

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 6
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Luke 7:36 – 8:3

We remain Easter people, now with the wind of the Holy Spirit in our sails. Our task for the months ahead in this season of Ordinary Time, which extends to the end of November, is to look at what Jesus so tenaciously taught his disciples and see what is in these teachings for us as we carry out the work we have been given to do. Jesus promised his disciples a helper, an Advocate, who would stand with them making the work possible. This same helper, the Holy Spirit, hovers over us still eager to quench the fire of fear and replace it with the powerful energy of love.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

Luke's Gospel accompanies us on the rest of our journey this year. Luke fleshes out the parables and adds rich details not found in the other gospel accounts. Today, it is the story of the woman who is self-convicted of sin. Her relief at encountering forgiveness flows out of her in an extravagant display of gratitude. Are we so able to confront our transgressions, confess them, and then believe they are truly forgiven, that we, too, can dance our gratitude?

Theme: The gratitude that flows from forgiveness

Before: There are three options for activities today.

Foot Washing: You will need pitchers of water, a place to dump the used water, towels, Try to do this outside. If not, make sure you have lots of towels and maybe set down a tarp.

Drawing Activity: You will need paper and coloring supplies.

Beginning: After you have greeted the children and checked in with them on what is going on in their lives. You might offer something from yours that would interest them. Ask them to think about something they might do that would get them into **BIG** trouble with their parents. What would get their parents so angry with them, that they would be sure they were going to get punished, big time? (If they are having trouble, ask them to think about something they **KNOW** they are not supposed to do, but that they do anyway. This is not about an accident, but something they know they should not do.)

You could also ask them to think of things (like chores or responsibilities) that they do everyday. Things like taking your shoes off when you come in the house, brushing your teeth, helping set the table for dinner. What happens if they forget to do those things?

Once they have settled on something (or you have come up with several hypothetical situations) ask them how they think they would feel if their parents, instead of punishing them said: "I can see you are really sorry about this. I can see you have learned something. No, I am not going to punish you!" Ask the children to say with you : "W H E U U U U! What a relief! Wow! I sure feel better!" (Add any motions that seem appropriate - wiping the forehead, dancing around in a circle.) Tell the children that the big fancy word for what they are feeling is **GRATITUDE**. Tell them the story we have today is about gratitude.

Praying: Thank you God for forgiving us when we do bad things or forget to do things. Amen.

The Story: Jesus was invited to a fancy party. There were lots of people at the dinner table and lots of really good food. When Jesus came in, they just said: "Hi Jesus, grab a seat." A woman who had done some really bad stuff found out that Jesus was going to be at this party, so she showed up with a jar of sweet smelling oil. Since people did not wear socks and shoes, but just sandals on their bare feet, and it was hot and dusty in town, usually a party began with someone washing everyone's feet so they would not be itchy and scratchy in the sandals. No one had done that for Jesus, so the woman started washing his feet with her tears, drying them with her long hair, and then putting the oil on Jesus feet. "Hey!" the host of the party said to Jesus: "Don't you know that woman has done some really bad stuff?" Jesus told him that the woman had told God she was sorry and God had said I can see that you are sorry and I am not going to punish you. Jesus also reminded the host of the dinner that he had forgotten to wash his feet. Jesus forgave the host. Both the woman and the host were feeling GRATITUDE!

Option: Foot Washing

If you can go outside, it will be easier to manage the splashing. If you cannot, be sure you have lots of towels, pitchers of water, and a place to dump used water – such as a trash can. If children have shoes and socks, have them stuff socks into shoes so the socks will not get lost. If they are wearing sandals, they will get an even better idea of what it was like in Jesus' time when sand got between feet and sandals and washing would feel so good. Invite the children to wash each other's feet and dry them gently with towels.

Option: Invite the children to create a movement activity to show how gratitude feels. They could crouch in a corner, feeling very bad about something, then get up and dance around, arms flying in the air to show the freedom gratitude brings. If time permits, they could sketch their dance and take the picture home with them.

Activity: If time permits (or if you chose not to do the foot washing option) invite the children to draw pictures of the grateful woman washing Jesus' feet with her tears and drying Jesus' feet with her hair.

Getting Closure: Ask the children to pretend you do not know what gratitude means. Ask them to tell you or show you in their own words.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for showing us what gratitude means. Thank you for loving us. Amen.

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