

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Younger Children

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 copies of the scripture. As illustrations of the parables, you will need to find these things or pictures of them: mustard seed, yeast and leavened bread, treasure, pearls, and fish of many different kinds. You will need paper and markers or crayons for their own parable illustrations.

BEGINNING

Invite the group to gather together. Tell them that Jesus taught the people around him in story. He often used what are called parables. In a parable, Jesus is comparing the Kingdom of Heaven to something here on earth to help us know more about it and understand it better. Today, we will hear many 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, 44-52

(As you read these, you can show them the pictures or examples you brought to help them understand the parables.)

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

- Jesus compared the Kingdom of Heaven to many things. I wonder which one you liked the most?
- I wonder what Jesus might be telling us in these stories?

ACTIVITY: EXPLORING THE PARABLES

In the parables, Jesus is trying to convey to people what the Kingdom of Heaven is like by using things here on earth. Let’s think about what the Kingdom of Heaven might be like and what we could use to tell people about God.

Invite the children to name what they think the Kingdom of Heaven will be like, using examples from their own lives.

- The Kingdom of Heaven will be like a playground where people share and get along.
- The Kingdom of Heaven will be like my family who love one another.
- The Kingdom of Heaven will be like...

Invite many responses and then invite them to choose one to illustrate.

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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