

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 7
Lesson Plans for Younger 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: Children, just like adults, have many fears. Some are likely to occur (parents fighting, bullies at school, etc.), but some can be controlled, like the fear of tigers in the closet or monsters under the bed. Perhaps this scripture can help with what is in closets and under beds.

There are two options for today: blowing bubbles outside or “trashing” those things that scare us. Before class, you need to decide whether blowing bubbles outside will be doable in your setting. Depending on what you choose, you will need bubble supplies OR paper, crayons, and pencils.

Recipe for homemade bubbles: For every cup of water add 2 tablespoons of Dawn dishwashing liquid (this brand simply works best) and 1 tablespoon of Karo light corn syrup.

Note: Young children might be horrified that Jesus drove a batch of unsuspecting innocent pigs off a cliff to their death below. So we have softened the manner in which the demons are dispatched. We hope you will find it acceptable.

Beginning: Offer this story or something like it from when you were a child. When I was about 6 (or whatever the average age of your group is) I used to be afraid that monsters were under my bed. I would call my mother and she would come and turn on the light and look under the bed with me to show me that the monsters had gone away, and I could go back to sleep. Has this ever happened to you? Maybe it is something in your closet or outside your window? Invite the children to share their stories.

Praying: Thank you, Jesus, for calming our fears and being with us. Thank you for loving each of us. Amen.

The Story: A man was going crazy with all kinds of demons. A demon is something that makes you afraid and makes you act differently than you normally would. This man was suffering from all the demons and fear he had. Jesus did not want the man to be afraid. So Jesus said to the demons: "You come out of that man this instant and go away and do not ever come back to him. I am sending you demons off the cliff and into the ocean and you are to never come back!" Well, the man felt better right away. He said "Thank you, thank you, thank you to Jesus." The man went home to his friends and told them Jesus had sent his demons away, never to come back.

Option: Invite the children to think of fears or things that they want to get rid of and then tell them we are going to let all those fears go up to God. Take them outside to blow bubbles in the wind. Invite them to say with each bubble, "Go away, bad dream, and do not ever come back!" or "I want my fears to be gone!" Each time they blow the bubbles they can watch them float away and when they pop, those fears have gone up to be with God!

Inside Option: Give the children pieces of paper and crayons. Tell them we are all going to draw our bad dreams and then tear up our drawings into a zillion pieces and put the pieces in the trash.

Getting Closure: Gather the children and tell them that IF the bad dream or fear (or whatever they named) comes back, you can tell it you have already gotten rid of it, and it is not allowed to come back! Tell your parents to come into your room and remind the bad dream that it has been blown to the wind (or torn into a zillion pieces).

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that you want us to be happy and live a peaceful life. When things make us scared, help us to remember that you are there for us. Amen.

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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