

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

Scripture: Matthew 10:40-42

In this season after Pentecost, we hear stories of Jesus' ministry in the world and our call to engage in that mission. This season is also known as Ordinary Time coming from the word "ordinal" which means counted time. This time is not ordinary as in common or regular, but it is the time of counted weeks between Pentecost and Advent. The color for this season is green and it is often referred to as the green growing time as we hear stories of what God is calling us to do in the world, we join in that call, and we grow in our faith.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel and Reading

Whoever welcomes you, welcomes Christ. Whoever welcomes Christ, welcomes God. Seems simple, but it is rather profound if you stop to think about it. As these words were being written, there weren't phones or computers or even the postal service. Welcoming someone who came bearing a message meant welcoming not just the messenger, but also the one who sent the message. God sent Christ as a messenger, as one who came to show us and speak to us about God and living as people of God. For us today, what does welcoming the other look like and how do we welcome Christ into our lives? Who or what are our messengers today?

Theme: Welcoming Christ

Before Class: You will need two different translations of today's reading. You can either supply enough Bibles (of both translations) or make copies of the scripture for each person.

Beginning: As people are arriving, you may want to give them a small cup of water as a way of illustrating our Gospel lesson. Invite everyone to gather and ask them what it means for someone to be welcoming. After a brief discussion, open in prayer.

Opening Prayer: Loving God, we ask you to be with us as we explore what your words mean for our lives. Guide us as we seek to welcome and be welcomed. Amen.

The Scripture: Matthew 10:40-42

You will be reading the lesson today twice and will need two different readers. Think about having two very different voices read this such as male or female, young or old. Before reading the lesson the first time, invite people to listen for a word or phrase that stood out for them.

Invite the first reader to read the lesson.

After a few moments of silence, invite the group to say what word or phrase stood out for them.

When you feel everyone has shared, invite the group to listen once more and to listen for what Jesus is saying to them. Invite the second reader to read the lesson.

After a few moments of silence, invite the group to say what they heard Jesus saying to them.

After everyone has shared, you can begin with the questions or go to the activity.

Questions:

- I wonder what this Gospel stirs in us?
- I wonder why giving a cold cup of water would be meaningful to someone whom you are welcoming?
- What does it say about how we welcome people here at church?
- What does it tell us about how we welcome the stranger?
- What does it say to us if we are the ones being welcomed?

Activity Option: Invite the group to discuss how your faith community welcomes people on Sundays as well as other days of the week. You can do this in smaller groups or in a large group. How is this Gospel lesson inviting us to change how we greet and welcome people? Do we really welcome them as if they were Christ?

Getting Closure: Invite them to share what stood out for them in our discussion today. How might the world be different if we welcomed each person as if they were truly Christ?

Closing Prayer: Loving God, help us welcome one another and to welcome you. Help us to hear and see your messengers in our midst. Guide our ears, eyes, mouth, hands, and feet that we may engage in your mission in the world. Amen.

Matthew 10:40-42

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple-- truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."

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