Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Adults
Proper 14 (B)
New Testament: John 6:35, 41-51

BACKGROUND
We continue to remember Israel's leaders and how they strived to serve God. Each had their own challenges and gifts. The need for faithful leadership continues today and we seek wisdom from how these leaders sought the welfare of their people and showed their devotion to God.

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK'S READING
Those entrusted with keeping the faith are getting nervous. "Hold it," they say. "Isn't this Joseph and Mary's kid? We know them well and have watched their child, Jesus, grow up. How can he say, 'I have come down from heaven?' How are we to understand this Jesus to be the 'living bread'?" Each of us today is also on a journey into trusting this bread of life.

THEME
Living Bread

BEFORE CLASS
You will need Bibles or make copies of the scripture below and have enough copies of the Book of Common Prayer.

BEGINNING
Tell the group that we continue with John, Chapter 6. Invite them to look for a mood change among those listening to Jesus.

OPENING PRAYER
Thank you, God, for Jesus, the bread that comes down from heaven, and for our growing ability to begin to understand. Amen.

THE STORY: JOHN 6:35, 41-51
Ask for volunteers to read the parts outlined in the scripture passage below. (Narrator, Jesus, and Religious Leaders)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS
- What stood out for you in this reading?
- I wonder why the people are questioning Jesus' teaching?

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- What might it have been like to be discounted because of who Jesus' family was?
- How does Jesus handle the grumbling of the leaders? (He deflects it by changing the subject. Note: when we find reference to "the Jews" in scripture it usually means the Jewish leaders -- not the Jewish people who made up the largest group of the followers of Jesus.)
- Jesus' followers all knew the story of manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16). How is Jesus contrasting that bread with the bread he is offering? (Verse 51)

ACTIVITY

Look at Eucharistic Prayer B in the Book of Common Prayer, beginning on page 367. Notice the parts that are identical to Eucharistic Prayer A (p. 361). Everything on page 367 is identical to the beginning of Prayer A. Notice the subtle differences in the prayer at the consecration. Notice the different acclamation (from "Christ has died" to "We remember his death"). Then look at the last part, just before the Lord's Prayer.

GETTING CLOSURE

Invite the group to reflect in silence by getting comfortably seated, with eyes closed, and taking several deep breaths to relax. Then have them listen as you read:

I am the living bread
The bread that comes down from heaven
Whoever eats of this bread
Will live forever
The bread that I will give
For the life of the world
Is my flesh.
Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for this bread, and for the love that brings it to us. Amen.

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JOHN 6:35, 41-51

Narrator: Jesus said to them,

Jesus: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

Narrator: Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They were saying,

Religious Leaders: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

Narrator: Jesus answered them,

Jesus: "Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

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