Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Younger Children
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
Balloons would be good for this session. Blow up a few before class, then blow up a few more when the children are with you. You can also use bubbles or pinwheels.

BEGINNING
Show the children a balloon that is inflated and one that has no air in it. Ask the children which one bounces higher. What has made the difference? Tell the children that in the language Jesus spoke, the word for "air" – or "breath" – was the same as the word for "spirit." Today we will hear what Jesus said about spirit.

OPENING PRAYER
Thank you, Jesus, for helping us to know that you love us and that you want us to have your spirit in us. Amen.

THE STORY: JOHN 6:56-59
The people who had been listening to Jesus were having a hard time understanding him. "This is hard!" they said. Some of them thought it was so hard that they just went away. Jesus asked his friends if they wanted to go away too. "No way," they said, "we want to

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be with you." Jesus said to them, "It is the spirit that gives life. Without the spirit, my breath, your bodies are not good for much of anything."

ACTIVITY

If you can go outside, have a balloon relay race. (Since you might be popping balloons, make sure you do this in an area that will not disrupt others.) Set up a course that works for your setting. If it is an especially hot day, instead of running, tell the children to walk heel-toe, heel-toe. Or have them tiptoe or take three big steps forward and then two back. Take extra balloons with you in case one pops. If the children ask, "What happens to the spirit when the balloon pops?" You can tell them that the "spirit" has gone out of the balloon and its body is not of much use. When we die, the spirit goes out of our bodies, our bodies are not of much use, but our spirit goes to be with Jesus.

Option: If you cannot go outside, you could use bubbles or pinwheels to show breath/spirit for this activity and do it inside. You could also invite the children to draw some pictures of breath or the spirit.

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for these summer days we have had together. Thank you for sending Jesus to show us how to stay close to him. Amen.

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