

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Older Children

Proper 17 (A)

Old Testament: Exodus 3:1-15

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

This may be one of the best known stories in the Bible. The story of Moses and the burning bush is not only a great story, but the first story we hear of someone being called to be a prophet. The first story of God calling someone to speak on God’s behalf, to do the work of God, to be the voice of God in the world. How is it that we are now answering God’s call and coming off the mountaintop to do God’s work?

THEME

Answering God’s call

BEFORE CLASS

You will need cloth for prayer space, Bible, candle, and red, yellow and orange pieces of construction paper. Prepare your prayer/gathering space with a small table, or a piece of green or colorful cloth depending on your traditions. On this cloth place a candle.

BEGINNING

As the children enter the room, have them take off their shoes, and leave them near the entrance. Explain that they are entering holy ground, a special place where they will meet and hear God. Bring them to the prayer table and have them write their names (assist if necessary) on the pieces of construction paper and leave it there.

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

- I wonder why this is holy ground?
- I wonder how we made this holy ground?
- I wonder if you have ever heard someone call your name from a far distance?
- Today we have entered holy ground and will learn more about God's call. I wonder why God calls different people in the Bible to do various jobs?

OPENING PRAYER

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

We hear you;
 call us by name.
We hear you
 when you calm our fear.
We hear you
 when you ask us.
Help us to keep listening.
Amen.

THE STORY: EXODUS 3:1-15

In the Bible we hear stories of many people. These people are just like us, they eat and sleep, go to school and work. God has a plan for each of them, and in hearing the stories we learn that God's plan is for each of us too. Read Exodus 3:1-15 aloud (the version listed is New Revised Standard.)

¹ Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. ³ Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' ⁴ When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' ⁵ Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' ⁶ He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, ⁸ and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹ The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ So come, I will send

you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.’¹¹ But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’¹² He said, ‘I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.’

¹³ But Moses said to God, ‘If I come to the Israelites and say to them, “The God of your ancestors has sent me to you”, and they ask me, “What is his name?” what shall I say to them?’¹⁴ God said to Moses, ‘I am who I am.’ He said further, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “I am has sent me to you.”’¹⁵ God also said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you” This is my name for ever, and this my title for all generations.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder if Moses was afraid of the fire?
- I wonder how Moses felt when he realized that God was talking to him?
- I wonder why Moses had to know the name of God?
- God called Moses to help the Israelites leave Egypt where they were slaves. We are called to help others...when we leave this mountaintop where will we go and help others?

ACTIVITIES

The activities are based on outreach and helping others.

Option 1: Outreach

If your church has an outreach project, is there something the kids can do to assist with it? Optional ideas for outreach:

- Create cards for your homebound parishioners
- Decorate and plant flower pots for homebound parishioners
- Make sandwiches (bread, a piece of meat, and cheese) for the homeless in your area.

After the children have gone off the mountaintop and helped others, gather them together again and enter the holy ground.

Option 2: Learning about Outreach and Mission

Invite a member or chair of your parish outreach or mission committee into your class space (make sure he/she removes shoes too.) Ask them to speak about how decisions are made in the church, how outreach activities are planned and supported, and where there are opportunities for children to get involved.

GETTING CLOSURE

Gather the children together in a circle in your prayer area. Using Exodus 3:12, read a child's name from the slips of paper and say - "____, I am with you, this is a place where you will worship me." Repeat for all children. Then ask the children if there is anything they would like to share in their prayers.

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God, we thank you for showing us who you are and calling us off of the mountaintop to serve you. Be with us as we go forth and guide us. Amen.