Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Younger Children
Proper 23 (B)
New Testament: Mark 10:17-31

BACKGROUND
During the last weeks of Ordinary Time in Lectionary Cycle B, the Gospel of Mark, our primary guide, continues. The kingdom of God is open for all people. We hear this message in the readings about the rich man, the disciples jockeying for position, the blind man, the saints, the poor widow, and even Pilate as he queries Jesus about being a king. We don't have to pass an entrance exam; we are already in the kingdom. Through all the changes that occur in our lives, what will not change is God's love for each of us. The kingdom that Jesus is proclaiming is already here and yet is also still to come – the undercurrent of Advent, which is coming near.

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK'S READING
What does it take to get in? That's the question that Jesus is asked. Jesus answers the question that is not asked and offers a very different way of being. The commandments of old are valid but insufficient. The way we've always done it is not working. What in the world would be an entrance requirement for a way of life you have already begun? What if it is not about getting in but about noticing that you are already in?

THEME
What Does it Take to Get Into the Kingdom?

BEFORE CLASS
Use a basket or a plastic bin from the classroom or from your home and fill it with toys, costume jewelry, fake money, etc. -- things the children would recognize as items a "rich" person would have.

BEGINNING
Tell the children that today's story is about a man who had way too much stuff and it was getting in his way.

OPENING PRAYER
Thank you, Jesus, for giving us stories that show us that you love us. Amen.

THE STORY: MARK 10:17-31
A man who owned many things and had lots of money comes up to Jesus. The man is used to being able to get whatever he wants. He asks Jesus how he can be sure he gets into heaven. Jesus knows this man knows the Ten Commandments (rules for living a

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.

good life), so Jesus tells the man to follow those rules – rules like don't kill anyone, don't tell lies, and obey your parents. The man feels very proud of himself because he is sure he does all these things. Jesus sees that the man is proud of following all the rules, but was still unhappy, so Jesus says, "Well, what you really need to do is sell everything you have and give the money to poor people." That made the man sad, because he loved all his fancy things, so he just went away.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Like the rich man let money and possessions get in the way of being with God, ask the children if they can think of some things that might be distracting them from loving God and invite them to share. (too many toys, focusing on having "stuff," obsessing over a specific thing they like to do, etc.)

Like the rich man let money get in the way, invite the children to draw pictures of what they might need to get rid of or what they think they can do to be closer to God.

ACTIVITIES

Ask for a child to act out the part of the rich man and another to act out the part of Jesus. Give the basket of toys to child playing the rich man and tell that child to go up to Jesus and ask what he needs to do to get into heaven. The child being Jesus can tell him to be a good person. The man can tell Jesus he is always a good person. Jesus can then tell the man to sell everything he has – all the toys in the basket – and give the money to the poor. The man goes away sadly.

Then have the children act it out the same way except that this time the rich man decides to sell his stuff. Perhaps he goes over to a computer, gets on eBay and sells all his stuff. Then he goes back to Jesus and writes a big check to help the poor people. He asks if he can follow Jesus.

Ask the children if they think they have to sell everything they have. Explain that Jesus only asked this man to do that because he needed to get rid of some of his stuff and help others who had less.

GETTING CLOSURE

Invite the children to share their pictures.

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for helping us to remember that being with you is what is important. Help us to remember that all the "things" in our lives can be distracting and remind us that with you all things possible. 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.