

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Third Sunday in Lent
Gospel Lesson for Adults

Scripture: Luke 13:1-9

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: Come, let us adore him. (Antiphon for Lent, Book of Common Prayer, page 81.) And what if, during this season of Lent, we sought a deeper understanding of this amazing gospel of grace? Will that image of grace energize us to do the spiritual housekeeping we need to be ready for the "new thing" God is doing in Easter?

A notation for this week's Gospel

To repent means to turn or return after seeing what you have done or not done is wrong. It is a change of mind – turning away from the evil ways, toward the good ways. The first part of today's Gospel may seem like another version of the age-old question: why are some people killed in bizarre accidents — and others amazingly spared?

However, today's lesson is not about good guys or bad guys, but rather about turning your life around so you are ready to meet God. It is about feeding our souls with the good, nurturing ourselves so we will produce good things, and turning over the soil of our lives so we can begin again and again.

Theme: Called to repentance

Before Class: You will need Bibles or the copy of the scripture found at the end of the lesson and at least one copy of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Beginning: Our Gospel for today has two stories: the first story's theme could be a paraphrase of the popular book, *Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?* The second story is about a tree that gets another chance.

Opening Prayer: Gracious God, our Psalms tell us, "Oh God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you." Help us to eagerly seek you each day. Amen. (Psalm 63:1)

The Scripture: Luke 13: 1 - 9. Invite two people to read.

The first will read the scripture all the way through. As this person reads the scripture, invite the group to notice words or phrases that stick out for them. After the reading is done, invite people to share their word or phrase.

Invite the second person to read. As this person reads, invite the group to notice what Jesus is saying to them in the scripture today.

Questions: After the second reading, invite them to share what they think Jesus might be saying to them today.

I wonder what good soil is being wasted in our own lives with non-bearing things growing there.

I wonder what "fertilizer" is re-energizing us — improving our ability to "bear fruit."

I wonder who, by their presence in our lives (our gardener), is currently creating space for us to grow?

Getting Closure: Invite anyone who wishes to share insights that have come to them during this class or within the last week. Perhaps they have read something recently that was helpful. Invite them to share what they might be taking away from today's scripture lesson.

Closing Prayer: Read the Collect for the Third Sunday in Lent, *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 218.

Luke 13:1-9

13At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²He asked them, ‘Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? ³No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. ⁴Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.’

6 Then he told this parable: ‘A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷So he said to the gardener, “See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?” ⁸He replied, “Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.”’

Printed by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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