

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Proper 6 (B)

New Testament: Mark 4:26-34

BACKGROUND

We are now in the long season known as Ordinary Time, which runs through Christ the King Sunday. 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

Jesus has begun his ministry; fresh with the capacity to notice abundance wherever he looks. But how to describe the richness of the Kingdom of God so people can grasp it? Seeds. Maybe that is it – everyone has seen seeds.

THEME

Seeds Scattered on the Ground

BEFORE CLASS

This lesson cries out for fresh dirt, water, and seeds! Some options: you and the children could cast wildflower seeds on a vacant lot; or plant seeds in a container small enough for you to take home and water (unless there is someone in your church who could tend to it midweek); or you and the children could plant some hardy seeds in paper cups. Note: the concept of Kingdom of God is a bit abstract for these children, but God's World may connect.

If you are going to show the YouTube video of the story, have the equipment set up and tested.

BEGINNING

Ask the children if anyone has ever planted a seed or helped someone else plant seeds. Find out what they know (digging a hole, planting the seeds, covering them, watering them, etc.) Then tell them we have a story about seeds today.

OPENING PRAYER

Life-giving God, thank you for all that you plant and for how you help us grow. Be with us as we hear your story and your word that we may grow closer to you. Amen.

THE STORY: MARK 4:26-34

“Hmmm,” said Jesus. “God’s World is so wonderful, how can I tell people so they will understand? Hmmm. I know,” said Jesus. “Seeds! Everyone has seen seeds. It’s like this: there are seeds planted all over the place. We go to bed and sleep, we get up, and one day little green shoots stick up in the ground. No one knows how; it just happens. The shoots get bigger and bigger. One day they are ready to be picked. Then, if they are wheat seeds, we can make bread, cereal – even cookies. Sometimes the tiniest seed of all grows up to be the biggest tree. And that tree sticks out its big branches so birds can come sit on the branches – and make safe nests for their eggs.”

Here is a YouTube video of the Parable of the Mustard Seed you could use if you have the equipment. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKpxQjWV2RA>

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder how Samuel felt as each son was brought out to him?
- I wonder who was most surprised to learn that David would be the next king?
- I wonder what God saw in David that helped him choose David to be king?
- I wonder what God sees when looking at me? At you?

ACTIVITIES

Show the children what you have brought (seeds to plant outside – seeds to plant in a pot or in cups to go). If you cannot go outside for this activity, cover the workspace with newspapers or trash bags. Plant away!

If you have time, and if the children are taking the plants home, you can also give them popsicle sticks and help them write what seeds they have planted, so they and their parents can know what they are watching grow.

For additional ideas for seeds, look at this lesson from Abundant Life Garden Project from Episcopal Relief and Development. (Scroll down the page and click on Session Two: Seeds).

<http://www.er-d.org/Children#Abundant>

Grow like a Plant

Ask the children to show with their bodies what it is like to be a tiny round seed. What does it look like when a tiny green shoot sticks up through the ground? Then, show what the plant looks like when it gets bigger and sways in the breeze. What does it feel like when rain comes down on the leaves and the flowers? What would the seed look like if it grew into a great big tree with long branches stretching out? How would it look if birds came and sat on the branches – and made little nests that baby birds could sit in?

If time permits, give the children paper and crayons to draw either what you have planted together or the seed growing up.



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GETTING CLOSURE

Describe what will happen from here, if you planted seeds. (How they will be cared for, etc.) Suggest the children be on the lookout for little green sprouts around their homes.

CLOSING PRAYER

Gracious God, thank you for our time together. Help us to grow in our love of you each day. Amen.