Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Older Children
Proper 17 (B)
New Testament: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

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.

The Pharisee in each of us wants to "get it right." In the gospel passages for Propers 17-22 from the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is concerned that we "get it." So Jesus takes the ordinary things of life, from washing hands to attending to a child, and meets us where we are and helps us to "get it," finding blessings in the ordinary.

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK'S READING
Temple security guards, those responsible for guarding the purity of the religion, are getting hung up on rules that seem urgent to them but they are missing what is important. Jesus dismisses their concerns about who washed what and insists that these concerns are reducing the ability to hear and do God's word. What is important is not what goes into the body, it is what comes out of our hearts.

THEME
What Does Defile?

BEFORE CLASS
If this is your first session with the group, make sure you have nametags for everyone and open with a Get-to-Know-You activity.

You will need Bibles for each child, scraps of paper, markers, construction paper, pencils, and at least four copies of the script if you are reading the lesson with parts. Look the "Basic Supply List" page found below, which lists the materials you will need for crafts for the next six sessions. For this week's class, bring materials to make fancy bookmarks: laminating sheets, scraps of colored tissue paper, felt markers, and plain paper.

BEGINNING
Once you have done a Get to Know you activity, then tell the children that for the next six weeks you will look at what the writer of Mark's Gospel has to say in his gospel, and you will get more familiar with the Bible and look for what the Bible has to say to you all – right where you are today.

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OPENING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for bringing us here together today and for being with us as we hear and wonder about your story. Amen.

BIBLE SCAVENGER HUNT (OPTIONAL)

Make sure each child has a Bible and scraps of paper to serve as bookmarks (at least 4 or 5 per child) and pencils.

- Ask the children to look for the index, and place a bookmark at the index.
- Ask the children to find the beginning of the New Testament and insert a bookmark.
- Ask them find the beginning of the Old Testament and insert a bookmark.
- Ask them to find the Gospel According to Mark and insert a bookmark.
- Ask them to find Mark, chapter 7, verse 1.
- Ask the children to write on the paper scrap serving as a bookmark: Mark 7:1-6, 14-15, 21-23. Tell the children that this is the passage we will be reading today.

THE STORY: MARK 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

If the children would like to volunteer to read different parts, you will need someone to read the lines of the narrator, the Pharisee, and Jesus. (It is outlined in script form below. If you are going to use the script, make sure you have at least four copies and the other children can follow along in their bibles)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder what stands out for you in the reading?
- As we begin the story today, The Pharisees are following the letter of the law and being very careful with how they wash cups and even pans. I wonder what you think Jesus finds wrong with this? (The Pharisees, who are the leaders of the Hebrew people, are focused on the details of the washing, and they complain that the disciples are not following these rules. The Pharisees do not notice the more important things that they are doing that are wrong.)
- Does anyone know what defile means? (To defile is to make dirty or pollute.)
- I wonder what Jesus means when he says "the things that come out are what defile"? (He means that the actions we take and the things we say are what matter.)
- I wonder if you have had a time in your life when what you said really mattered.
- I wonder if there are times you can think of that what you or someone you know had done or said has had an impact on others.

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ACTIVITIES

Class Rules

Invite the children to help you illustrate some class rules so we can do and say things that will help us work together. Ask the children what some rules might be. Suggest, "How about 'Listen to each other' and 'Share with each other'"? Try to get the children to give you examples of these types of behavior. Ask the children, "What can we do when we goof up?" Suggest, "How about if we say, 'I'm sorry'?"

When the children have completed drawing the rules of behavior on their construction paper, hang the posters where you and the children will be able to see them.

Bible Bookmarks

Tell the children that over then next year, we will be finding things in the Bible that will help us on our journey with God. As we explore the Bible, it would be helpful if each of us had a distinctive bookmark. Invite the children to make bookmarks.

Using the materials you brought, let each child design and create a bookmark. Tell the children they will be leaving these bookmarks in the classroom so they will be available each time you meet. (If there is sufficient time and materials, they could also make a bookmark to take home with them.)

GETTING CLOSURE

Tell the children that one of the ways we live as a community is to share our concerns and our thanksgivings together. Tell them that each time we meet, we can ask for prayers for someone we are concerned about and thanksgivings for someone who got well or if we got a happy surprise. If no one has anything to offer, you can begin by asking their prayers for someone you are praying for and sharing something you are thankful for.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for letting us come to you with our prayers of concern and our offerings of thanks, especially for (add what the class suggests). Amen.

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BASIC SUPPLY LIST

1 ream copier paper
1 package construction paper, various colors
500 sheets
Crayons
Masking tape (one roll 60')
Transparent tape (108' roll)
Glue - 4 oz. bottles or .88 oz. glue sticks
Scissors (enough for each child to have one)
Glitter

Optional

Fluorescent BioColor Paint
Paint
Paintbrushes
Tissue paper - 50 sheets, assorted colors

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MARK 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Narrator: Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him,

Pharisees/Scribes: 'Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?'

Jesus: 'Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines." You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.'

Narrator: Then Jesus called the crowd again and said to them,

Jesus: 'Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.' For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.'

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