Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Younger Children
Proper 22 (B)
New Testament: Mark 10:2-16

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
The Pharisees continue to try to trap Jesus. Divorce: "Is it lawful?" the Pharisees ask. Jesus moves the question to higher ground. Meanwhile, people were bringing their children to Jesus. The disciples still did not "get it" and were trying to turn the children away. Jesus takes the children, lays his hands on them, and blesses them. Do we "get it"?

THEME
Jesus Blessed Them

BEFORE CLASS
You will need paper and crayons. The Episcopal Church recognizes divorce and, after appropriate counseling, may authorize a remarriage. Frequently, children whose parents divorce carry in their psyches the conviction that the divorce was, somehow, their fault. As a teacher, you probably cannot heal that deep wound, but attending to what the child has to say can help the process. For this lesson, more than any in the series, it is important for teachers to listen more than talk.

BEGINNING
Today we have a story with two stories in one. Jesus is telling people to watch out and not have their hearts closed, and he is also telling people, yet again, that he loves the children – all the children.

OPENING PRAYER
Thank you, Jesus, for loving all of us – adults, children, old people, young people, big children, and little children. Amen.

THE Episcopal CHURCH

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THE STORY: MARK 10:2-16

Some leaders came to ask Jesus a question. They were pretty sure Jesus would not be able to answer their question. And Jesus gave them an answer they did not expect. They asked Jesus if it was OK for people to get a divorce. Jesus told them they were asking the wrong question! When people get married they really want to stay married, but sometimes they get divorced. But Jesus said the problem is not divorce, it is "hard hearts." What is a hard heart? Well, it could mean you won't play with a child in your class. Or it could mean you say you don't like something or someone without ever making an effort or trying. Jesus' friends still don't "get it." Jesus wants the children to come to him and to be a part of what everyone does. Jesus ended his story by blessing each child.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder if you would continue to believe in God's goodness with sores all over your body?
- I wonder if you know a person that is like Job, completely faith-filled. Can you tell us about that person?

ACTIVITIES

Option 1: Give each child a piece of white paper and some crayons. (Take one yourself and draw along with them.) Tell the children to draw a picture of Jesus with them, telling Jesus things that make them sad and things that make them happy. When they have finished with their pictures. They can take it home and put it beside the cross they made a few weeks ago – to remind them that Jesus is ready to listen any time.

Option 2: Give each child a piece of paper – the same size as the other pieces you have given for additions to the poster. Tell them to draw Jesus with them and also with other children if they would like. Tell the children this picture will be added to your class poster of Jesus.

GETTING CLOSURE

Bring the children into a circle with you, preferably sitting on the floor. Invite the children to tell you about the pictures they drew. (Accept what they offer – do not attempt to evaluate what they have done or what they say.) A serious nod or verbal thank you is usually all that is desired from the teacher. If you sense the child might want to say more, invite the child by simply asking, "Did you want to tell us anything more?" (If the answer is no, assure the child that is OK.)

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you, Jesus, for being here with us and listening to what we say. Thank you for loving each of us and reminding us we are important in your kingdom. Amen.

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