

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Older Children

Proper 6 (B)

Old Testament: 1 Samuel 15:34-16:13

BACKGROUND

In some ways, God is re-establishing his authority of the choosing of the kings of Israel. When Saul was chosen, the people had begged for a king and God took it as rejection of his authority. He granted their wish and later regretted his choice. Now he sends Samuel to Jesse and a big deal is made of bringing out all the older sons first. God makes his message clear: it is what is on the inside that matters most. David is found by God to be the right one, even though he is young.

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK'S READING

We do best when we remember that God chooses us and calls us into leadership, and that our outward appearance does not matter. God sees what is in our heart.

THEME

The Lord Looks on the Heart

BEFORE CLASS

Gather the materials to write the lists and the letters. Learn the songs for closing.

BEGINNING

Gather the children and distribute paper and pens to all. Invite them to write down three things about themselves that people would not know just by looking at them. They could be past experiences, hobbies, who makes up their family, etc. Collect the papers and read off the facts. Invite the group to guess who wrote each set. Allow for a time of clarifying questions and informal conversation. Celebrate together the wonderful gifts and experiences shared and wonder together about the significance of getting to know someone on a deeper level than just what is visible.

OPENING PRAYER

O God, you know us and love us. Help us to see what really matters in our friends and family and in our own lives. Amen.

THE STORY: 1 SAMUEL 15:34-16:13

Read from the NRSV or another version you prefer.

Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul. Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the Lord was sorry that he had made Saul king over Israel.

The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you, and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.” Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, “Do you come peaceably?” He said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is now before the Lord.” But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen any of these.” Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.” He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, “Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.” Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

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

Appreciation Letters

Talk about the importance of seeing people for who they really are and not just reacting to what they look like. Say that God values our characteristics of kindness, courage, helpfulness, faithfulness, etc. Invite them to think about someone close to them (a family member, neighbor, close friend, etc.) and consider their “invisible” qualities. Ask them to

name a quality they appreciate and write a letter to that person affirming that characteristic.

Game: Come Over, Come Over

The goal is to get everyone into a line in the middle of the room. Begin with half the students on one side and half on the other. A leader (or teams can take turns) calls out a characteristic (either seen or unseen). The children step to the line in the middle if that characteristic applies to them. Examples could include: wearing black shoes, is kind to family members, likes to sing, wears glasses, etc. Play until everyone is on the middle line.

GETTING CLOSURE

Invite everyone to try to see as God sees during the coming week. Try to look for the invisible qualities of a person, rather than judging them by their outward appearance. Ask them to consider how God might see them as well.

Sing Thuma Mina (Send Me Jesus) from My Heart Sings Out, or “I the Lord of Sea and Sky” from Wonder Love and Praise.

CLOSING PRAYER

God of grace, thank you for creating us in your image and helping others see in us the gifts we have to serve you each day. Bless us as we leave this place and help us to see and appreciate the qualities and gifts each person has. Amen.