

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 8**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**

**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:** The premise for very young children is that most of the following they do is defined by someone else. One area they have open to them is to be who they are, bringing their fresh insight to those who will listen to them. They are also deeply prayerful persons, so the focus of this session is that to pray is to follow. Think through where you and the children could go to look for places where they can pray for people and their work and the world around us. Inside, could you and the children tiptoe by the nursery, if you have one, and pray for the little ones and those who care for them? Could you go into some of the staff offices (clearing it ahead of time) and pray for that person and their work? Could you stand outside the worship space and pray for the people inside? Outside, could you ask the children to show you what they find (the little blade of grass growing in the crack in the sidewalk, a tiny bug making its way along a leaf, etc.) and stop and give thanks?

There is also a project that involves a camera, or finger paint, if you have it, or simply crayons and paper.

**Beginning:** Tell the children we have a story about following Jesus, and we will look at ways we, too, can follow Jesus.

**Praying:** Thank you, Jesus, for showing us ways we can follow you. Amen.

**The Story:** Tell the children you need their help to show this story. Ask someone to volunteer to be Jesus, and the rest of us will be Jesus' friends.

*Teacher:* “Jesus, tell us to go on ahead to the next town to get things ready for you. And off we will go.” (Invite the volunteer who is Jesus to tell the friends to go and then you and the rest get up and move from one end of the room to the other.)

*Teacher:* “But guess what? The people don't want to hear about Jesus in that silly town! Are we furious, or what? How do you think we can show that we are angry over this?” (Show outrage, stamp feet, etc. then quiet down.)

*Teacher:* But what does Jesus say? He tells us we will just keep on going to another town. (Invite Jesus to tell the friends to go to another town.)

*Teacher:* So let's walk and walk to the next town. We are saying to Jesus, “We want to follow you.” Jesus says to us, “to follow me, you have to do what I tell you to do.” (Invite Jesus to say, “to follow me, you have to do what I tell you to do.”)

*Teacher:* What does Jesus tell us to do? Jesus says following Jesus is praying for those Jesus loves. (Invite Jesus to say, “If you want to follow me, then pray for people I love.”)

**Activity:** Ask the children to sit in a circle with you and think about people Jesus loves. Be prepared to write down what they offer.

Does he love us? (For sure!) How about our parents? Who else does Jesus love? Does he love the people who come to this church? Who work in this church?

If we were going to show someone what it looks like to be praying, what might we do with our hands? (You could offer your fingers touching in the common gesture to indicate prayer, or the orans position that the priest uses during communion.) Accept what the children agree is a posture to indicate prayer. Then, tell them we will go on a walk, and anytime we find something we want to pray about, we can make that sign.



**Activity:** Tell the children we are going to follow Jesus around our space and pray for those who work here. Depending on time and your facility, tiptoe to the worship space, the nursery, the place where the people who clean store their supplies, the offices, another class space, etc. Stop at each place and ask the children to pray in their own words for what goes on there. If going outside is a part of your following, invite the children to point out things we can say thank you to Jesus for putting in our world: flowers, trees, buildings where people work or live, etc.

When you are done, you might want to help them think about what they can pray for at home and in their everyday lives. Brainstorm with them how they might do that each day.

**Activity:** (If time permits, and you have the materials.) Offer to photograph the hands of each child, held in prayer. To be sure you have the right photo for each child, have each child write his or her name on a piece of paper and place it right by the hands as you take the picture. When you have the photos either developed or printed out on your computer, send each child his or her photo. Tell the child they can put the photo someplace in their bedroom, to remind them that Jesus invites them to pray.

If you don't have a camera, use finger paint and make handprints, or have the children trace an outline each others' hands clasped in prayer.

**Getting Closure:** Gather the children in a circle and invite them to tell about a place we went, or something they saw, that they want to be sure we do not forget.

**Closing Prayer:** In your closing prayer, thank Jesus for the places the children remember, naming each in the prayer.

Loving God, thank you for teaching us to follow you in prayer. We remember those special places we visited today (especially \_\_\_\_\_). Be with us all and help us to follow you in love and prayer. Amen.

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**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 8**  
**Lesson Plans for Older Children**

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

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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:** Since there are several voices in this passage, make sure you have enough copies of the script below or enough copies of the Bible. You will need paper and pencils.

**Beginning:** Tell the children Jesus is still teaching his disciples. Today they are learning about following and what it means to follow Jesus.

**Opening Prayer:** You teach us to follow you, Jesus. Help us to understand how to follow you and be your disciples. Amen.

**The Scripture: Luke 9: 51- 62.** Depending on how many children you have, ask for volunteers to read the parts found in the script. Double up on readers, if needed.

**Questions:**

- Why didn't the people of Samaria want to hear Jesus? (Samaritans were considered "outcasts" by the Jewish people. We will have another story about Samaritans in two weeks.)
- What was the disciple's reaction to not being invited in? (They were furious! Verse 54b)
- What did Jesus do? (He "rebuked" them. What does that mean? Scolded.)
- What happens as Jesus and the disciples walk on to the next town? (People show up and start walking along with them.)
- I wonder what Jesus is trying to help people decide about following him? (Are they sure they can put Jesus first?)
- What does Jesus say to the first person who says they will follow? (Verse 58)
- What happens when Jesus says "follow me" to the second one? (Verse 59b-60)
- And what happens to the third person who says he/she will follow? (Verse 62)

Invite the children to discuss the responses.

- Do we think Jesus really did not think it was important for a man to bury his father or was he trying to help the man set priorities?
- How do we set priorities with the important things we have to do?

**Option:** Give the children sheets of paper and pencils. Suggest they fold the paper in half, and then in half again. Open the sheet of paper back up and create titles for the bottom two quadrants. It could be something like **Very Important** for one and **Important** for the other. Then, give an example from your own life of a choice you have had to make: Taking the dog for a walk (Important) or sitting with your child as she worked on a really hard piece of homework (Very Important). Invite the children to note some decisions they have to make at the top of the page and, either now or later, draw an arrow showing into which column each decision could go.

**Getting Closure:** Brainstorm with the children about what our world would be like if EVERYONE truly followed Jesus, that is, did what Jesus told us to do: loved the way Jesus invited us to love. Tell them that if we can dream something it could happen. Encourage them also to notice things that already are happening. (Football players tutoring children in the inner cities, doctors seeing patients in clinics and not charging, other caring things happening in your own community.)

**Closing Prayer:** *A Prayer For Guidance (adapted from the Book of Common Prayer, page 832)*  
O God, give us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what you would have us do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all bad 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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**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 8**  
**Gospel Lesson for Adults**

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

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**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.*

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