

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 23
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Luke 17:11-19

Choices: What situation do we find ourselves, right here and now, in which we have a choice? What is preventing us from making it? Are possessions, in fact, possessing us? For some of us the choice might be to rearrange our priorities, even make a career change, or maybe it is to faithfully deal with what is on our plate. For all of us, Jesus invites us to follow him.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

What do we take for granted, not pausing for even a moment's gratitude? Healed, nine lepers raced off. One, an undocumented alien, came back to say thanks. Are we choosing to show gratitude?

Theme: Choosing Gratitude

Before Class: You will need Bibles or copies of the scripture and copies of *The Book of Common Prayer*. If you have a laptop, it would come in handy. If not, paper and pens to scribe what the group comes up with will be needed. If you do not know about how leprosy affects people today, you might want to search on internet for some examples.

Beginning: Ask the group to consider this statement: "This person has an attitude of gratitude." What would be some things you might say about that person? Then ask them to be thinking of a person they know who would fit our description.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for opportunities that help us stop, notice, and be grateful. Be with us today as we explore gratitude and your love for us. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 17:11-19 Invite someone to read the passage for today and then sit quietly for a moment.

Questions:

- I wonder what stood out for you in this passage?
- Contrast leprosy in Jesus' time with leprosy in our time. (Then it was almost impossible to treat and people afflicted were shunned. It can be successfully treated with contemporary medical treatments.)
- Why did Jesus tell the lepers to go show themselves to the priests? (Jesus knew that although he had healed them, they would have to be certified as healed by the priests to be allowed to re-enter society.)
- I wonder why the nine lepers raced off so fast? Invite the group to come up with some potential reasons. (Eager to get certified and get back to their families; so blown away at the healing that they were not thinking clearly; perhaps they intended to come back and thank Jesus once they were certified as healed and could get close to Jesus.)

- I wonder why the tenth leper came back. I wonder what he was thinking. (Perhaps he tried to convince the others to turn back but was unsuccessful; perhaps he had an attitude of gratitude and just had to turn back; perhaps he had been ill longer than the others so felt greater relief.)

Getting Closure: Tell the group that they have been commissioned to draft a section for our *Book of Common Prayer*. Ask them to turn to page 810 and following, and notice how many "bidding" (asking for things) prayers there are (72) and how many Thanksgiving prayers (beginning on page 836 there are six pages with 11 prayers) there are.

Tell the group that an attitude of gratitude would long for more "thank you" prayers so we are going to pretend that we have been commissioned to produce some. If time permits you and the group could compose prayers for the occasions you have noticed. If time is short simply list the topics you notice. (For the sound of children's voices in our church, for people who drive people to church, etc. for example.)

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for (and include what the group has noticed.) Amen. *Alternatively* you could end with a prayer that the group has written in gratitude.

Luke 17:11-19

Jesus Cleanses Ten Lepers

11 On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, ¹³they called out, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' ¹⁴When he saw them, he said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went, they were made clean. ¹⁵Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. ¹⁶He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Then Jesus asked, 'Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they?' ¹⁸Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?' ¹⁹Then he said to him, 'Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.'

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