand your words and parables so that we can hold onto the gift you have given us in these parables that remind us that no matter how big or small, new or old, we are valued. Guide our ears, eyes, mouth, hands, and feet that we may engage in your mission in the world. Amen.

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