

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year A – Season after Pentecost, Proper 16**  
**Gospel Lesson for Younger Children**

**Scripture: Matthew 16:13-20**

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**

After much instruction, story-telling, miracles, encounters, and prayer, Jesus finally asks two big questions to his disciples – Who do people say the Son of Man is? And Who do you say that I am. Whenever Jesus asks questions in the Gospels, it often has a way of marking an important teaching or an important moment, so we better pay attention. Questions are how Jesus can gauge how his mission in the world is going. Are the disciples and the people understanding who he is? What do they say about him and what he is doing? Who do they say he is?

**Theme: Who Do You Say That I Am?**

**Before Class:** You will need copies of the script below for today’s reading. You will need a rock for each child, paint or markers, a roll of paper, and art supplies.

**Beginning:** Invite the children to gather together. Ask if they have ever been asked by someone, “Who is that?” Invite them to share the descriptors that come to mind for them.

**Opening Prayer:** Loving God, be with us as we explore who you are for us and for the world. Help us to grow in our belief and not be afraid to speak of your power and love. Amen.

**The Scripture: Matthew 16:13-20**

Jesus and his disciples arrived in the village of Caesarea Philippi. When they got there, Jesus gathered his disciples around him and asked, “What are people saying about who the Son of Man is?” The disciples answered him and said, “Some think he is John the Baptist, some say he is Elijah, some say Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets.”

Then Jesus asked them a big question. He asked, “And how about you? Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter said, “You are the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus said to Peter, “God bless you, Simon, son of Jonah! You didn’t get that answer from books or other teachers, but you got it from God in heaven who let you know who I am. Peter, you are the rock upon which I will build my church. It will be a church that is big and energetic that no one can contain it and no one will be kept out.” Jesus told Peter, “You will be given the keys to the kingdom of God so that there is nothing between heaven and earth that can keep you out.” Then Jesus told the disciples to keep this a secret among them.

**Reflection Questions:**

- Jesus had some big questions for us today! I wonder what you have heard other people say about Jesus?
- I wonder why Jesus asked the disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” (to see their response, maybe to see who would answer, to see if his teaching was possibly getting through to them)
- I wonder what we would say if Jesus asked us the question, “Who do you say that I am?”
- Jesus tells Peter that his is the rock upon which he will build the church. What do you think that means? (Jesus trusts Peter to take the message forward because he has heard what Peter believes and professes)

**Activity: Who Do You Say that I Am Wall**

Brainstorm with the children...who do they say Jesus is? If Jesus asked them that question what would they say? If someone else asked them who Jesus was, what would they say?

After brainstorming a bit, invite the children to create a mural with the roll of paper that tells people who Jesus is. They can use pictures, words, illustrations, and various art supplies to get the message across. You may want to write across the top, “Jesus asks, ‘Who do you say that I am?’” If you can hang it up in a place where others will see it, it will strike up some good conversation. Perhaps where you have coffee hour?

Note: The Older Children may be doing this same activity, so you might be able to join them in creating one mural.

**Activity: You are the Rock**

Give each child a rock. Tell them that they, like Peter, are the rock upon which Jesus builds the church. Rocks are stable and do not move easily. They are something you can build on and expect it to stay stable.

Invite them to decorate their rock in a way that will remind them that they are a rock upon which Jesus builds his church. They could paint their name, words that remind them who Jesus calls them to be, they could paint Jesus’ name, etc.

**Getting Closure:** Invite the children to gather together and share what they created. They can take their rocks home and tell their parents about it.

**Closing Prayer:** Loving God, help us to not be afraid to profess who you are so that we can be the rocks upon which you build the church. Guide our ears, eyes, mouth, hands, and feet that we may engage in your mission in the world. Amen.

*Written by The Rev. Shannon Kelly*

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