

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Season after Pentecost, Proper 14
Gospel Lesson for Younger Children

Scripture: Matthew 14:22-33

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

Today’s Gospel lesson comes on the tails of the feeding of the 5,000. Imagine being a disciple and having fed that many people, having seen the miracle of the loaves and fishes, and now being in a boat going to the other side of the lake. Jesus stayed behind to dismiss the crowds and then went up the mountain to pray. This story has many important things for us to take away as we grow in becoming disciples.

Theme: Do Not Be Afraid

Before Class: You may want to have some props for the retelling of the story. You will need paper and art supplies for the boat pictures.

Beginning: Invite the group to gather together. Invite them to share an example of being scared in a storm. I wonder what scared them?

Opening Prayer: Loving God, we ask you to be with us as we explore what your words mean for our lives. Help us to grow in our belief and to not be afraid of the things you call us to do. Amen.

The Scripture: Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus had just finished feeding the 5,000 people. When everyone was done eating, Jesus told the disciples to get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side of the sea. Jesus stayed there and said goodbye to the people as they left to go home. When everyone was gone, Jesus climbed up the mountain to pray to God and he stayed there late into the night.

During the night, the disciples were still in the boat on the sea when a strong wind came and battered the boat with waves and wind. As the boat was getting tossed around, Jesus came toward them walking on the water. The disciples were scared and were crying out in terror. Jesus said to them, “Have courage, it is me. Do not be afraid.” Peter said to Jesus, “if it is really you, tell me to come to you on the water.” Jesus said, “Come.”

Peter got out of the boat and began walking to Jesus on the water, but then he got scared because of the wind and the storm and he began to sink. He said, “Master, save me!” Jesus reached out and saved him. Jesus said, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”

Then Jesus and Peter got into the boat and wind ceased and the sea calmed. The disciples were amazed and said, “You truly are the Son of God!”

Questions:

- I wonder what you liked about this story?
- I wonder what questions you have about this story?
- I wonder why Jesus sent up the mountain by himself to pray while the disciples were in the boat?
- We hear the phrase, “do not be afraid” many times in the Bible. Why do you think that is?
- I wonder if you would have been scared in the storm?
- I wonder if you would have wanted to walk on the water?

Activity: Modern Retelling

Split the group into smaller groups and invite them to think about how this story may be told if it were told in today’s culture. If this was a modern retelling, what would be different? What would be the same. They can make it into a poem, song, silent movie, or skit about what this encounter would be like today.

Activity: Making Boats

Invite the children to draw boats with Jesus and them in it.

Getting Closure: Invite the group back together and let them share the modern stories they came up with or their ideas about what might be different and the same in the story.

Closing Prayer: Loving God, help us to not be afraid as we encounter you in unexpected places in the world. Guide our ears, eyes, mouth, hands, and feet that we may engage in your mission in the world. Amen.

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