

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 23
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Mark 10:17-31

Background: During the last weeks of Ordinary Time in Lectionary Cycle B, the Gospel of Mark, our primary guide, continues. The kingdom of God is open for all people. We hear this message in the readings about the rich man, the disciples jockeying for position, the blind man, the saints, the poor widow, and even Pilate as he queries Jesus about being a king. We don't have to pass an entrance exam; we are already in the kingdom. Through all the changes that occur in our lives, what will not change is God's love for each of us. The kingdom that Jesus is proclaiming is already here and yet is also still to come – the undercurrent of Advent, which is coming near.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

What does it take to get in? That's the question that Jesus is asked. Jesus answers the question that is not asked and offers a very different way of being. The commandments of old are valid but insufficient. The way we've always done it is not working. What in the world would be an entrance requirement for a way of life you have already begun? What if it is not about getting in but about noticing that you are already in?

Theme: What Does it Take to Get Into the Kingdom?

Before Class: Use a basket or a plastic bin from the classroom or from your home and fill it with toys, costume jewelry, fake money, etc. -- things the children would recognize as items a "rich" person would have.

Beginning: Tell the children that today's story is about a man who had way too much stuff and it was getting in his way.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for giving us stories that show us that you love us. Amen.

The Story (Mark 10:17-31): A man who owned many things and had lots of money comes up to Jesus. The man is used to being able to get whatever he wants. He asks Jesus how he can be sure he gets into heaven. Jesus knows this man knows the Ten Commandments (rules for living a good life), so Jesus tells the man to follow those rules – rules like don't kill anyone, don't tell lies, and obey your parents. The man feels very proud of himself because he is sure he does all these things. Jesus sees that the man is proud of following all the rules, but was still unhappy, so Jesus says, "Well, what you really need to do is sell everything you have and give the money to poor people." That made the man sad, because he loved all his fancy things, so he just went away.

Activity: Ask for a child to act out the part of the rich man and another to act out the part of Jesus. Give the basket of toys to child playing the rich man and tell that child to go up to Jesus and ask what he needs to do to get into heaven. The child being Jesus can tell him to be a good person. The man can tell Jesus he is always a good person. Jesus can then tell the man to sell

everything he has – all the toys in the basket – and give the money to the poor. The man goes away sadly.

Then have the children act it out the same way except that this time the rich man decides to sell his stuff. Perhaps he goes over to a computer, gets on eBay and sells all his stuff. Then he goes back to Jesus and writes a big check to help the poor people. He asks if he can follow Jesus.

Ask the children if they think they have to sell everything they have. Explain that Jesus only asked this man to do that because he needed to get rid of some of his stuff and help others who had less.

Reflection: Like the rich man let money and possessions get in the way of being with God, ask the children if they can think of some things that might be distracting them from loving God and invite them to share. (too many toys, focusing on having “stuff,” obsessing over a specific thing they like to do, etc.)

Like the rich man let money get in the way, invite the children to draw pictures of what they might need to get rid of or what they think they can do to be closer to God.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share their pictures.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for helping us to remember that being with you is what is important. Help us to remember that all the “things” in our lives can be distracting and remind us that with you all things possible. Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 23
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Mark 10:17-31

Background: During the last weeks of Ordinary Time in Lectionary Cycle B, the Gospel of Mark, our primary guide, continues. The kingdom of God is open for all people. We hear this message in the readings about the rich man, the disciples jockeying for position, the blind man, the saints, the poor widow, and even Pilate as he queries Jesus about being a king. We don't have to pass an entrance exam; we are already in the kingdom. Through all the changes that occur in our lives, what will not change is God's love for each of us. The kingdom that Jesus is proclaiming is already here and yet is also still to come – the undercurrent of Advent, which is coming near.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

What does it take to get in? That's the question that Jesus is asked. Jesus answers the question that is not asked and offers a very different way of being. The commandments of old are valid but insufficient. The way we've always done it is not working. What in the world would be an entrance requirement for a way of life you have already begun? What if it is not about getting in but about noticing that you are already in?

Theme: What Does it Take to Get Into the Kingdom?

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible or of the script found at the end of the lesson. To do the opening activity, you will need to bring items for the children to use to identify the fact that they are "in," such as a length of crepe-paper streamer or a small object like a toy or piece of candy or a coin. The point is to use some arbitrary sign to indicate being "in" and then to notice that we do not have such arbitrary entrance requirements in our church.

Beginning: As the children enter the classroom, give some of them the identifying object – but do not give one to everyone. Be sure you have not created an obvious distinction (all the boys, for instance). When all the children have arrived, ask them to guess what this is about. Ask those who got something how it makes them feel. Then ask those who did not get anything how it makes them feel. Ask them if they have to wear any special item to come to church, and if not, why not.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for loving us just the way we are. Help us to remember that we are a part of your kingdom because with God all things are possible. Amen.

The Story (Mark 10: 17 – 31): Invite volunteers to read. You can split it into the three sections or you can split it into parts. (there is a script for both below.)

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what the man who came to Jesus was trying to find out? (What it would take to get "in.")

- What did the man say about the Ten Commandments? (That he had obeyed all of them all of his life.)
- To see if we think it is possible that he never once slipped and broke any of the commandments, let's see if we can find the Ten Commandments in the Bible (Exodus 20:1-7; Deuteronomy 5:1-21) or in our Prayer Book (pp. 317-318, 350). What might he have goofed up on? (Maybe just once disobeyed his parents? Or maybe he said something once that was not altogether true?)
- What does Jesus say about this? (He doesn't look for places he has goofed, but instead offers him the chance to do even more, finding treasures in other places.)
- What is the man's response? (He just goes away sad because he had so many things he cannot part with.)
- In verses 23-26, do you think Jesus is saying that God does not love rich people? (No, it just may be they have more distractions and it might be harder for them.)
- Is Jesus saying then that rich people probably won't get to be "in"? (No, Jesus is saying that with God, all things are possible.)
- Peter wonders if he will be "in." What does Jesus say to him? (There is no figuring who will be first and who will be last; just follow Jesus.)

Activity: Today as we have reflected if we are “in” or not, we have looked at what it takes to be “in.” Being “in” means following God’s ways for us. Invite the children to reflect on ways in which they follow God. (Have them brainstorm and write down their reflections on the white board or easel.)

Give the children paper, markers, and other art supplies. Invite them to create something that will remind them how they are to follow God (a picture of a cross or three-dimensional cross, a picture about the creation around them, a reminder of how to treat people, a friendship bracelet to remind us of how to treat everyone, etc.)

Getting Closure: Invite the children back together and invite them to share what they have created. Thank them for their work.

Closing Prayer: Help us, God, as we grow into your call to us. Guide us as we seek to live into the life you have given us. Help us to remember that with you, all things are possible. Amen.

Mark 10:17-31

17 As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’¹⁸ Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.¹⁹ You know the commandments: “You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.”’²⁰ He said to him, ‘Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.’²¹ Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, ‘You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.’²² When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

23 Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, ‘How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!’²⁴ And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, ‘Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.’²⁶ They were greatly astounded and said to one another, ‘Then who can be saved?’²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, ‘For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.’

28 Peter began to say to him, ‘Look, we have left everything and followed you.’²⁹ Jesus said, ‘Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news,³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life.³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.’

Mark 10:17-31 (in parts: Narrator, Man, Jesus, Disciples, Peter)

Narrator: As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him,

Man: ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’

Jesus: ‘Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: “You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.” ’

Man: ‘Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.’

Narrator: Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said,

Jesus: ‘You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.’

Narrator: When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions. Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples,

Jesus: ‘How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!’

Narrator: And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again,

Jesus: ‘Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.’

Narrator: They were greatly astounded and said to one another,

Disciples: ‘Then who can be saved?’

Jesus: ‘For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.’

Narrator: Peter began to say to him,

Peter: ‘Look, we have left everything and followed you.’

Jesus: ‘Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.’

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

Scripture: Mark 10:17-31

Background: During the last weeks of Ordinary Time in Lectionary Cycle B, the Gospel of Mark, our primary guide, continues. The kingdom of God is open for all people. We hear this message in the readings about the rich man, the disciples jockeying for position, the blind man, the saints, the poor widow, and even Pilate as he queries Jesus about being a king. We don't have to pass an entrance exam; we are already in the kingdom. Through all the changes that occur in our lives, what will not change is God's love for each of us. The kingdom that Jesus is proclaiming is already here and yet is also still to come – the undercurrent of Advent, which is coming near.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

What does it take to get in? That's the question that Jesus is asked. Jesus answers the question that is not asked and offers a very different way of being. The commandments of old are valid but insufficient. The way we've always done it is not working. What in the world would be an entrance requirement for a way of life you have already begun? What if it is not about getting in but about noticing that you are already in?

Theme: What Does it Take to Get Into the Kingdom?

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible.

Beginning: Invite the group to think about a time when they have wanted to join a group or community but had to give up something in order to do it.

Opening Prayer: Help us, God, to hear these words in our souls: 'For God, all things are possible.' Amen.

The Scripture (Mark 10:17-31): Invite three members of your group to read the three different sections. If time permits, you may choose to discuss this passage in thirds: verses 17-22; verses 23-27; verses 28-31.

Reflection Questions:

Verses 17-22

- Notice who is concerned with entrance requirements. I wonder what might be behind the man's questions? (Perhaps he is looking for a good way to be really "in" with Jesus.)
- Why do you think Jesus took the approach he did? (Perhaps he detects a bit of "one-upmanship" in the man.)
- How do you reconcile the response that was so devastating to the man with the statement that Jesus loved the man? (Jesus realizes that the man is paralyzed by his possessions.)
- In what ways do our possessions weigh us down?

Verses 23-27

- What was so shocking to Jesus' hearers in verse 23? (It was assumed that rich people had an easier time with the various religious duties imposed on them.)
- What is Jesus noticing that makes it so hard for rich people to get "in"? (The distractions rich people can afford make it harder for them.)
- Do we think Jesus means that rich people cannot get "in"? Who makes the final decision? (God.)
- Do we think we are "rich" people? Why? Why not?

Verses 28-31

- Peter points out that he and the others have given up everything to follow Jesus. How does Jesus reassure him? (See verse 29.)
- Do we notice that people who give up everything to follow Jesus always "receive a hundredfold"? Why or why not?
- What does verse 31 mean?

Getting Closure: Reflect on your own church community. Who has a hard time getting "in" to our churches? What unintentional barriers do we put up? How could we make our church more accessible without diluting what we believe? What would happen in our lives together if we spent less energy on worrying about "getting in" and more on building relationships – with Jesus, with one another, and with those who are not part of our community?

Closing Prayer: Help us, God, as we grow into your call to us. Guide us as we seek to live into the life you have given us. Help us to remember that with you, all things are possible. Amen.

Mark 10:17-31

17 As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’¹⁸ Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.¹⁹ You know the commandments: “You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.”’²⁰ He said to him, ‘Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.’²¹ Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, ‘You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.’²² When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

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