Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Older Children
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 paper, pencils, a small loaf of unsliced bread, preferably a round loaf of white bread or something you are pretty sure the children will enjoy eating. (Be mindful of allergies and bring gluten-free bread if necessary.) You could also bring some honey, a small dish, and napkins or a moistened cloth for wiping fingers. You may also choose to bring a few un-consecrated communion wafers if your clergy person is okay with the idea. If you choose, you could bring a candle in a glass jar and some matches for the closing prayer.

BEGINNING
The next three sessions all focus on Jesus' effort to get people to understand that God is inviting us into relationship: us in God, God in us. This could be a very abstract concept for some children, so it might help to begin by asking the children if any of them have ever tasted chocolate. Ask them to describe chocolate to you as if you had never ever tasted chocolate. Accept whatever they offer, but keep on probing so they can begin to see how hard it is to describe something their listener has not experienced. If you want, you can continue by asking if someone in the group has traveled to a place none of the rest of us have gone to. If the answer is Paris, France, that's fine – or it could be a town only 25 miles away or a house in town none of the rest of us has been inside. Then, ask that child to describe the place so we will feel like we have been there. Then you can tell

THE Episcopal CHURCH

Published by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. © 2015 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.

them we have a tiny clue about how hard it was for Jesus to tell people just how very much God loves them and wants all of us to be in relationship with God.

OPENING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for sending Jesus to us. Thank you for all the ways Jesus tried to help us understand just how much you love us. Amen.

THE STORY: JOHN 6:35, 41-51

Remind the children that Jesus knows God and knows God's love for all of us. Jesus also knows that God wants us to notice God in our lives, so Jesus is coming up with a way to help us do that.

Give each child a piece of paper and a pencil. Tell the children you are going to read the passage slowly and invite them to write down any words that are interesting, words that made them ask questions, words that they notice are said more than once. Tell them you will read it twice. (If you have another teacher or an assistant, let them read it the second time through for a change of voice.)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder what words you wrote down? (Accept what is offered. Ask the child what he/she thinks the word means. See if anyone else heard that word or wants to comment on it.) Keep asking for reflection words until everyone has had a chance.
- Let's see if we can figure out what was really bothering the people referred to as "the Jews." (They could not find the places in scripture that indicated the Messiah would come as such a common-looking man.)
- What do we think Jesus means by saying: "I will raise that person up on the last day"? (We will continue to be with Jesus after we die.)
- Read verse 51 to the children and ask them to help you figure out how we would explain this verse to a child who is just joining us. How would we explain what Jesus was saying? (Try to draw the explanation out of the children rather than impose your understanding.)

ACTIVITIES

If you are working with the younger children, be sure they are included in this closing activity. Tell the children that we come together in church to do what Jesus asked us to do: to be together and eat the bread he gives us to eat so we can remember Jesus together. Tell them that Jesus also wants us to be together with God in the center in all that we do. And here is an additional way we can do what Jesus asks us to do.

Invite the children to sit in a circle, with enough space between each child to be comfortable, but not so far apart that they cannot reach each other. Tell them that God is in the center of anything we do, so we will notice that God is right here in the middle with us. We cannot see God, of course, but God is here.

THE Episcopal CHURCH

Published by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. © 2015 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.

Place the loaf of bread and some honey in the center of your circle. Ask the children what we should do with this bread and honey. If they say you should cut it up and give each of them some of it, tell them that is a good idea. Suggest that one child can take a piece of bread, offer it and the dish of honey to another child, then that child can offer a piece to another child and keep going until all have been fed.

GETTING CLOSURE

If you have brought a candle in a jar, light it. If the younger children have been singing the hymn "I am the bread of life" (#335 in the Hymnal) ask them to teach it to the rest of us.

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for sending us Jesus. Thank you for loving us and showing us how to love you. Amen. (Extinguish the candle.)

JOHN 6:35, 41-51

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. 41 Then the Jews began to complain
about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42 They were
saying, "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'?" 43 Jesus answered them, "Do not
complain among yourselves. 44 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. 45 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. 46 Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from
God; he has seen the Father. 47 Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. 48 I
am the bread of life. 49 Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50
This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51
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."

THE Episcopal CHURCH

Published by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. © 2015 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.