

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Season after Pentecost, Proper 6
Gospel Lesson for Adults

Scripture: Matthew 9:35-10:8(9-23)

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

Our reading today is part of one of the major discourses in Matthew and it comes right after Matthew shares with us a collection of Jesus’ words and deeds. In our passage, Matthew is naming the disciples and the sending out of the 12 disciples as laborers in the harvest. This sets up Jesus’ ministry of sending people forth in ministry and mission to love and heal those around them.

Note: Since this is a long passage, we will just be focusing on Matthew 9:35-10:8.

Theme: Laborers in the Harvest

Before Class: You will need two different translation of today’s reading. You can either supply enough Bibles (of both translations) or make copies of the scripture for each person. For the activity, you will need index cards and pens or pencils.

Beginning: Invite everyone to gather. Tell them a bit about what this Season after Pentecost means (you can use the description found at the beginning of the lesson if you would like to) and invite them to think about what this green growing time can mean for them.

Opening Prayer: Loving God, we ask you to be with us as we explore what it means for us to be laborers in the harvest. Guide us in our mission and ministry. Remind us that we have the authority to love and heal those around us. Amen.

The Scripture: Matthew 9:35-10:8

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:

- What do you think of when you hear these words: “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”
- What do you think it means for us today?
- As Jesus gave the disciples authority to do this work, what do you think Jesus was telling them to focus on?
- I wonder what Jesus has given us authority to do? Is it any different than the disciples?

Activity: Pass out the index cards and invite people to list the ways they think they can join in the call to be a laborer in the harvest. How can they participate in the call Jesus gave to the disciples? What has Jesus given them authority to do.

Getting Closure: Invite them to share what they came up with in their reflection. If you have extra time, you can have people share in groups of three before coming back to the large group. Then invite the triads to share parts of their discussion.

Closing Prayer: God of the Harvest, thank you for calling us to labor in your fields and become a part of this your creation. Guide us as we leave this place that we may continually hear your call to us to go, heal, and love. Amen.

Matthew 9:35-10:8(9-23)

Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

[Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

“See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”]

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