Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Adults
Proper 15 (B)
New Testament: John 6:51-58

BACKGROUND
During this "Ordinary Time" our lives may well include exceptionally un-ordinary events, such as births and deaths. As we take this journey, nourished by the scriptures appointed for the season and empowered by our baptisms, we are invited to be on the lookout for all the blessings found in the ordinary – to see God at work here and now. And we are compelled to share our blessings with others.

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK'S READING
Nutritionists will assure us that we are what we eat. Jesus, long before nutritionists, told us that we become what we eat. And so Jesus invites us to become one with him by eating his flesh and by drinking his blood. Our task is to trust that "whoever eats this bread will live forever."

THEME
We Become What We Eat

BEFORE CLASS
You will need copies of the Bible or copies of the scripture from below and enough copies of the Book of Common Prayer.

BEGINNING
Invite the group to try to imagine hearing the words of today's scripture reading for the very first time. Imagine following Jesus, being fed with the loaves and fishes, seeing incredible healings, and having the Word come alive for you. Then put yourself in their sandals as they heard these words that appear to have been offered, at least in part, for their shock value.

OPENING PRAYER
Thank you, God, for your infinite patience with us as we struggle to understand what you are calling us to understand. Amen.

THE STORY: JOHN 6:51-58
Invite people to read the parts outlined in the script below.

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder what stood out for you in the reading?
- If you hadn't ever heard this passage before, what questions might you have?
- What about verse 52 was so difficult to understand? (It must have sounded like cannibalism.)
- What are the three ways Jesus says basically the same thing in verses 53 to 56? (Eat my flesh. Drink my blood. Have life in you.)
- How might the saying "You are what you eat" help us here?
- What is the significance of the "living Father" in verse 57? (Jesus "lives" because of the Father, and we live because of Jesus.)
- How might this impact the ways in which we live our lives?

GETTING CLOSURE

Invite your group to get comfortably seated and close their eyes. Ask them to breathe deeply and put aside worries and concerns. Then ask them to reflect silently on what you are about to say. (Pause between each phrase.)

A wind from God swept over the face of the waters.
Then the Lord God breathed into the man, breathed the breath of life.
And the word became flesh and lived among us.
I am the bread of life.
The one who eats this bread will live forever.

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for sending us food, drink, and the promise that you will lift us up on the last day. Amen.

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JOHN 6:51-58

Jesus: "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."

Narrator: The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying,

Religious Leaders: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

Narrator: So Jesus said to them,

Jesus: "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever."

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