

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Older Children

Proper 15 (A)

Old Testament: Genesis 45:1-15

BACKGROUND

The Season After Pentecost is the longest season of the church year, spanning almost half the calendar year. The weeks after Pentecost are called 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 liturgical color of the season is green. It is often thought of as a season of growth both in our personal faith and in the life of the church. Common themes to focus on throughout the season are:

- Our relationship with God.
- Our relationship with Jesus Christ and with one another through our prayers, the sacraments and life in the body of Christ.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- The Church and its work for God’s mission.

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK’S READING

The story of Joseph and his brothers continues this week as it culminates in forgiveness. Joseph forgives his brothers for selling him into slavery and sees it as a gift from God that he is there to help them in their time of need. After all he has been through and all that he has overcome, he is still a member of the family and is overwhelmed by seeing them again.

THEME

Forgiveness

BEFORE CLASS

You will need cloth for prayer space, Bible, (with a translation used in your parish) and a candle. If you are using Option 1, include a box of ‘o’ shaped cereal, construction paper, glue, and a rock for each child in the group for the closing.

Prepare your prayer/gathering space with a small table, or a piece of cloth, it could be green or colorful depending on your traditions. On this cloth place a candle.

BEGINNING

Gather the children together at the prayer table, and ask some wondering questions:

- I wonder if you have ever been angry with someone in your family.

- I wonder how the other person felt when you were angry.
- I wonder if you have ever said to someone “I forgive you.”

As a leader, you can then talk with the children and state that saying ‘I forgive you’, can be a very difficult thing to do, and yet we hear stories about doing just that all of the time in the Bible.

Ask: What changes have they noticed in the room? What colors should they look for in the main Church? We are now in the season of growing or ordinary time. We hear stories of the family of God, and how we are all a part of this story. I wonder why God keeps reminding us to forgive each other.

OPENING PRAYER

Light the candle. Have the children repeat each line of the following prayer:

For the things we have done,
we ask forgiveness.
For the things we have not done,
we ask forgiveness.
For always loving us,
we thank you.
Amen.

THE STORY: GENESIS 45:1-15

In the Bible we hear stories of many families. These families are just like ours, they love each other and sometimes the children don’t get along, or get mad at each other. We tell these stories to remind us that we are all a part of the story of God’s family. Now Joseph had been sold by his brothers into slavery in Egypt, but while he was in Egypt, Joseph had been given a position of respect and power by the Pharaoh. Joseph’s brothers didn’t realize what had happened to him, and they thought he might be dead.

¹ Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, ‘Send everyone away from me.’ So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. ³ Joseph said to his brothers, ‘I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?’ But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, ‘Come closer to me.’ And they came closer. He said, ‘I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.’ ⁵ And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶ For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷ God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to

keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸ So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹ Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, “Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. ¹⁰ You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹ I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.” ¹² And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. ¹³ You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.’ ¹⁴ Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder why Joseph didn’t get angry when he saw his brothers.
- I wonder how Joseph’s brothers felt when they realized it was their brother Joseph talking to them.
- I wonder why Joseph was so quick to forgive his brothers.

ACTIVITIES

These options can be done within your same space or a separate area. Encourage movement after the storytelling.

Option 1: Forgiveness Creation

Have the children gather in a circle. Using a box of ‘o’ shaped cereal, open the box and slowly pour it out. Ask the children - How many pieces do you think there are in this box? How long would it take us to count all of the cereal shapes one by one? How many times does God forgive us? How many times should we forgive each other?

Children can use the cereal to create a design on construction paper with glue that represents forgiveness to them.

Option 2: Forgiveness Prayer

Using the letters for F-O-R-G-I-V-E to start each sentence, have the children write a prayer. Example:

For each of us
 O Lord we pray
 R...
 G...
 I...
 V...
 E...

If your children are able to write on their own, have them copy the prayer to take home with them as a way to remind them to forgive one another.

GETTING CLOSURE

Gather the children together in a circle in your prayer area. Give a rock to each child. Have them think of someone they need to forgive or something for which they want to ask for forgiveness. Have the children place the rock in the center of the circle as they say the name or thing.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, we know that you always love us and forgive us. When others need our love, and forgiveness, help us to follow your example. Amen.