

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Older Children

Proper 16 (A)

Old Testament: Exodus 1:8-2:19

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

This is the opening chapter of Exodus in which we see the Pharaoh’s jealousy of the people of Israel and their numbers. He tries to control the world around him by enslaving people, ordering babies to be killed, and killing the first-born sons in each family. The women in Egypt play an important role in subverting his orders. Today we hear of Miriam saving Moses, reuniting him with his mother who becomes hired as his nursemaid, and Miriam raising Moses as her own.

THEME

Baby Moses

BEFORE CLASS

Supplies Needed: Cloth and candle for prayer space and a Bible (with a translation used in your parish). If you are using Option 1 include a laundry basket, baby doll, and baby blanket. If you are using Option 2 include cut out figures, and art supplies (crayons, markers, etc.) 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 held a baby.
- I wonder how you could comfort a baby.
- I wonder if babies need different things than we do.
- I wonder what some of those different things are.
- I wonder why God tells us stories about babies.

OPENING PRAYER

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

Thank you for creating us.
Thank you for those who care for us.
We pray for babies all over the world.
Keep them safe.
Amen.

THE STORY: EXODUS 1:8-2:10

In the Bible we hear stories of babies. I wonder what stories we can think of, from the Bible that includes babies or young children? (Allow them time to respond.) We tell these stories to remind us that we are all a part of the story of God's family. Read Exodus 1:8-2:10 aloud using a translation of the bible that is used your congregation.

Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. He said to his people, 'Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.' Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labour. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, 'When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live.' But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, 'Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?' The midwives said to Pharaoh, 'Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes

to them.’ So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, ‘Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live.’

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. ‘This must be one of the Hebrews’ children,’ she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, ‘Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?’ Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Yes.’ So the girl went and called the child’s mother. Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.’ So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, ‘because’, she said, ‘I drew him out of the water.’

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder why the Pharaoh didn’t want baby boys.
- I wonder how it feels to be jealous of other people.
- Did the Pharaoh know the children?
- I wonder why the Pharaoh’s daughter saved baby Moses.
- I wonder if the story would have been different if Moses’ sister hadn’t been watching over her brother.

ACTIVITIES

Option 1: Baby Moses Relay

Gather the children in groups of 4-5. At one end of the room have a basket, baby doll, and blanket. Line the groups up behind the supplies. Explain the motions for each person listed below. Then start the relay.

- First person puts the baby in the basket and brings it down to the other end of the room and returns to their group.
- Second person takes the blanket down to the baby, wrap it, and place it back in the basket, before returning to their group.

- Third (and fourth if five in group) person runs down to the basket, picks up the basket and runs the perimeter of the room, returning the basket where it was found. Then the child returns to the group.
- Fourth (or fifth if five in group) person runs down and retrieves the basket, brings it back to the group, and the entire group sits down around their basket.
- Remind the children this is a game, and they should never run holding a baby.

This game can continue with the children changing their roles within the relay.

Option 2: Infant Outreach

As the leader, talk with your children about what types of things that are needed to help take care of a baby. Explain that your class is going to ask the whole congregation to help other babies who may not have all of the things needed for their care.

Make a list of items with the children that people could donate (diapers, wipes, etc.). Then using pre-cut baby figures, have the children decorate each one, and place them in a basket. As the leader, or if you have children who can write, list one needed item on each figure, and place the basket in your church for people to take a figure, and return with the donation. Items could be given to food banks, shelters, women's programs, etc. Decide which is best for your context.

GETTING CLOSURE

Gather the children together in a circle in your prayer area. Invite them to share one thing they learned today or one thing they want to do to help the babies around them.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, we know that you always love us and guide us. Help us to reach out to those in need, especially those who are younger than us. Amen.