Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Adults
Proper 16 (B)
New Testament: John 6:56-59

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
The fork in the road. The moment of truth. The choice. Will we do things the way we've always done it, or will we take a leap of faith? "This teaching is difficult!" say those who have trekked with Jesus. Will we risk the spirit that gives life or will we pin all our hopes on "the flesh"? Jesus invites us into the unfathomable joys of the kingdom of God. What will we choose?

THEME
What Will We Choose?

BEFORE CLASS
You will need copies of the Scripture reading (found below) or enough Bibles for the group. You will also need copies of the Book of Common Prayer for the group.

BEGINNING
Tell the group that this is the last of the sessions on John 6, and today we will look at the scripture passage to see what it has to say to us: right here where we are. Then tell them we will look at Eucharistic Prayer D and close with a few minutes of contemplative prayer.

OPENING PRAYER
Teaching God, be with us today and help us to be open to your Spirit – your Spirit that gives life. Amen.

THE STORY: JOHN 6:56-59
Invite people to choose a part to read -- the part of Jesus, the narrator, or the disciples (which could be read in unison by all the rest of the group).

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.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What stood out for you in this passage?
- What is the struggle the disciples are having with what Jesus is saying? (See verses 60, 67b. They want to believe, but it is hard. They realize that Jesus has the words of life so they want to choose to follow.)
- I wonder if any of us struggle with this passage?
- In verse 63, what is Jesus saying to the disciples – and to us? Does he mean that we should abandon our bodies? (No, but our bodies will not, finally, take us where we need to go.)
- Consider the word "wind" in Genesis 1:2: "while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters." The word ruach (pronounced "ROO–hah") in Hebrew means "wind," "breath," and also "spirit." In what ways does our breathing signify that we are alive?
- Notice how often the word "choice" is used in this passage. In verse 65, God chooses who can come to God. In verse 66, some of the disciples choose to go away. In verse 67, Jesus asks those who stayed if they want to leave. In verse 70, Jesus has chosen the disciples. And one of the disciples will choose to betray him. How do we show that we are choosing "the spirit that gives life?" (By continuing to follow, being willing to grow, being faithful, trusting.)

ACTIVITY

Look at Eucharistic Prayer D, The Book of Common Prayer (p. 372). If you have time, ask someone to read the entire prayer while the rest follow along or have people switch off reading by paragraph. As you are reading through the Eucharistic Prayer, invite people to make note of a particular word or phrase that particularly spoke to them. Once you are done reading, invite the group to share the word or phrase that struck them.

GETTING CLOSURE

Invite the group into a brief contemplative prayer. If they are unfamiliar with this type of prayer, explain that the purpose is to sit quietly with eyes closed and simply "be" for God. Instead of offering petitions, simply being quiet. As stray thoughts occur, let them float on by and return again to the quiet. If there is too much noise in your head, simply select a simple word: "Jesus," "Spirit," "Abba," or even "Amen." When the group is ready, say: "Be still, and know." If the group is new to this type of prayer, 3 to 5 minutes will be sufficient. If they are experienced with this type of prayer, agree together how long the time should be and you should watch the clock. At the end, you could simply say: "Amen." Or you could lead the group in saying The Lord's Prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER

Gracious God, we offer our prayers to you and thank you for the ways in which you teach us to live with you and with each other. Bless us as we continue on our journey today. Amen.

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.

JOHN 6:56-59

Jesus: "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 for ever."

Narrator: Jesus said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. When many of his disciples heard it, they said,

Disciples: 'This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?'

Narrator: But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them,

Jesus: 'Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe.'

Narrator: For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said,

Jesus: 'For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.'

Narrator: Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve,

Jesus: 'Do you also wish to go away?'

Narrator: Simon Peter answered him,

Simon Peter/Disciple: 'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'

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.