Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Younger 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.

Begin by making a large name tag for yourself out of construction paper (at least 6" by 9") with the name you want the children to call you in the middle and decorations around your name that illustrate things about you (little faces for your own children if you have them, something to indicate what you do during the week, a hobby, a pet, etc.). Create similar nametags for the children, leaving space for them to decorate it themselves.

BEGINNING

As the children arrive, have your name tag hanging around your neck and invite the children to decorate the nametags you have for them. Do they have a pet at their house? If so, ask the to draw it on their nametag. Do they go to daycare? If so, ask them the name of the place. Are they in a school? If so, ask them to draw the school.

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If it is your first time with these children, you may want to use one of the "Getting to Know You" exercises.

Option: If music is one of the gifts you bring to this class, select a very simple tune and create new words for it. For example, using the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb," you could sing: "Here we are at church today, church today, church today. Here we are at church today, And God is here with us." Each week you could add new words that the children can help you compose.

OPENING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for letting us be here in church today. Thank you for letting (name each child) be here today. Amen.

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

Tell the children that the story today is about some people who really wanted to get it right. These people were in charge of the temple, the place people went to worship God. These people always washed their hands before they ate and they had special ways to wash each of the cups and pans in their kitchens. Jesus tells these people that they are worrying about the wrong things. Jesus tells these people that it is much more important to God what we say and what we do. Washing hands is good, and washing cups and pans is good. But being careful about what we say and what we do is more important. Things we do and things we say to other people can really hurt them.

ACTIVITIES

Let each child select a piece of construction paper and some crayons or markers. 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.

GETTING CLOSURE

If the children did not know each other before today, you could another one of the getting acquainted activities from the beginning of class to make sure the children do know each other's names. If the children did know each other, and you began with a song, you could end your time together with the same song.

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for letting us be together today. Thank you for (and name each child), and thank you for being right here with us. 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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