

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 19
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Mark 8:27-38

Background: During this “Ordinary Time” our lives may well include exceptionally un-ordinary events, such as births and deaths. As we take this journey, nourished by the scriptures appointed for the season and empowered by our baptisms, we are invited to be on the lookout for all the blessings found in the ordinary – to see God at work here and now. And we are compelled to share our blessings with others.

The Pharisee in each of us wants to "get it right." In the gospel passages for Propers 17-22 from the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is concerned that we "get it." So Jesus takes the ordinary things of life, from washing hands to attending to a child, and meets us where we are and helps us to "get it," finding blessings in the ordinary.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

"Who do people say that I am?" Jesus asks his disciples. And they offer the various responses they have heard. "But who do YOU say that I am?" asks Jesus. Ah, the central question. Central for the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. Central for us. Who do WE say that Jesus is?

Theme: If You Want to Become My Followers

Before Class: For a list of basic supplies, go to the list below. If you do not have those supplies, a “Plan B” art activity is also suggested. In addition, it is suggested that you begin a several week "Who is Jesus" activity using a large, very simple drawing of Jesus. You might draw Jesus with his back to the group so his face may be any color the child imagines. (you can find simple line drawings of Jesus on Google Images) Or you might draw a simple outline figure with no features. You will also need to cut out a simple cross, one per sheet of card stock, one for each child.

Beginning: If this is your first session with the group, make sure you have nametags for everyone and open with a Get to Know You activity. Find Get to Know You Resources: <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/lessons/resources/>.

If the group already knows each other, then begin by asking the children to pretend that you have never heard of Jesus. Who would they tell you Jesus is? Accept what they offer, and take note.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for loving us and showing us who you are. (Include what the children have offered as you say "thank you for") Amen.

The Story (Mark 8:27–38): You might tell the story something like this.

Jesus and his friends are walking along a road. It is probably hot, and the road is dusty. His friends are talking to each other – probably saying things like: "Are we almost there yet? I am

thirsty!" Then, Jesus stops walking and turns to his friends. "Who do people say that I am?" And his friends tell him that people are not sure, but they think he just might be John the Baptist or Elijah the Prophet. "Hmm," says Jesus. "Who do YOU say that I am?" They were pretty sure about this, so they said: "The Messiah."

Who is the Messiah? Well, for thousands of years, people hoped the Messiah would come and be a good king and take care of them.

"Hmm," said Jesus. "OK, but it is not going to be the way you think. I am not going to be a fancy king. In fact, I am going to get killed for what I am telling you. But I will not stay dead. After three days, I will be alive again. So, if you want to be one of my followers, you need to keep remembering to do the things I do."

Activity: Engage the children in conversation as you do this activity, drawing out of the children who they say Jesus is. Be sure they hear you say things such as "Jesus loves us," "Jesus helps us do hard things," and "Jesus knows when we are sad, and he knows when we are happy."

Help the children create a cross to take home. Using the supplies you have, help them to decorate their crosses. You might use glue and glitter, or make a glow-in-the-dark cross. Or you might use clear folder covers and tissue paper.

Option: If time permits, show the children the drawing of Jesus, and tell them that each Sunday we will draw things to put on the poster to show things we are learning about Jesus. Ask the children to draw things they have already told you about Jesus, then suggest that, together, you draw a large cross and decorate it the way you decorated the ones that are going home – and then fasten the cross by the drawing of Jesus and hang your poster where all can see.

Getting Closure: Suggest the children find a place in their bedroom to put the cross they have just made. (If you have used paint and it is not dry, tell them you will take care of it and bring it back next Sunday for them to take home.) Suggest they put it on a bedside table or someplace they will be able to see it to remind them that Jesus loves them.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for loving us and for showing us things we can do for you. Amen.

Basic Supply List

1 ream copier paper
1 package construction paper, various colors, 500 sheets
Crayons
Masking tape (one roll 60')
Transparent tape (108' roll)
Glue - 4 oz. bottles Or .88 oz. glue sticks
Scissors (enough for each child to have one)
Glitter

Optional:

Fluorescent BioColor Paint
Paint
Paint brushes
Tissue paper - 50 sheets -- assorted colors

You can find many of these things at a discount at the following places online:

www.discountschoolsupply.com

<http://www.ssw.com/>

<http://www.orientaltrading.com/>

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 19
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Mark 8:27-38

Background: During this “Ordinary Time” our lives may well include exceptionally un-ordinary events, such as births and deaths. As we take this journey, nourished by the scriptures appointed for the season and empowered by our baptisms, we are invited to be on the lookout for all the blessings found in the ordinary – to see God at work here and now. And we are compelled to share our blessings with others.

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A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

"Who do people say that I am?" Jesus asks his disciples. And they offer the various responses they have heard. "But who do YOU say that I am?" asks Jesus. Ah, the central question. Central for the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. Central for us. Who do WE say that Jesus is?

Theme: If You Want to Become My Followers

Before Class: You will need Bibles for the children, and art supplies you will need if you are going to do the craft activity.

Beginning: If this is your first session with the group, make sure you have nametags for everyone and open with a Get to Know You activity. Find Get to Know You Resources: <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/lessons/resources/>.

Pass out copies of the Bible and the bookmarks. Help them find and mark 2 Kings 2:1-13. Ask them which section of the Bible holds that book (Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament). If you have time, read the passage. If time is short, tell them the story. You might tell the children: Elijah was a prophet, a man who told it like it is. It was time for Elijah to be taken up to heaven and his apprentice, Elisha, would now do the work Elijah had been doing. Elisha had been a good apprentice and wanted to do a good job. He knew that the key to doing a good job was having the spirit that had been helping Elijah. He asks for the same spirit to fall on him. Elijah tells him to watch very carefully as he is taken up to heaven, not take his eyes off of him, and he will get what he needs. As Elijah is being taken up, Elisha keeps his eyes peeled on Elijah, and when Elijah is gone, his coat is at the feet of Elisha, who picks it up and goes on to do the work he has been given to do. To this day, many Hebrew people still expect Elijah to come back, and at the feast of Passover they set a place for him in case he shows up.

Opening Prayer: Thank you for the Prophet Elijah and for those who still wait for his return. Thank you for sending Jesus who will come again. Amen.

The Story (Mark 8:27-38): Ask the children to find this passage in their Bibles. Ask them, “Which section of the Bible contains this book?” (Tell them it’s in the New Testament, in the gospels.) Ask for volunteers to read. You might break the passage in this fashion: verses 27-30; verse 31; verses 32-33; verse 34; verses 35-37; verse 38.

Reflection Questions:

- Who is John the Baptist? (The children may remember that it was John the Baptist who baptized Jesus and was later killed by King Herod.)
- Who is Elijah? (He was a prophet that the Hebrew people expect to return again.)
- What did the disciples mean by saying that Jesus is the Messiah? (The Hebrew people believed that the Messiah – a descendant of King David – would come and be a glorious King.)
- Why didn't Jesus want the disciples to tell other people what they were noticing? (Jesus knew that he was not going to be the kind of king they expected.)
- What does Jesus say is going to happen to him? (He predicts rejection, death and resurrection.)
- What is going on between Peter and Jesus in verses 32b and 33? (Peter wants to protect Jesus from the future that Jesus predicts, and Jesus tells Peter he is getting in the way.)

Activity: Invite the children to explore the meaning of “taking up your cross and following Jesus” by developing their own “crosses.” Explain that knights of old went out to do battle carrying a shield with their family crest and motto. We probably won't need suits of armor, but our own crosses help us notice who we are.

Tell the children that we will be working on this for the next several weeks, so they can be thinking about things they want on their crosses as well as a motto that describes them. They can incorporate their family name if they want, or just use their first name. They can be thinking of symbols to describe things they have a talent for doing, such as a musical note, a sports ball, a paint brush, etc. Perhaps one of their talents is entertaining a much younger sibling or young friend in the neighborhood. Maybe they spend time with an elderly grandparent. Perhaps they serve as acolytes in your church. Draw these "talents" out of the children and help them discover ways to include them on their cross.

Give them some paper and pencil and time to start thinking about what they may want to include.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to think about what it means to each of them to be a Christian. What are the hard parts? What are the comforting parts? Here are some additional questions, if time permits:

Can you think of times when following Jesus will:

- make you seem odd to friends at school?
- cause you to have to make difficult choices?
- invite you to be who you really are, using your gifts and talents?
- help you discover what is really true, valuable, and beautiful?
- will maybe even change your priorities?

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for showing us the ways to follow you. Thank you for loving us as we learn how to do what you call us to do. Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 19
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Mark 8:27-38

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A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

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Theme: If You Want to Become My Followers

Before Class: You will need Bibles for your group or copies of the scripture found below.

Beginning: If this is your first session with the group, make sure you have nametags for everyone and open with a Get to Know You activity. Find Get to Know You Resources: <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/lessons/resources/>.

Opening Prayer: Loving God, you tell us today, ‘Take up your cross and follow me.’ Help us to understand what this might mean in our community and in our lives. Amen.

The Scripture (Mark 8:27-38): Read half the passage and stop to discuss it, and then read the second half and discuss.

Reflection Questions:

- Who are the people guessing who Jesus is, and why do you think they said John the Baptist? (In our days of instant communication, it is hard to imagine a world where word-of-mouth was the main method of communication. Possibly not everyone knew – or believed – that John the Baptist had been beheaded. Perhaps they hoped what they were not sure they could believe.)
- Why did they guess Jesus was Elijah? (Hebrew people at that time – and many to this day – believe that Elijah the prophet will return. For passages describing Elijah, see 1 Kings:17-21 and 2 Kings:1-2.)

- What have the disciples concluded? (They believe Jesus is the Messiah, the descendant of King David who will live long and rule gloriously.)
- Why did Jesus demand the disciples tell no one about him? (He knew that if people expected him to be a glorious king, his message would be lost in the publicity.)
- Why did Peter react so strongly against Jesus' description of what was to come? (Peter, understandably, wanted Jesus to continue to lead them and not get himself killed.)
- Why do we think Jesus was so hard on Peter? (Perhaps the actual wording is a bit hyperbolic, but the message is clear: his disciples must learn a new way of thinking about power.)

Read the second half of the lesson

Reflection Questions:

- What does Jesus mean by the following statement? "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." Does this mean we must quit our jobs, leave our families, and go around the country dragging a wooden cross? (To unpack this, look at two aspects of the statement: what we deny and what we take up.)
- What kinds of power trips, overblown prestige, and privileged positions does Jesus disdain for himself and therefore for us? What phony glory does much of our culture attempt to seduce us to embrace? What injustices, inequities, and prejudices does Jesus invite us to notice -- and work against?
- How might the causes we have noticed make us vulnerable? What responsibilities are we being asked to assume? What rights of others are we being called to notice? What talents do we have that we are expected to exercise? What gifts do we have that can help build up our families, our church, and our community? What help and encouragement can we offer each other, the children and youth in our midst, the elderly, sick, or the otherwise alone?

Getting Closure: As we look at all these callings, discuss how we can keep from getting overwhelmed by all that we see ourselves called to do. And discuss how we can support each other, hold each other accountable, and take care of our own selves?

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for calling us to a deeper life in you, and for giving us each other to share this journey. (Today we especially pray for _____.) Be with us as we leave this place and bless our journeys. Amen.

Mark 8:27-38

Peter's Declaration about Jesus

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?' And they answered him, 'John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.' He asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Messiah.' And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

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