

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 7**  
**Lesson Plans for Older Children**

**Scripture: Luke 8:26-39**

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 his week's Gospel**

Demons. Not a likely topic for a meeting of psychiatric medical professionals. And the prescription — tossing demons onto the back of pigs and subsequently driving the pigs off a cliff — is equally unlikely. Yet who among us has not been taunted by a demon in some other disguise? ("I am not qualified, I can't do it, it is too hard." etc.) And, oh, the delicious relief when the wind blows the demons away.

**Theme: Demons blown away**

**Before Class:** You will need enough Alka-Seltzer (or something similar) so each child has at least one tablet and a large clear bowl filled with water or enough cups of water for each child.

**Beginning:** Tell the children that today's scripture talks about the damage demons can do. Demons grab people's attention, make them think lies about themselves, and can make people very miserable. Share a demon you can resonate with and something that is true for you. (i.e. I didn't think I was smart enough, but I was.)

Some things we cannot change: I am not a good enough baseball player to be invited to play for a professional team. But the demons we are talking about are the demons we can get rid of. Some demons we are okay talking about, and some we may not want to share with each other. No matter what they are, God waits for us to share them with God.

**Opening Prayer:** Dear God, thank you for wanting us to be free of the demons that bother us. Thank you for making us free to serve you and to live our lives in love and in peace. Amen.

**The Scripture: Luke 8: 26- 39.** Here is a way to divide up the reading:  
Verses 26-31, Verses 32-33, Verses 34-37, Verses 38 and 39

**Questions:**

- What is the illness of the man in this story? (So consumed by demons that he even tears his clothes off!)
- What do the demons say to Jesus? (Verse 28b)
- What did Jesus do about this? (Verse 29a)

- I wonder why didn't the demons want to get out of the man? (They were having a wonderful time making the man miserable — that is what demons do.)
- What did the demons propose as a solution? (Verse 32)
- What did the people taking care of the swine do? (Verse 34)
- What did the man who was cured of the demons do? (Verse 38)
- I wonder why do you think Jesus told the man to go home and not follow Jesus? (Maybe Jesus realized that this happy, healed man could help other people get rid of their demons.)

**Activity: Wondering**

I wonder if you would come up with the same solution as Jesus did? (Even if we had a herd of swine and a cliff, would the owners of the herd be so understanding?)

I wonder what demons we might experience in our culture today? I wonder if we have any demons that hold us back? They do not have to share, just think about them. Then ask them to think about how much more energy they would have if these demons were not bugging them.

**Activity:** Since we do not have a herd of swine in our classroom, let alone a cliff to drive them over, we can try something else. Show them the big bowl of water and the Alka-Seltzer tablets. Tell the children to, one by one, take one of the tablets, think about a demon you want to let go of, put the demon on the back of the Alka-Seltzer and drop it in the water. Watch what happens to the tablet! Then invite another child to do the same. Keep going until each child has drowned a demon. Remember to take a turn yourself also.

**Getting Closure:** Ask the children what they think they could do the next time they meet something that looks a lot like that drowned demon? Could they tell the demon: "Sorry, you have no more power over me. I drowned you a long time ago. Get away!"

**Closing Prayer:** Loving God, you tell us not to be afraid. Thank you for helping us get rid of our demons and fears. Be with us as we confront them each day. Amen.

## Luke 8:26-39

26 Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. <sup>27</sup>As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. <sup>28</sup>When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, ‘What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me’— <sup>29</sup>for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) <sup>30</sup>Jesus then asked him, ‘What is your name?’ He said, ‘Legion’; for many demons had entered him. <sup>31</sup>They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

32 Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. <sup>33</sup>Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

34 When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. <sup>35</sup>Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. <sup>36</sup>Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. <sup>37</sup>Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>8</sup>The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup>‘Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.’ So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

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