

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 8**  
**Gospel Lesson for Adults**

**Scripture: Luke 9:51-62**

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**

Rejection. To the disciples' horror, the people of the village did not receive Jesus. Retribution, they insisted! "No," said Jesus, moving on. Follow, they decided. But what would follow mean? Maybe to follow is to hold focus. Staying on focus involves choosing the important and not getting bogged down in the urgent. What is the important that we follow?

**Theme: Where do we go when we follow?**

**Before Class:** Make sure you have enough copies of the scripture and/or the script below with the scriptures divided into parts.

**Beginning:** Invite the group to notice that our most difficult decisions are often not between a really poor option and a really good one but deciding between two apparently equally good options. For example: do I stay late at work and finish this project which my company really needs, or do I take off in time to get to my child's baseball game?

**Opening Prayer:** Dear God, amid the tyranny of options we face, help us to make the choices that result in truly following you. Amen.

**The Scripture: Luke 9: 51 - 62.** This passage has several voices: the narrator, the disciples, Jesus and three people with speaking parts as they walk with Jesus, and the disciples. Have the volunteers read through their highlighted part in the passage.

**Questions:**

**What's going on here?**

- Is your group clear about the relationship between Samaritans and Jews? (Jews tended to see Samaritans as "mongrels" and Samaritans had little use for Jews although they both read from the same scriptures. Here, Jesus is clearly on his way to Jerusalem; Samaritans did not worship God in Jerusalem but on the mountain, instead.)
- The disciples rage at not being invited in by the Samaritans is understandable, but what is Jesus' response to their rage? (Verses 55-56)
- Three people are walking along with Jesus and the disciples. With the first one speaking, who initiates the conversation? (Verse 57b) and what is Jesus' response? (Verse 58)

- What is the sequence in the second conversation? (Verses 59-60) and in the third? (Verses 61-62)
- If we do not think Jesus opposed a follower attending his own father's funeral, what do we think he means? (In what ways is Jesus helping these people set priorities?)

**How does this speak to us as we choose to follow Jesus?**

- Where did following Jesus take the disciples?
- Where did Jesus go?
- If we really follow Jesus, where will we need to go?

**How do we make choices?**

- Invite a discussion about making choices and what has worked for each of us. How does it help to have someone listen as we talk through our options?
- When have we found someone "wiser" to talk with?
- When have we noticed that we learned something by making the wrong choice and learning from our mistakes?
- When has choosing not to choose until we have had time to reflect helped?
- When has summoning up our courage to do the hard thing energized us for the next decision?
- How does a consistent pattern make these decisions easier to make?

**Getting Closure:** Discuss how our world might look if everyone really chose to love one another? How might that affect the decisions each of us makes?

**Closing Prayer:** *A Prayer For Guidance (Book of Common Prayer, page 832)*

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light rises up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what you would have us to do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in your light we may see light, and in your straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## **Luke 9:51-62**

**Narrator:** When the days drew near for Jesus to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. <sup>52</sup>And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; <sup>53</sup>but they did not receive him, because his face was set towards Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup>When his disciples James and John saw it, they said,

**James and John:** ‘Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?’

**Narrator:** <sup>55</sup>But he turned and rebuked them. <sup>56</sup>Then they went on to another village. <sup>57</sup>As they were going along the road, someone said to him,

**Follower 1:** ‘I will follow you wherever you go.’

**Narrator:** <sup>58</sup>And Jesus said to him,

**Jesus:** ‘Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.’

**Narrator:** <sup>59</sup>To another he said,

**Jesus:** ‘Follow me.’

**Narrator:** But he said,

**Follower 2:** ‘Lord, first let me go and bury my father.’

**Narrator:** <sup>60</sup>But Jesus said to him,

**Narrator:** ‘Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.’

**Narrator:** <sup>61</sup>Another said,

**Follower 3:** ‘I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.’

**Narrator:** <sup>62</sup>Jesus said to him,

**Jesus:** ‘No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.’

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