

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Proper 28
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Mark 13:1-8

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

A beautiful building, the Temple –laboriously built and the pride of the people. Impressive now, Jesus agrees, but not one stone will be left upon stone. The kingdom he offers is not about fancy buildings. His kingdom will, however, remain after all else has been destroyed.

Theme: Our Temples and Buildings

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible, paper, and crayons. You may choose to go online and download a full color picture of what modern research indicates the Temple in Jerusalem may have looked like. (www.templemount.org). The site also has photos of what is there today and an artist's rendering of The Ark.

Beginning: Ask the children to tell you about the biggest church they have ever seen. Has any child been to a large cathedral? Would any of them have been to New York City and seen the Cathedral of St. John the Divine? Then, show the children the picture of the Temple in Jerusalem (if you have been able to download a copy). Tell the children that today's Bible story happens just outside that Temple.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for the stories we have from the Bible to help us better understand what you want for us. Amen.

The Story: Mark 13:1-8 If you have sufficient children, four of them can read in unison the parts of the disciples, one can read the part of Jesus, and one the part of the narrator. (See script below)

Reflection Questions:

- Let's assume that this time the disciples had time to really explore the Temple for the first time. Mark writes that the disciples say, simply, "What large stones and what large buildings." I wonder what else they might have said? (Encourage expressions of amazement and wonder.)

- I wonder why Jesus tells the disciples the Temple will soon be demolished? (It did happen about 60 years later.)
- I wonder why Jesus was not concerned about the destruction of the Temple? (He was trying to teach the disciples that the Kingdom of God does not need temples.)
- What do the disciples then ask Jesus? (When is this going to happen and how will we know it is going to happen?)
- Do you think Jesus answered their question? Why, Why not?

Option: Offer the children the opportunity to explore what it means to be church. Pose this pretend situation. A member of our church suddenly comes into a ton of money and decides to give \$ 1,000,000 to our church! Yeah! But this person says this money must be used to build the kind of church Jesus wants.

Invite the children to discuss what the "church" Jesus wants would look like. You can do this in small groups, as a large group, or in twos or threes depending on the size of your group. (Encourage them to think outside the box: would it even be a building at all? How would it help the greater community? Would it make it possible to do things we cannot do now? If several models emerge, encourage the children to sketch their ideas.)

Have paper and supplies there for them to draw up plans or create the building as they see it.

Getting Closure: Gather the sketches the children have drawn of the \$1,000,000 church and ask them to share their favorite part of their creation. Wonder with them about how their buildings or constructions would serve God's mission.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for helping us to understand what it is to be in your kingdom. Amen.

Mark 13:1-8

Narrator: As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him,

Disciple: ‘Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!’

Narrator: Then Jesus asked him,

Jesus ‘Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.’

Narrator: When Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately,

Disciples: ‘Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?’

Narrator: Then Jesus began to say to them,

Jesus: ‘Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, “I am he!” and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.’

Published by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

© 2015 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.