



Community of Christ

COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS

YOUTH

3 JUNE 2018 — 2 SEPTEMBER 2018

COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS



Lifelong Disciple Formation in Community of Christ is the shaping of persons in the likeness of Christ at all stages of life. It begins with our response to the grace of God in loving community and continues as we help others learn, grow, and serve in the mission of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, discipleship is expressed as one lives the mission initiatives of the church through service, generosity, witness, and invitation.

We invite you to use these lessons for your class, group, or congregation.

Lectionary-based: The weekly lessons connect the *Revised Common Lectionary* for worship with Community of Christ identity, mission, message, and beliefs.

Quick, easy: The lessons are designed for approximately 45-minute class sessions with two to three pages of ideas, discussion starters, and activities. Additional preparation help may be found in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament* (with focus on the gospel according to Matthew).

Lessons are available for three age groups. Recognizing each age group represents multiple stages of development, the instructor is encouraged to adapt lessons to best meet the needs of the class or group. When possible, optional activities are provided to help adapt lessons for diverse settings.

Children (multiage, 6–11): Help children engage in the Bible and introduce mission and beliefs with stories, crafts, and activities.

Youth (ages 12–18): Engage teens in scripture study and provocative questions about identity, mission, and beliefs.

Adult (ages 19 and older): Deepen faith and understanding with reflective questions, theological understanding, and discussion ideas.

Note: Unless otherwise noted, all Bible scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Bible, copyright 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 4)

LESSON 27
3 June 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 2:23—3:6/2:21—3:7 IV

Lesson Focus: What should I do to practice God's shalom?

Objectives

The learners will...

- define God's shalom and the peace of Jesus.
- identify God's shalom and peace of Jesus from the scripture passage.
- practice God's shalom when it comes to breaking rules.
- identify those who are in need of God's shalom.

Supplies

- Copies of handout "What Do You Do?" (end of lesson)
- Bible
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 2:23—3:6/2:21—3:7 IV in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, p. 84, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson
(15% of total lesson time)

Note to teacher: This lesson provides opportunity for discussion about responsible choices, consequences, and restorative justice. The intent is not to question authority, but to think critically about fairness, justice, and wholeness.

Give students each a copy of the "What Do You Do?" handout and have them answer yes or no to each scenario. Provide no input or direction; let the students answer as they want to, but they must choose an answer.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction
(35% of total lesson time)

Before you begin reading the scripture passage, let the students know that they will hear about Pharisees. The Pharisees were the group most influential with

the Jewish people. They were noted for their accurate and authoritative interpretations of Jewish law, which comes from the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament).

Read Mark 2:23—3:6/2:21—3:7 IV.

Discuss the following to deepen understanding of scripture:

- There seems to be a conflict between the Pharisees and Jesus about how to behave on the Sabbath. Describe the differences between the two points of view.
- According to Jewish law, the Sabbath is meant as a day for rest and spiritual enrichment. Based on the scripture passage, what description of Sabbath can you infer from the behavior of the Pharisees? From the behavior of Jesus?
- Focus some attention on the man with the withered hand. He had been a part of the community and around the Pharisees for some time. What do you think went through his mind when Jesus told him to stretch out his hand? What tone of voice do you think Jesus was using? What non-verbal communication do you think the man saw in Jesus? What kind of traits was the man showing when he followed Jesus' command?

- Go back to Mark 3:4 where it says, “[the Pharisees] were silent.” These were men with centuries of tradition passed down to them. They loved their religion and did their best to interpret the law. They had taught the community and been raised to treat the Sabbath as a day of no work. They probably would have preferred to answer, “Wait until Sabbath is ended.” But Jesus challenged that notion. Instead of treating “no work” as a restriction, Jesus saw the Sabbath as open to opportunities to exercise compassion, love, and justice.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Ask the students to define or describe God’s vision for creation—shalom (*justice, wholeness, reconciliation, and peace*) (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 23).

Another way to describe shalom is “restoring people to right relationships with God, others, creation, and themselves” (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 31).

Go back to the handout the students were given earlier. Find a student who answered yes to Phoebe’s dilemma, and ask that person to come up with an argument to support a no answer. Likewise, find a student who answered no, and ask that person to come up with an argument to support a yes answer. Give them each a few minutes to prepare their arguments.

While the two students are preparing, have the rest of the class discuss:

- Is the Honor Council Handbook consequence a good example of God’s shalom? Explain why or why not.
- Ask what bulleted items, if any, they might add to or remove from the Honor Council consequence. Have them explain their thinking.

At this time, let the two students defend the opposing view of the consequence to the group.

Now, suppose the class was the actual Honor Council and had the ability to determine the consequence(s) for Phoebe. Have them develop a decision for Phoebe that would be an example of God’s shalom—the consequence needs to include justice, wholeness, reconciliation, and peace. They can modify the Honor Council list or create their own list.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Read the five stanzas of “For Everyone Born” CCS 285, but not the refrain. Ask the students to focus on the first phrase of stanzas two, three, and four. Ask them:

- If we were to change the first phrase, what descriptions could we use instead of young and old? Woman and man? Just and unjust? Whom can we identify who are suffering from injustice? (*ideas include parents and childless, married and divorced or single, LGBT and straight, teen mother and teen father, DACA and immigrants.*)
- Together read aloud the refrain and connect to how Jesus behaved in today’s scripture.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Ask students to stand and hold out a hand in front of them to symbolize the man from our scripture. Read to them while they ponder the man with the withered hand:

Open your hearts and feel the yearnings of your brothers and sisters who are lonely, despised, fearful, neglected, unloved. Reach out in understanding, clasp their hands, and invite all to share in the blessings of community created in the name of the One who suffered on behalf of all.

—Doctrine and Covenants 161:3a

WHAT DO YOU DO?

Read each situation and check YES or NO to answer the given question.

You are grounded. Your parents go out for the evening. Friends text you they are coming to your house to take you out for pizza. You know your parents will be out for at least three hours. When you share your dilemma with your friends, they suggest that the punishment given by your parents was not fair. Do you go out for pizza with your friends who promise you will only be out for 90 minutes?

YES NO

At lunch time you realize that you forgot to do your math homework. The assignment is three pages long with 45 problems to complete. Instead of eating you start your assignment. Your best friend offers you his completed assignment to copy before class. Will you copy it?

YES NO

You promise a friend that you will go to a movie with her on Saturday. After you made the promise, you are invited to a swim party the same day with a different group of friends that you really enjoy being with. You are thrilled to be invited and you really want to go hang out with your group of friends, especially when you hear about everything you will do at the party. But the friend that invited you to go to a movie is not invited. Do you go to a movie or the swim party?

YES NO

Phoebe is a senior and president of the student body. She has been sick for the past month and has fallen behind in many of her classes. Monday is the deadline for both her college application and her Honors Art History paper. It's Sunday now. Phoebe makes a tough decision and copies and pastes information from the internet to complete her art paper. She finishes her application and goes to bed.

A couple of days later, Phoebe is called to the office by her art teacher who confronts her about her plagiarism of the paper. Phoebe bursts into tears and explains about the pressure she has been under to catch up in her five advanced courses after being ill, playing varsity sports, and being student council president.

The teacher's only choice is to turn her in to the school honor council. The honor council reviews the violation and, according to the Honor Council Handbook, Phoebe's type of plagiarism is assigned the following consequence:

- 0% on assignment
- disqualification for Honor Council or Honor Societies
- 30-day suspension from all extracurricular activities
- written reflection assignment for teacher

Do you think the Honor Council consequence is appropriate?

YES NO

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 5)

LESSON 28
10 June 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 3:20–35

Lesson Focus: Who is my family?

Objectives

The learners will...

- identify brothers and sisters in Christ.
- gain a deeper understanding of a difficult text.
- tell of times when they lived and experienced the Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons.

Supplies

- Bible
- Chart paper, chalkboard, or marker board
- Blank paper for students
- Pens and pencils
- Journal page, one per student (end of lesson)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Mark 3:20–35 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 85–86, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Post the following scenario on the marker board or on chart paper.

A close friend of yours, during a school-wide assembly, decides to stand up and protest the dress code for the special end-of-school-year dance. This code won't allow students wearing jeans or sneakers to attend.

Ask the following questions, and have the students verbally respond.

- What is the first thought that crosses your mind when you see your friend start yelling and waving a sign in protest?
- How will the school administrators react to your friend's protest?
- What will the reactions of the students at the assembly be when they start posting about it on social media?
- How is this protest perceived by your parents? By your friends' parents?

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

As you move into the scripture text, ask the students to keep in mind their responses in the opening activity.

Read Mark 3:20–35.

When Jesus was alive, family image was everything, especially in one's town or community. What someone from the family did reflected on the entire family—whether the action was positive or negative.

Ask the students to identify the verses that relate to Jesus' family (vv. 21, 31–33).

Ask the students to identify the verse that relates to the Scribes (v. 22).

Help the students notice the concern from the family was couched in love and concern that Jesus was going beyond what was acceptable for the family. But the concern from the Scribes was focused on ruining Jesus' reputation, and the accusation could also lead to Jesus' death.

Jesus' speech can be a bit overwhelming to the students. You may read this passage to help them:

As he does in other stories in the Gospels, Jesus uses logical thinking to turn his opponents' words against them. It can be only the power of God, not Satan, who drives out demons.

—*Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, p. 85

Focus now on vv. 32–34. Ask the students what that passage means to them. Help them recognize the importance of the Holy Spirit in what Jesus is sharing.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Hand out a sheet of paper to each student. Instruct students to write a description of a person in his or her school, neighborhood, job, or at camp whom many people either ignore or don't include in most activities. This could be someone who possibly doesn't "fit in" with the group. Do not identify by name.

Be specific in the description such as "talks really loud and interrupts a lot" instead of "rude." Or "doesn't keep his clothing or hair washed so the smell is difficult to be around" instead of "dirty" or "stinks." This is not about being mean or nice but rather a deep awareness of why the person is left out.

When they finish writing the descriptions, share with each other and see if any common behaviors appear. On the marker board or chart paper, write the commonalities.

Now have the students imagine the person they described is a member of their family (a cousin, a dad, or maybe a sister; they can choose).

Ask: How do you go about loving (not changing) the person you described who is a member of your family? (*Encourage further conversation by asking more specific questions, such as: What do you do if the person wants a hug and you do not want to give one? How do you compromise to*

meet their need for connection and keep your need for boundaries?)

How did Jesus do it?

After discussing, redirect them to the last part of today's scripture reading, Mark 3:33–35, to remind them Jesus includes everyone.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

The Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons is reflected in today's scripture passage. Distribute a journal page to each student. Charge the students to write on their journal pages each night to open their eyes to their brothers and sisters they meet each day. They should not only try to be aware when they are upholding the Worth of All Persons, but to recognize if there are times when someone else is upholding their worth. Bring back next Sunday with the results.

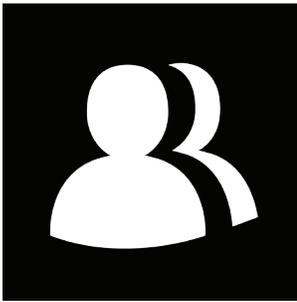
5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Ask the youth to bow their heads while the prayer is read:

Is there one who's been rejected, left alone or left behind;
walking through the lonesome valley, where new hope is hard to find?
Come and find a place at table with a people called by grace;
and let hope be sought and nurtured in this gentle, loving space.

—Ken Medena, © 2009 Ken Medena Music,
"Is There One Who Feels Unworthy?"
Community of Christ Sings 526



Worth of All Persons

Once a day, reflect on your activities. Write down not only how you showed Worth of All Persons, but also how you received Worth of All Persons.

Ways I show the Worth of All Persons to others:

Sun	
Mon	
Tue	
Wed	
Thu	
Fri	
Sat	

Ways others demonstrate the Worth of All Persons with me:

Sun	
Mon	
Tue	
Wed	
Thu	
Fri	
Sat	

Challenge—Bring this to the dinner table each night and ask your family members to share in the same way. You can put their responses on the back if you desire.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 6)

LESSON 29
17 June 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 4:26–34

Lesson Focus: God's kingdom has characteristics of a weed.

Objectives

The learners will...

- interpret the three parts of the scripture text.
- illustrate the mustard seed parable in relevant terms.
- use the Prayer of Examen to deepen their understanding.

Supplies

- Bible
- Paper
- Pen or pencils
- Poster paper
- Markers
- Copies of "Favorable or Unfavorable" (end of lesson)

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 4:26–34 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 87–88, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson
(15% of total lesson time)

Before class, copy and cut up "Favorable or Unfavorable," one set per student or one class set—whatever works best for your group. Give the students time to sort as a basis for today's scripture passage.

Pay attention to their reactions to the "unfavorable," for you will need them to recollect their feelings after the scripture passage reading.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction
(35% of total lesson time)

Before you begin, let the students know there are three parts to the scripture text today. The first two are about plants and the third is a bit strange.

Read Mark 4:26–34.

As you begin to process the scripture passage, reference verses 26–29:

- Who do you think Jesus is describing as the one scattering the seed? (*God*)
- How do verses 27–28 apply to our daily living? (*agency, God will not interfere and will let us grow as we may*)
- What does verse 29 mean? (*People in Jesus' time were very concerned about when "the end" would come. Jesus is trying to help them see it is God's decision and we don't know.*)

Verses 30–32 may be familiar to the students.

- If you were to place the mustard seed/shrub on your Favorable/Unfavorable list, in which category would you put it? (*In Jesus' day, it was undesirable.*)
- Share the following.

(Mustard seed)...grew into a wild, spreading bush larger than vegetable plants. It was tough, resilient,

and hard to control. In Jesus' day, farmers kept it separate from their vegetable gardens. When they found it growing wild in their fields, they pulled it out. The parable speaks of "sowing" the mustard seed, that is, planting this wild, uncontrollable weed on purpose. His hearers would have laughed. Jesus was saying that God's reign is not intended to be separate from everyday life. We must plant it in the middle of our tiny, cultivated world—and watch it take over! It grows wild and spreads everywhere, a weed that many reject or try to destroy.

—*Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament, p. 87*

Verses 33–34 make it sound as if Jesus was being very secretive. Help the students understand that what Jesus was doing was revolutionary, and the parables allowed him to say things that were dangerous without getting in trouble. The people who wanted to harm him couldn't understand the meaning within the parables, which kept Jesus safe. Those who really wanted to learn and understand would gain the understanding privately rather than in public places.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Ask:

- Have you ever had an experience when someone told you something important and you didn't understand? What did you do? (*If they just pretended to understand, explore different ways the students could have gained better understanding.*)
- What was so important about Jesus' message? How was his message different from what was being taught in the synagogues or enforced by the government?
- Do you think there are people today who need to hear that message? Why or why not?

Have students create their own parable of the mustard seed. They can work on their own or as a group. Pick an undesirable plant with which they are familiar. Describe that plant in a positive way to describe the kingdom of God.

If time allows, let them write their parable on poster paper and hang in the classroom. Feel free to add artwork. If possible, post where the congregation can share in the good news of the class.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Participate in a Prayer of Examen. Have the students get comfortable, close their eyes, and focus on their breathing. Read these phrases to them:

1. Center yourself in God's presence and peace.
2. Think of today's scripture. How did it change your idea of God and God's Kingdom?
3. How did your parable today add to God's kingdom?
4. Offer a prayer of gratitude for God sending Jesus to teach us about God's love in a whole new way.

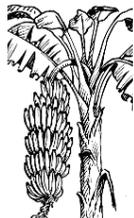
—adapted from *Live, Love, Share: Visibly One in Christ*, Herald Publishing House, 2014, p. 41

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

If possible, show a picture of the mustard seed shrub. One can be found at goo.gl/wDraH4. Tell the students that you hope their faith in the kingdom of God grows wild and spreads just like the mustard shrub Jesus taught about.

Types of plants

Favorable	Unfavorable
<i>Teacher, cut the strips below and mix up. Have students place them in the correct columns above.</i>	
<p>Rose</p> 	<p>Dandelion</p> 
<p>Blueberry</p> 	<p>Thistle</p> 
<p>Grass</p> 	<p>Crabgrass</p> 
<p>Apple</p> 	<p>Pigweed</p> 
<p>Lilac</p> 	<p>Ragweed</p> 
<p>Banana</p> 	<p>Poison Ivy</p> 

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 7)

LESSON 30
24 June 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 4:35–41

Lesson Focus: The peace of Jesus Christ is dependent on my relationship with God.

Objectives

The learners will...

- recognize feelings that one experiences when missing God in one's life.
- describe a time when they reconciled with God.
- verify reconciliation with God is part of experiencing the peace of Jesus Christ.
- use haiku to express the peace of Jesus Christ.

Supplies

- Bible
- Survey, one per student (end of lesson)
- Haiku work page, one per student (end of lesson)
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Pens or pencils

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 4:35–41 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 89–90, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson
(15% of total lesson time)

Hand out a survey to each student. Give them a few minutes to answer without discussion, and then let them share their answers with the group. Allow time for them to react and talk.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction
(35% of total lesson time)

Remind students that last week's scripture passage had to do with the mustard seed and how Jesus used parables. Today's scripture is a continuation of last week's—we pick up at the end of the long day of teaching.

Read Mark 4:35–41.

Tell students that even today, winds blow off the Golan Heights onto the Sea of Galilee and create storms like the one in the scripture text. The storm wasn't unusual for that body of water. Also, the stern is the back of the boat where the steering takes place.

Ask

- What seemed odd or out of place in the scripture text? (*Jesus slept through the storm; disciples whom we thought were fisherman seemed out of their element in this storm; at the end of the scripture reading the disciples are in great awe; Jesus questions the disciples.*)
- Would you have been able to sleep through the storm? (*relate back to survey*)
- What was Jesus' tone of voice once the wind ceased?
- What emotions did the disciples have prior to waking Jesus? After Jesus calmed the wind?

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

When the disciples had to wake Jesus, it was because of fear—fear that Jesus was not concerned for them and what they were experiencing. They felt abandoned and yet Jesus was with them the entire time. He changed chaos to calm and order. The disciples were still in awe and did not completely understand that with Jesus, they had God with them.

Ask the students to think about these questions. Read each one and give 30 to 45 seconds in between for students to reflect without speaking:

- When have you felt like the disciples, that you were alone and God wasn't concerned about you?
- How did you deal with that? Did you bargain, argue, or yell at God?
- How did you come back into right relationship with God?
- What changed in you?

To help process their thoughts, ask them to respond to the following:

- After pondering your experience, think about your faith in God. How did that experience deepen or lessen your faith? Explain.

Say:

- Our focus today is the peace of Jesus Christ. In the scripture text, we can easily see how Jesus created peace in the midst of the storm. How amazed the disciples were when the waters were calmed!

- In your previous reflection, you may have experienced fear and feelings of being alone when you thought God wasn't with you. How did you feel once you got back in right relationship with God?
- Would you describe your feeling as the "peace of Jesus Christ"? Why or why not?

Hand out the Haiku page to each student. Give them time to complete their poetry. If time allows, let them draw or decorate around their poem.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

The peace of Jesus Christ means having right relationship with God. Share the following poem by Kenneth McLaughlin ("The Peace of Jesus Christ," © Kenneth L. McLaughlin, CCS 317).

The peace of Jesus Christ makes us whole,
gives us life, restores our souls,
brings us grace, sets us free.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Offer a prayer of blessing for the group that they continue in right relationship with God and experience the peace of Jesus Christ.

Survey

Rank the situations with the numbers 1 to 10, with 1 being a situation that would never disrupt your sleep and 10 being a situation that would keep you from getting any sleep at all.

	Crickets chirping		Wood crackling in a campfire
	Shower running		Hail storm
	Strong storms		Someone typing
	Dogs barking next door		Gentle wind
	Someone snoring		Purring cat

Survey

Rank the situations with the numbers 1 to 10, with 1 being a situation that would never disrupt your sleep and 10 being a situation that would keep you from getting any sleep at all.

	Crickets chirping		Wood crackling in a campfire
	Shower running		Hail storm
	Strong storms		Someone typing
	Dogs barking next door		Gentle wind
	Someone snoring		Purring cat

Survey

Rank the situations with the numbers 1 to 10, with 1 being a situation that would never disrupt your sleep and 10 being a situation that would keep you from getting any sleep at all.

	Crickets chirping		Wood crackling in a campfire
	Shower running		Hail storm
	Strong storms		Someone typing
	Dogs barking next door		Gentle wind
	Someone snoring		Purring cat

Create a haiku about either your experience or about today's scripture reading. Let your haiku show how to experience the peace of Jesus Christ.

The format for haiku is three lines; line one has five syllables, line two has seven syllables, and line three has five syllables.

*Haiku poetry—the images are not "imaginative" in the sense of invented, fantasized, or fictionalized. They are usually closely observed aspects of nature. They are real experiences. They are images in the sense that they give the reader pictures (and sounds, textures, and smells) with which to recreate the experience as a whole. They **show** the experience, in the vivid present; they do not **tell** about it, reporting on something that has passed and summing up the judgment to be made about it. The reader is in the middle of it, not being told about it secondhand.*

http://www.haiku.org.uk/teachshow_t3.htm

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 8)

LESSON 31
1 July 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 5:21–43

Lesson Focus: Every person has worth.

Objectives

The learners will...

- learn the cultural norms for today's scripture text.
- recognize Jesus' actions as creating shalom.
- recall times of exclusion.
- recall times of inclusion.
- develop a stronger understanding of the Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons.

Supplies

- Chalkboard, marker board, or chart paper
- Chalk, dry erase marker, or markers for chart paper
- Exclude or Include handout at end of lesson, one per student
- Bibles
- Pens or pencils
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- (Optional) internet connection and means to show a video clip from YouTube

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 5:21–43 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 91–92, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Write on the marker board or chart paper: "The teacher has cooties. Who wants to get a hug from the teacher?" Have an informal discussion about games that kids play similar to this situation.

If you have the capability, you could show the following clip about the "Cheese Touch" from *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (it is about 1:15 minutes) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ky5Y99wb_00.

Essentially, remind students of times when they participated in childish games of inclusion or exclusion. As an example, my sister and I would run away from our family dog whenever we saw him eat food we thought was gross, such as mushrooms. We didn't want "mushroom germs." Of course, after a few minutes, all was forgotten and we played with him.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Transition to today's scripture passage by telling the students that in Jesus' time, it was culturally unacceptable (or taboo) for a man to be around an unmarried woman who was not part of his family, let alone to touch a woman. In addition, if anyone touched a dead body, they were unclean and could not participate in the community until they had separated themselves from community for seven days and participated in two ritual washings (see Numbers 19:11–12).

If you watched the video clip, convey to the students there was a sort of "cheese touch" mindset among the community in which Jesus lived.

Read Mark 5:21–43.

First, focus on the woman with the hemorrhage. According to Helen Bruch Pearson,

Most cleanliness laws had to do with fluids related to the reproductive organs. The religious and social life of a woman in the Hebrew-Jewish tradition was centered on her biological cycles. For seven out of every twenty-eight days she was unclean and anyone or anything she touched was also made unclean. After her cycle was complete she was required to wait an additional seven days before she could make her sin offering for atonement and be pronounced clean by the priest (What was her sin? Nothing more than something her body did naturally). A woman with regular cycles spent most of her adult life imagining herself as unworthy and unclean due to the laws of her religion. But the woman in the scripture was never able to make a sin offering because she continuously hemorrhaged—she was sent away from the community as an outcast, sentenced to a living death. The religious laws offered no redemption for the likes of her.

—*Do What You Have the Power to Do*, Wipf and Stock, 2015, pp. 99–101

Ask:

- What do you think the crowd thought about Jesus when the woman confessed and told Jesus the truth?
- When they realized she pushed her way through the crowd and many of them might have been touched by her, how might they have reacted?
- According to his upbringing, how should Jesus have responded to the touch?
- What makes his response so unorthodox (different from expected)? (*Jesus cast aside the purity laws and showed by example the kind of relationships in which men and women could be companions and friends. He wanted to make visible and public his attitude toward purity laws that degraded and enslaved women.*)
- What drove the woman to break all rules and risk touching Jesus' robe? Describe how she might have been feeling at that moment.

Now focus on Jairus—one of the leaders of the synagogue. Point out to the students that not every Jewish leader was suspicious and out to get Jesus. Both Jairus and the hemorrhaging woman approached Jesus because they believed he had the power to heal.

Refer the students to verse 35.

Ask:

- Why do you think they tell Jesus not to bother going to Jairus' house? (*Jesus cannot touch a dead person—it is against Jewish law.*)
- What is the significance of Jesus taking her by the hand? (*He wanted to make visible and public his attitude toward purity laws. Instead of attacking the laws, he*

ignored them. Purification rites and sin offerings do not make anyone spiritually clean before God. Jesus used actions to share this understanding.)

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Distribute the “Exclude or Include” handouts. Let students complete them as much as they want. Include yourself in the exercise and provide examples if they are having difficulties.

As time allows, relate their experiences of “including” with the Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons. Remind them that society does not always follow the Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons and that as disciples of Jesus, we must be strong and do our best to live the principle.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Option 1: (Adapted from Helen Bruch Pearson, *Do What You Have the Power to Do*, p. 119) If the class is comfortable, sit in a circle. Touch the wrist of the person on your left. Locate the pulse. If you cannot find it, let the person help you. The person on your right should locate your pulse.

Say:

Once the pulse of each person is found, sit quietly and feel the heartbeat of your life.

Remember those persons who reach toward you for healing. Remember those who empower you with their healing touch. Imagine their hearts beating together with yours.

Option 2: “Friend of the Streetwalker” CCS 289. Read together, take turns reading, or sing together.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Read:

“...the path of the disciple requires us to stand up for justice...to join with God in the journey toward the peaceable kingdom, where the unity of all creation is honored and celebrated.”

—Grant McMurray, *Called by a New Name*, 2000, Herald House, p. 13

Exclude or Include?



<p>Tell about a time when you were excluded.</p>	<p>Tell about a time when you were included.</p>
<p>List one time when you excluded someone (whether or not for a “good reason”).</p>	<p>List one time when you included someone when others were urging you not to.</p>
<p>Describe a time when you needed to be embraced or hugged and to know that you mattered.</p>	<p>To whom do you turn when you need a “healing touch”? Who have been healers for you?</p>
<p>Have you ever felt invisible or unworthy? Write three adjectives that describe how that made you feel.</p>	<p>For whom have you been a healer?</p>

Worth of All Persons

- God views all people as having inestimable and equal worth.
- God wants all people to experience wholeness of body, mind, spirit, and relationships.
- We seek to uphold and restore the worth of all people individually and in community, challenging unjust systems that diminish human worth.
- We join with Jesus Christ in bringing good news to the poor, sick, captive, and oppressed.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 13

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 9)

LESSON 32
8 July 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 6:1–13

Lesson Focus: God has given you everything you need to share the good news of Jesus.

Objectives

The learners will...

- participate in *Lectio Divina*.
- role play to learn to witness to others.
- remember Doctrine and Covenants 155:8 when they have opportunities to witness to others.

Supplies

- Bible
- Doctrine and Covenants 155:8, one per student (end of lesson)

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Mark 6:1–13 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 93–94, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson
(15% of total lesson time)

Informally discuss the following scenario:

- You are in the grocery store parking lot, and a stranger approaches you and your family saying he has no money and is hungry. Can you help? What is your response?

When the conversation seems to ebb, ask:

- What if the stranger asks to come home with you to share the good news of Jesus? What is your response?

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction
(35% of total lesson time)

Today's scripture passage will be experienced by practicing *Lectio Divina*. Share the following with the students:

Invite the group to sit quietly and enter a time of prayerful reflection. Breathe calmly, relax your body, and offer a prayer for guidance as you interact with the selected scripture text.

Briefly describe the three ways students will listen and reflect on the scripture reading.

Lectio

Read the passage to get a sense of the story. Who are the characters; what is the setting? Imagine the scene, the sights, sounds, odors, emotions, and tensions involved in the story. Enter the scene and allow it to become real to you.

Meditatio

Read the scripture again but this time for meaning and understanding. Ask questions. Why was this story recorded? What are the surface and underlying meanings? What does this story tell me about God? If I were in the story, who would I be? Whom do I most relate to in the story?

Oratio

Read the passage again, and pay attention to your emotional responses. What feelings surface as I read this scripture? Do I feel joy, sorrow, fear, anger, or guilt? Share your feelings with God in prayer. Ask for help in listening deeply to these emotions and meanings.

—adapted from www.CofChrist.org/spiritual-practice-lectio-divina-for-individuals

Read Mark 6:1–13 three times, allowing time for meditation and prayer between each reading.

After the third reading, ask the students to share what they experienced during lectio divina. Here are some conversation starters:

- Which part of the story stood out in your mind?
- What emotions did you experience when you heard, “[Jesus] could do no deed of power there”?
- How would you respond to Jesus’ call to go out and minister two by two?
- What questions popped into your mind as the different scenes were described?

There are no right or wrong answers. The students should be able to find something in the text that moved them and caused them to question or wonder. We want them to voice their experiences, questions, and reactions to what they heard.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Share with the students:

Even though much of Mark’s Gospel focuses on the inability of the disciples to understand who Jesus is, this story recalls their early decision to follow him and live into his priorities. Doubt reoccurred at several key points in Mark’s Gospel, but the disciples continued to respond to their call, despite their doubts.

—*Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, p. 93

To help students become more comfortable with witnessing, act out these situations. You can copy them from the lesson and pass them out to the students (adapted from *Vibrant Witness: Who, Me?*, Herald Publishing House, pp. 73–75).

- You are wearing a Community of Christ shirt from a camp or a conference and someone asks you about it. What do you tell them?
- A friend is at your house just hanging out and notices your Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and

Covenants on a shelf or table. When they ask you about it, what do you say?

- A friend of yours shares that her mom was diagnosed with cancer. Your friend is scared her mom is going to die. You think about the way your church helped you and your family when your grandma was ill. What do you say to her? In what sacrament can you invite her to share?
- You see a student in your class who seems to be having a really bad day. At one point he says, “No one cares about how I’m feeling anymore!” This is a boy you’ve known and gone to school with since kindergarten. You walk over to him and say, “Sometimes when I have problems I count on my church family to lift me up. Can I tell you about how they help?” He nods. What do you share with him?
- On the bus ride home, your pal says, “I am having such a bad day!” Instead of convincing your friend that the day isn’t all bad, you surprise yourself and respond, “I am really sorry to hear that. Would you like me to pray for you?” What would you say in your prayer to support your friend?

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Say to the class:

Remember the scenario at the start of class, specifically “What if the stranger asks to come home with you to share the good news of Jesus? What is your response?”

Instead of focusing on the stranger-asking-to-come-home-with-you scene, we just spent time practicing what it feels like to share the good news of Jesus. And even though the role playing was practiced with your friends, when it comes to sharing about Jesus, sometimes our uncertainty makes our friend feel like a stranger. But we can transform our friendship to something more through the saving grace of Jesus.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Give each student a copy of Doctrine and Covenants 155:8 (end of lesson).

As a class, read aloud the scripture text and encourage the students to put it somewhere they will see it throughout each day to remind them that Christ’s mission is our mission.

I know your perplexities and I am aware of your uncertainties, but if you will call upon my name my Spirit will go before you into whatsoever place you are sent and I will continue to bless you as you have need.

—Doctrine and Covenants 155:8

I know your perplexities and I am aware of your uncertainties, but if you will call upon my name my Spirit will go before you into whatsoever place you are sent and I will continue to bless you as you have need.

—Doctrine and Covenants 155:8

I know your perplexities and I am aware of your uncertainties, but if you will call upon my name my Spirit will go before you into whatsoever place you are sent and I will continue to bless you as you have need.

—Doctrine and Covenants 155:8

I know your perplexities and I am aware of your uncertainties, but if you will call upon my name my Spirit will go before you into whatsoever place you are sent and I will continue to bless you as you have need.

—Doctrine and Covenants 155:8

I know your perplexities and I am aware of your uncertainties, but if you will call upon my name my Spirit will go before you into whatsoever place you are sent and I will continue to bless you as you have need.

—Doctrine and Covenants 155:8

I know your perplexities and I am aware of your uncertainties, but if you will call upon my name my Spirit will go before you into whatsoever place you are sent and I will continue to bless you as you have need.

—Doctrine and Covenants 155:8

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 10)

LESSON 33
15 July 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 6:14–29

Lesson Focus: God helps me make responsible choices.

Objectives

The learners will...

- make a connection with the Enduring Principle Responsible Choices.
- participate in a hands-on *Lectio Divina*.
- determine how to make responsible choices.

Supplies

- Copies of scripture passage, one per student (end of lesson)
- Half sheets of paper, one per student
- Pens, pencils, colored pencils
- Marker board or chart paper with markers
- Copy of Doctrine and Covenants 153:9b, one per student (end of lesson)

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Mark 6:14–29 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 95–96, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Write “Enduring Principles” on the marker board or chart paper. As students arrive, ask them to recall and write the nine Enduring Principles.

Enduring Principles

- Grace and Generosity
- Sacredness of Creation
- Continuing Revelation
- Worth of All Persons
- All Are Called
- Responsible Choices
- Pursuit of Peace (Shalom)
- Unity in Diversity
- Blessings of Community

Say:

Today, we are going to hear a scripture passage that will help us explore one of those principles. After the scripture, you will identify the Enduring Principle you think the scripture references.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Last week the students experienced *Lectio Divina* by focusing on different ways of personal reflection on the scripture. This week they will try a more hands-on approach to *Lectio Divina* (adapted from <https://prayingincolor.com/pray-a-word-of-scripture-lectio-divina>).

Lectio

Hand out a copy of today’s scripture text to each student. Before you read aloud, instruct the students to be open and when one particular word jumps out at them, circle it. If one doesn’t, they can just pick one at random. Have

them follow along with their eyes as you read the scripture passage aloud and give them a minute to discover their word.

Meditatio

Hand out a blank sheet of paper to each student. Instruct them to write their lectio word in the middle of the paper. Then, as you read through the scripture again, they should listen for what God might say to them through the word. While they are listening, encourage them to draw or doodle around the word. Let the movement of the hand help them focus on the word and release anxiety. If the students hear other things about the word, ask them to write them down.

Oratio

During this third reading, ask students to talk to God in the more traditional way of prayer. Use words and have a conversation with God. They can ask God about the selected word, for example, "What do you want me to hear and learn from this word?" On the same paper, let them continue to doodle and draw but now write down their thoughts and questions. Continue to doodle, draw, and write. Drawing can help persons focus and listen. Writing can help to see what one is thinking and feeling.

Contemplatio

During this step (about 60–90 seconds for youth), students release the word and all thoughts and feelings about the word. Give up all the activity of drawing, thinking, and writing. Put down the pens, close your eyes, take a deep breath and release it. Some students may have a spiritual "Aha" while others just enjoy the rest and quiet time with God.

Feel free to spend a short amount of time letting the students share about their experience. But don't get bogged down here.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Transition back to the Enduring Principles and ask the students which one Herod fails to heed in the scripture (Responsible Choices). Being responsible means that no matter what, you are in charge of making your own choices and decisions.

Ask the students to come up with a game plan or steps to follow to help with difficult decisions and make Responsible Choices. Let them write on the marker board or chart paper.

While they are working, continue to pose questions to keep the plan God centered.

Some helps include the deeper description of the Enduring Principle:

- God gives humans the ability to make choices about whom or what they will serve. Some people experience conditions that diminish their ability to make choices.
- Human choices contribute to good or evil in our lives and in the world.
- Many aspects of creation need redemption because of irresponsible and sinful human choices.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 13

When the students are satisfied with their plan, ask:

- Have you ever made a decision or choice that was not responsible? Think about it for a moment. Looking at our plan, in which part did you feel you were weak?
- Are you still struggling in that part? If not, how did you get better in your decision making?

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Tell the students:

- The scripture text today told of a man who made a promise to grant a wish but the wish was something terrible. Herod displayed weakness and lack of integrity. To save face, he executed John the Baptist. Herod put his pride and reputation over the life of a human being. God wants us to live the gospel message which means sometimes our choices may separate us from groups or make us feel alone.
- Can you be stronger than Herod and help transform the world through living Christ's mission, which is our mission?
- What difficulties do you think you will encounter?

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Hand out copies of Doctrine and Covenants 153:9b for the students to use for another lectio divina at home during the week.

Offer a brief prayer of encouragement for the students to continue living Jesus' mission.

Convey to the students that you would appreciate it if they shared their experiences with *lectio divina* on Spirit next week in Sunday school. Remind them to use the same format they did in class as their example.

Mark 6:14–29

King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him."¹⁵ But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old."¹⁶ But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

¹⁷ For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. ¹⁸ For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." ¹⁹ And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, ²⁰ for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. ²¹ But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. ²² When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." ²³ And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." ²⁴ She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." ²⁵ Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." ²⁶ The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷ Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, ²⁸ brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹ When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

My Spirit is reaching out to numerous souls even now and there are many who will respond if you, my people, will bear affirmative testimony of my love and my desires for all to come unto me.
—Doctrine & Covenants 153:9b

Spirit

My Spirit is reaching out to numerous souls even now and there are many who will respond if you, my people, will bear affirmative testimony of my love and my desires for all to come unto me.
—Doctrine & Covenants 153:9b

Spirit

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 11)

LESSON 34
22 July 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 6:30–34, 53–56

Lesson Focus: Christ shepherds us to address human need.

Objectives

The learners will...

- explore what “shepherding” means in traditional and Christian concepts.
- understand when it might be appropriate to retreat and when it’s appropriate to take action.
- identify different cultural groups and how we can bridge toward these groups.

Supplies

- Wool or cashmere cloth or clothing
- A picture or piece of art depicting Jesus as a shepherd
- Bibles
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Mark 6:30–34, 53–56 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 97–98, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

As the students gather, have something wool (or cashmere) sitting on the table in the middle of the meeting space. Have each of the students touch it and see if they can identify what it’s made of without looking at a label. Talk about how wool has been a staple cloth from ancient times to the present day. Today, shepherds all over the world continue to move flocks of sheep from pasture to pasture. This move helps protect the flock from danger (wolves and other predators) and benefit the environment without overtaxing pastureland.

Show a painting or piece of art depicting Jesus as shepherd. Discuss the following question.

- We have no record of Jesus ever being a shepherd of sheep—why do we sometimes depict Jesus as a shepherd? *(it was a common occupation in biblical times, people could relate to that image)*

Open with a prayer requesting God’s presence and spiritual guidance.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Mark’s Gospel introduces readers to concepts of shepherding. Shepherding is an ancient occupation. Each sheep in the flock has value for its milk, meat, or its replenishing supply of wool. Sheep are valuable resources and yet dependent on the watchful care of the shepherd who leads them from pasture to pasture. The term “shepherd” used in Mark is one of the earliest referring to Jesus, and now one of the most familiar.

First read Mark 6:30–34 and ask the students to remember key words and phrases from the passage.

- Ask what words stand out and why.
- Compare Jesus’ actions in the first part of this scripture

to the last part. Why might that be important? How did Jesus respond to this change of plans?

- What does Jesus mean about these people being “sheep without a shepherd”?

Now read Mark 6:53–56 again, asking the students to remember key words and phrases from the passage.

- Ask again what words stand out and why.
- What might have been Jesus’ and the disciples’ response when seeing the group who greeted them in Gennesaret?

Explain that Jesus’ trip across the Sea of Galilee is both physical and a way for the Gospel writer to make a connected thought in another setting. They start in a place of Jesus’ own people and cross over to another shore where there are people outside of his social group.

In both verses, Jesus and his disciples try to get away from the crowds only to be discovered and asked for more of their time. This could have been aggravating! Jesus—hounded by his fans and the paparazzi that day—searches for a little peace and quiet. Instead, he finds people chasing him for their own needs. Instead of getting fed up with this harassment, Jesus has “compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd” (v. 34).

We can relate sometimes. There’s always someone wanting our help or part of our time. Sometimes these people can be aggravating. First, Jesus demonstrates throughout the Bible stories his need to get away and replenish his soul from time to time. We, too, should remember that! We know this kind of spiritual practice builds our ministry as disciples.

In a group (or groups) share together:

- a time when “retreating” from school or work has been healing or renewing. Talk about how a camp or retreat experience has been helpful.
- when is it appropriate to retreat? When is it not appropriate to retreat, but take action? How does this scripture passage give us insight on how to know the difference?
- a time when your plans were interrupted—and though at first you didn’t feel so, that interruption was, in fact, a blessing.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Instead of treating the crowds as an interruption in his need for renewal and retreat, Jesus feeds and heals the people. He feeds a hungry group of mostly Jewish followers, and, after crossing the sea, he ministers among the sick and poor of the largely Gentile crowd.

Read this excerpt from Matthew 25:35–40 where Jesus says:

...I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

- Knowing this scripture, what would you say Jesus would identify as the most important part of discipleship?
- Is our story from the Gospel of Mark about the miracles (feeding the 5,000 and healing) or about compassion and equity? Explain your answer.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

In our community, we create our own social group—or groups—with those we’re familiar with. Jesus gathered a group of his own people and friends who were hungry and fed them.

- Who are the people in your community who are most like you? Describe the groups you most often hang out with.

- Who are the people in your community you have the most difficulty being with? What makes them different? Without using the excuse “they don’t like us,” give a reason why it’s sometimes so difficult to “cross the sea” to connect with people who are culturally different.
- Name a few ways you can bridge these cultural divides. How have you seen others break into culturally different groups?
- How can you show compassion even when groups can sometimes be frustrating?

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise,
blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Psalm 23 is probably the most familiar scripture text of the imagery of God as shepherd. Sing “The Lord’s My Shepherd” CCS 259, or read Psalm 23 from a modern English translation. Ask the youth to listen for how we, as shepherds in Christ, should imitate God’s loving response to all people.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 12)

LESSON 35
29 July 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: John 6:1–21

Lesson Focus: God's grace and generosity call us to respond and seek Christ's presence in our lives.

Objectives

The learners will...

- explore how Christ takes what we have, even though it might not be much, and makes it more than enough.
- understand the witness of Grace and Generosity in Jesus' ministry.

- discover Jesus' unexpected presence in the midst of upheaval and turmoil.

Supplies

- Bibles
- Marker board or chalkboard
- Markers

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for John 6:1–21 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, p. 99, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Once the group has gathered, ask them to imagine they have just teleported to a deserted island. Invite each student to consider what they have with them today—in their cars, their purses, their wallets, or their pockets. If students are willing, have them empty the contents of their pockets (do *not* require them to do so) on the table in front of them. Go around the table listing what the group has available right now and write on a board what resources they have.

- What is of value on this desert island? What is now worthless?
- Count the amount of pocket change in the room. If there were vendors on this island, what could they buy together?
- Ask the group what resources they have right now compared to what a youth group meeting in an impoverished nation might have.

- If freed to reflect God's generosity, what could be accomplished by those items just found in our pockets or here with us right now?

Share in a prayer asking for God's Spirit to open our eyes to how we can reflect God's generosity.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Share together in the reading of today's scripture passage. First focus on John 6:1–14.

Now have the class focus their attention on one of the characters below as they reread the scripture. Have students act out each character in this story:

- The followers who had traveled to see and hear Jesus
- Phillip
- Andrew

- The child who had food
- Jesus

Explain that this story is one of the few shared in all of the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It explores some of the problems preparing for the crowds in Jesus' growing popularity. We still know some of these problems in our church today—when we have a full day of church activities, we usually plan a way to feed those who participate. This means some will have to purchase the food, bring it to the venue, prepare it, and serve it. Imagine the difficulty managing this with over 5,000 people!

Jesus asks Phillip where they were planning to purchase enough food to feed this multitude. The answer eventually lies with a young boy and his little lunch. We don't know the name of the boy whose food was the catalyst for this miracle. We don't know how his groceries caught the attention of Andrew, Jesus' disciple. All we know is that his lunch was much too small to feed that large of a crowd.

Think for a while about this child:

- Was he asked by his parents to buy this food?
- Was this the only food this boy had for the day?
- What if his parents weren't there; how would he explain what happened?
- Imagine if his parents weren't there and he took home some of the leftovers. How would he explain it? What kind of lesson would this have been for this child?

Following this amazing miracle, the crowd becomes more convinced that Jesus is someone amazing. They begin to recognize he is more than a rabbi or teacher, and they want to move him into a political arena. They want to make Jesus king. Yet, Jesus resists this pressure for popularity and immediately leaves the crowds in the second part of today's scripture (read John 6:15–21). Jesus leaves the crowds after one of his most awe-inspiring events and goes off to be alone.

After being separated for a while, Jesus and his disciples reunite in a strange and mystical way. Many of Jesus' gospel stories were remembered and told because they connected to what the readers were experiencing. The readers of the Gospel of John knew about Jesus' death and resurrection. This story of Jesus unexpectedly appearing on the waters during a storm foreshadows what is to come. The disciples would experience the same feelings

of fear and abandonment during the time between Christ's death and resurrection. We also experience this during times of fear and faith.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Grace and Generosity is one of our Enduring Principles in Community of Christ. This principle includes these points:

- God's grace, especially as revealed in Jesus Christ, is generous and unconditional.
- Having received God's generous grace, we respond generously and graciously receive the generosity of others.
- We offer all we are and have to God's purposes as revealed in Jesus Christ.
- We generously share our witness, resources, ministries, and sacraments according to our true capacity.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 12

This story provides us many examples of how this principle plays out in Jesus' time:

- One of the main characters of this story is a child. How does having a "childlike faith" give us examples of Grace and Generosity both in this story and our personal experiences?
- What might be the significance in the 12 baskets of leftovers gathered by 12 disciples after all were fed? How does that connect to God's Grace and Generosity?
- When the crowds were fed, they wanted to force Jesus to become king, and Jesus retreats from them. What does that say about power and fame? How might this be connected to the principle of Grace and Generosity?

Jesus has a different way of expressing his message to people. We could call it counter-cultural or something opposite of what the rest of the people of his time (and our time) might do. Let's consider Jesus and the concept of popularity. Imagine that John's Gospel is not a book in the Bible, but a reality show on TV. How would someone in our time react to the following events?

- Five thousand people have gathered for a celebrity sighting in the countryside. What kind of publicity would have been sent out? Who would have shown up?
- Jesus just nailed his sermon. Now what? No food vendors are out here in the countryside. Jesus takes a kid's lunch and feeds everybody. What would the crowd's reaction have been?
- Jesus is now the most popular person on TV. Everybody wants a piece of him and his celebrity. What might his promoter suggest as his next move?
- Jesus disappears—no one knows where he is. How would the press explain this? What would the paparazzi say?
- Jesus next shows up when his disciples were in need. What does this disappearance and reappearance say about Jesus?
- What does this story say about popularity? Is it something Jesus pursued? Why is that important to consider as we work to be disciples of Jesus?

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Our scripture verse today ends with Jesus leaving the disciples and unexpectedly rejoining them when they were in a boat and in danger. Share as a group some of your thoughts below:

- A time when you or someone you know felt afraid during the "storms" of life
- When have you discovered in the middle of the "storm" that Jesus is with you?

- What does it mean to invite Jesus "into your boat"?
- We expect that there may be "rough seas" ahead in both our and others' lives. What advice might you give to help others keep Jesus "in our boat" and help "calm the seas" in our daily lives?

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

When storms come into our lives, we want to remember Jesus is nearby, awaiting invitation into our boats.

End with this benediction from Ephesians 3:14–21:

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 13)

LESSON 36
5 August 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: John 6:24–35

Lesson Focus: Jesus explains and offers the “bread of life.”

Objectives

The learners will...

- review the context of Jesus’ discourse of “the bread of life” found in John’s Gospel.
- consider Jesus’ desire to move his disciples from “spectacle” to “spiritual.”
- discover ways to offer God’s bread of life in our own community.

Supplies

- Pre-made unbaked rolls in a can or prepared unbaked dough

- Baking pan; make sure an oven is available and preheat before class. If you have students with gluten allergies, please plan accordingly.
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Internet connection or downloaded video—and the means to display the video *Sharing Food, Sharing Love* found at www.CofChrist.org/resources#/1470/mission-story---sharing-food,-sharing-love

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 6:24–35 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, p. 100, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

In today’s scripture passage the disciples have just returned from the feeding of the 5,000 miracle of Jesus and look for further signs. Jesus explains, “I am the bread of life.”

Explain that today we’re going to make bread and talk about what Jesus shared with his disciples. Go to the kitchen where you have already preheated an oven. Show the class your unbaked rolls (consider any gluten allergies in your group).

- Share that this class will be based around Jesus’ declaration, “I am the bread of life.”
- Explain that class will take place in the kitchen; have the students wash their hands and place the unbaked rolls in a baking pan.

- Share in a short prayer of thanks for the grain God has provided with our partnership in harvesting and preparing.
- Place the rolls in the oven and set a timer.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

As the rolls bake, read together John 6:24–35, assigning parts.

John 6:24–35 (adapted from NRSV)

Narrator: Jesus had just fed a crowd of over 5,000 people. After such a spectacle in front of so many people, instead of taking a victory lap, Jesus went

off to spend some time alone. He appeared a few days later in another location. When the crowds saw him, they got into boats and found him on the other side of the lake.

Disciple 1: Rabbi, when did you come here?

Jesus: Hmm, aren't you looking for me because I fed you bread a few days ago? Here's an idea; don't work for the food that perishes, but for food that endures for eternal life, which I will give you.

Disciple 2: What do we need to do to perform the works of God?

Jesus: This is the work of God; believe in him whom God has sent.

Disciple 3: What sign will you give us then, so we may see it and believe you? What miracles are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."

Jesus: I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my God who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

Everyone: Jesus, give us this bread always.

Jesus: I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Sometimes we, like the disciples, enjoy the "spectacle" more than the "message."

- Discuss a movie that you've seen recently with great visual effects, but had a poor script or message.
- Now discuss a book, movie, or TV show that had an incredibly good message. How did you respond to the theme of that book or show?
- How does this connect to what we experience in church?

During this time, your rolls will finish baking. Allow them to cool for a few moments, and then pass them out to the class. Discuss:

- In our scripture passage today, the people were focused on Jesus' miracles. Where did Jesus redirect their attention?
- What do you believe the bread of God might be?

- How do we provide our neighborhoods with the bread of God?

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

After eating the rolls, gather to a place where you can watch the video *Sharing Food, Sharing Love*: www.CofChrist.org/resources#/1470/mission-story---sharing-food,-sharing-love

Afterward discuss how the bread of life crosses both physical and spiritual lines in our life.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." We, as Jesus' disciples today, answer the call to turn people from just the momentary spectacles and toward the true bread of life.

Discuss:

- What does Jesus as the bread of life mean to us in the church today?
- What is our responsibility as disciples to provide the bread of life in our neighborhood today?
- How do we become ministers of the bread of life in our schools? In our homes?

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Share in a hymn together about the bread of life: "Eat This Bread" CCS 528 or "Eat This Bread and Never Hunger" CCS 530.

End in a short prayer of blessing that we help share the bread of life among people in our lives.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 14)

LESSON 37
12 August 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: John 6:35, 41–51

Lesson Focus: “I am” the bread of life.

Objectives

The learners will...

- study scripture passages that connect manna in the wilderness and the bread of life.
- consider Moses’ and Jesus’ encounters with the great “I am.”
- reflect how God’s existence in their lives can be shared in the greater community.

Supplies

- Bibles (multiple copies if available)
- Paper and pens or pencils
- Marker board or flip chart
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 6:35, 41–51 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 101–102, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson
(15% of total lesson time)

Dwelling in the Word

Sit comfortably and breathe deeply for a few moments, centering yourself in God’s peace.

Read the scripture below aloud. Instruct the class to let the words wash over them and fill their minds and imaginations.

Exodus 3:13–15

But Moses said to God, “If I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you’, and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” He said further, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I am has sent me to you.’” God also said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God

of Jacob, has sent me to you’: This is my name for ever, and this my title for all generations.”

Spend a few moments in silent reflection.

Read the passage a second time; respond to the following questions on a response sheet or in small groups of two or three:

- What words or phrases capture your attention in this passage? Why?
- What does this passage say to you about the nature of God?

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read John 6:35, 41–51. Explain that the Gospel of John, written after Jesus’ time, uses a term also found many years before in the scripture passage we just heard from

Exodus. When Moses asks for God's name, the reply is, "Tell them that I am." This revelation of God seems pretty basic, but also quite deep.

- Share for a few minutes why you think God uses the name I am.

Jesus further explains this as written in John's Gospel when he says, "I am the bread of life." This happens after everyone has just filled up on the bread and fishes provided at the feeding of the five thousand.

- Share for a few minutes what Jesus might be saying to his disciples when he says, "I am the bread of life."

John then records Jesus saying:

"I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

- Do you think Jesus means he's "bread"? What could he be referring to?
- What might Jesus mean when saying "the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh"?

Jesus uses a metaphor when saying "I am the bread of life." Metaphor is a figure of speech used to compare two different things that have something in common.

- Write on a marker board or flip chart examples of other metaphors (examples: broken heart, sunny disposition, and roller-coaster of emotions).
- Now write on the board the word "bread." List the different definitions we have for different kinds of bread (examples: money, toast can mean "game over," and so on).
- How do you think Jesus tried to connect his ministry and God's love to bread of life?
- How might the people hearing this metaphor miss the message Jesus tried to give? How can people today misunderstand some of Jesus' message?

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Read John 6:41–42.

Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

Jesus meets people who knew him when he was a child. They can't "grow him up" enough to hear his message. We've all experienced this to some degree. It's possible sometimes people know you as your parents' child more than you are known by your actual name! This can be a good thing and a bad thing.

On a piece of paper make room for two responses:

- Write your family's last name and how that makes others perceive you, either for good or not so good (example, "I'm a Johnson—I'm expected to always be on time.").
- Next, write your name and how you are different from other family members (example: "I'm Skylar, and I am almost always late.").
- Think of other ways you might be different from and similar to your parents.
- The crowds used Jesus' humble family background to discredit his message. Have you ever experienced the same thing or know someone who has? Share your experience.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Jesus uses the phrase "I am" in "I am the bread of life;" this is the same phrase used to introduce God to Moses in Exodus 3:13–15:

But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you', and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I am who I am." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I am has sent me to you.'"

We encounter many people each day with differing views on the existence of God. We might recognize the only way to know God is to *encounter* God—and that God might be best explained by the revelation "I am."

- Is the idea of God as "I am" difficult or easy for you? Why?
- What might God have been trying to help us understand by identifying as "I am"?
- Imagine you're talking to someone at school who doesn't believe in the existence of God. How would you

help them understand your viewpoint without belittling their view?

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Sing together "Bring Many Names" CCS 5.

End in a popcorn-style prayer:

Start by saying "Lord, we praise you for the many names we know you by. We call you the great I am. We also call you... (allow students to express their understanding of God). End the prayer with Amen.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 15)

LESSON 38
19 August 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: John 6:51–58

Lesson Focus: Jesus' strange instructions regarding his flesh and blood connect us to extending our "table" to others.

Objectives

The learners will...

- remember events in Jesus' life regarding table fellowship.
- connect the process of taking in life-giving energy and God's Spirit within us.
- consider the "eternal life" experienced with table fellowship.

Supplies

- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Bibles
- A small snack (grapes, orange slices, or bread with water or juice) for each student
- Equipment to show the video *Michigan's First Open Table*, found at <https://vimeo.com/122288237>

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for John 6:51–58 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 103–104, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Gather the class around a table. If possible, bring something for the group to eat and drink during class. Share that from the beginning to the end of Jesus' ministry, there were tables and community. Remind them of the wedding Jesus attended and where he performed his first miracle. Remind them of Jesus eating dinner at Zacchaeus' house. Remind them of the Last Supper.

First, have the students describe what the following tables look like.

- Their dining room table
- Their school lunchroom table
- Their grandparents' dining room table
- The most unusual table at which you've ever eaten

Next, share any special memory you have of being at any of these tables.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Discuss when you have experienced "table fellowship" when you were invited to share in a meal with people outside of your family group.

- Share the experience, where it was, and who was there.
- What made the meal uncomfortable?
- What made the experience good?

Explain the difficulty of today's scripture passage since we come with an understanding of the symbolism of the Lord's Supper. Read John 6:51–58.

This text can be shocking, just as it was to those who first heard it. “Eating flesh” and “drinking blood” are repulsive! Yet, Jesus uses the imagery to connect his disciples to him and to each other. Obviously, Jesus didn’t intend for his disciples to become cannibals. But he implied a spiritual metaphor, and we remember it when the community comes together for the common meal we call the Lord’s Supper. In a time of doubt and difficulty, we find comfort knowing the life of Christ is in us. We live in community through the sacraments we celebrate to remember him.

Discuss this process of our own body’s energy using the snack provided on the table:

- Our sun provides energy though nearly 93 million miles away.
- Plants receive this energy from the sun and the conditions on the Earth allow them to grow.
- We harvest the plants and eat them, or make them into a favorite dish.
- We eat the plants and receive the energy they gained from the sun and Earth.
- In our digestion, the energy from the food becomes part of us.

Also, discuss what connections there might be in Jesus’ admonition:

“Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.”

- What might Jesus have meant by “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you”? Is Jesus serious about our connection to him and each other through our “table fellowship”? What might this mean?
- Traditionally, we think of the Lord’s Supper when remembering Jesus’ flesh and blood. But might Jesus have been referring to something bigger than just this sacrament?
- Discuss eternal life and how the word “eternal” means “all time,” which refers to the past, present, and future. What might Christ have meant by, “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life”?

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

The Lord’s Supper also includes a table. Discuss how this “table fellowship” might connect to Jesus’ idea of eternal life.

Consider taking a field trip to the table on which the Lord’s Supper is served in your congregation.

- If you can find out the age of the table (or a rough estimate of its first use) and consider there would be 12 times each year we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, how many times has table fellowship been offered at this table?
- Discuss how many might have “dined” at that table. Talk about those no longer with us, and remember them present at that table. How does this eternal life connect us with those no longer physically present?
- Discuss those yet to be with us at this table— young people not yet old enough to fully commit to discipleship, and those not yet a part of our fellowship, but whom we hope to invite to share the table.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

One modern model of table fellowship has been expanded into a program called Open Table. You can choose to have your class watch the video *Michigan’s First Open Table* found at <https://vimeo.com/122288237>.

Afterward, discuss how programs like this take on Jesus’ flesh and blood and move into action. Share how your congregation could respond in a similar way.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Share in a prayer of hope for abiding in Christ and extending the table of fellowship into our communities and neighborhoods.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 16)

LESSON 39
26 August 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: John 6:56–69

Lesson Focus: Jesus chose mission over popularity.

Objectives

The learners will...

- recognize that sometimes discipleship is not an easy task.
- understand that Jesus also experienced both popularity and unpopularity.
- explore the reasons to stay connected to Jesus and our faith community.

Supplies

- A pre-determined obstacle course, a basketball and hoop, or a ping-pong ball and paper cup
- Bibles
- Paper and pens

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 6:56–69 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 105–106, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Prepare a group activity beforehand. It could be

- an indoor or outdoor obstacle course,
- a multiple trick shot at a basketball hoop,
- or an indoor multiple trick shot with a ping-pong ball and paper cup.

Share the scripture passage from today’s lectionary (John 6:60–67) and discuss how Jesus explained the eating of his flesh and drinking his blood in metaphoric symbolism, but had difficulty getting his meaning across.

Now explain in great detail the obstacle course or trick shot competition to the group.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Divide the group into teams and attempt the game you’ve set up. Take a few moments to see how difficult it is to accomplish.

Stop the action for a while and discuss how in the scripture Jesus had just revealed himself as the bread of life and those around him chose not to accept it. Jesus is vulnerable.

Share as a group how we have all experienced this vulnerability to one degree or another.

- Think of a time you chose to make yourself vulnerable.
- Share how it made you feel—what emotions you experienced.

- Think about a time you shared a new idea or attempted to develop something in a new way.
- Share how your idea or new development was first received.
- Why do we respond harshly to new ideas?

In John's narrative, Jesus loses most of his followers over a teaching commonly shared in Christian churches today. Afterward, only a handful of people remain. It's a disaster! It's a critical juncture in the ministry of Jesus. In this story we meet with three groups of people:

- The grumblers—"This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?"
- The tumblers—"...many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him."
- The devotees—"We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

Now attempt the obstacle course or trick shots again—this time have students play the part of each of the group above.

- Grumblers—loudly express how they don't believe the person can make the obstacle course or trick shot
- Tumblers—at first cheer on the person, but soon walk away
- Devotees—encourage the person performing the obstacle course or trick shot

How did the remarks of each group make you feel?

3 RESPOND Takes the learners from hearing to doing *(35% of total lesson time)*

Over the last few weeks reading chapter 6 in John's Gospel, we have witnessed

- feeding of thousands from a small amount of bread and fish,
- throngs of people attempting to follow Jesus as he seeks seclusion,
- Jesus walking on the water to the disciples,
- Jesus saying, "I am the bread of life," and connecting it to eternal life, and
- the rejection of Jesus by the crowds.

Without naming the person, talk about someone you have known who was once popular but now is not as popular. What made the difference? How might that person have felt when they were popular? Now how might they be feeling as their popularity has lessened?

How must Jesus have felt?

Discuss long-term friendships you've had. Have you known who befriended you even when others left you out? Have you had a long-term friendship with someone whose popularity has declined? Why have you chosen to remain a long-term friend even when popularity goes up and down?

4 SEND Explores how the lesson might be lived *(10% of total lesson time)*

"Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

—John 6:68–69

Today as followers of Jesus Christ, we will see some stay and some go. Jesus experienced being unpopular, too. Make a list of reasons to stay a part of this faith community and reasons to leave. Discuss why it's important to look seriously at our long-term friendship with Jesus and our family of faith.

5 BLESS Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope *(5% of total lesson time)*

For the last few moments of class, share a word of blessing for each person in the class in the form of a statement regarding why we stay. You can say something like:

- I stay because of Julie's kindness to the children in class.
- I stay because Mike has a nice voice when singing hymns.
- I stay because Kali always says "Hi" to me.
- I stay because Jenn and Andrew are like second parents to me.

Close with a short prayer of blessing.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 17)

LESSON 40
2 September 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 7:1–8, 14–15, 21–23

Lesson Focus: Jesus calls disciples to both inward attention and outward action.

Objectives

The learners will...

- consider how our traditions, rituals, and actions have the potential to both help and harm our message as disciples.
- recognize Jesus' concern with what is at the center of our being.
- learn how discipleship calls us to action for those hungry and in poverty.

Supplies

- Bibles
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

- Paper and pens
- A marker board or paper on which to make class lists
- Equipment to show the following videos:
 - *Fighting Hunger in Clay Cross* found at www.CofChrist.org/resources?tags=World%20Hunger#/1500/mission-story---clay-cross-fighting-hunger
 - *Community of Christ: World Hunger Meditation Video* found at www.CofChrist.org/resources?tags=World%20Hunger#/1074/world-hunger-meditation

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 7:1–8, 14–15, 21–23 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, p. 107 available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Discuss some traditions or rituals you or your family and friends commonly do that may or may not have any purpose. Some examples might include:

- saying "Bless you" after someone sneezes,
- locking the car door, and then pulling on the handle to ensure it's locked,

- having one Christmas decoration you simply must put out because it's "just not Christmas without it," or
- washing your hands before eating (and then opening a door or touching something unwashed).

List other traditions, rituals, or actions you may do often.

Discuss these actions and why we do them. Are they bad or good? Share how the center of these traditions, rituals, or actions in many cases may have purpose and meaning. Share together what that meaning and purpose might be.

Finally, discuss how sometimes these traditions, rituals, or actions might cloud or completely lose the center of their purpose and meaning.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

In today's scripture text, the local religious leaders once again scrutinize Jesus' teachings. Read aloud Mark 7:1–8, 14–15, 21–23.

The writer of Mark shares a story about the Pharisees who believed that people should practice the temple ritual of hand-washing before eating. More than an issue of cleanliness, this grew to become a way of deciding who was "in" and who was "out" socially. In other words, the ritual had been overtaken by the attempt to exclude others. By doing so, it became the opposite of its intent.

Discuss what's happening in this scripture passage regarding the "outside" (physical aspects) and "inside" (spiritual aspects):

Verses 1–8

- Put yourself in the place of the Pharisees and Scribes. Why would you ask the questions they ask? What do you hope to accomplish by asking these questions?
- What does Jesus say back to the Pharisees and Scribes?

Verses 14–15

- Jesus now addresses the crowds. What are the "outside" issues the Pharisees and Scribes address?
- What might be the "inside" issues Jesus addresses?

Verses 21–23

- Jesus makes a list of a number of repulsive and evil actions, or "outside" responses. Discuss how these actions might emerge from "inside" issues.
- Discuss how our actions can sometimes result from fear, resentment, or abuse. How does healing play a part in both our "inside" emotions and "outside" reactions?

Think about what you believe was the center of Jesus' "inside" ministry. You may choose to use some scripture references such as Luke 4:18–19, Matthew 25:35–36, and Matthew 22:36–40. How might these basic teachings of Jesus lead us to center our "inside" and affect our "outside" actions?

We many times find ourselves in the shoes of the Pharisees and Scribes—trying to live our traditions and faith because they bring us community and have spiritual

significance. But as Jesus shows his disciples time and time again, when our traditions and piety turn into means of lowering human worth, we've missed the central point of the gospel.

- Share some ways you've witnessed "religious" people using their beliefs to oppress others.
- How can we discover the center, or what matters most as a disciple of Jesus Christ today?
- How does that understanding affect both our "inside" being and "outside" actions?
- Discuss how our congregation can help emphasize the center of our discipleship both as "inside" growth and "outside" responses.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing

(35% of total lesson time)

Give each student a piece of paper and have them draw six circles, one inside another (like a target). In each of the circles, have them list the most important traits of who they are inside. They could list, for example:

- Kindness
- Love
- Empathy
- Positivity
- Compassion
- Friendship

Have them rank each trait by placing the most important trait inside the center circle and then moving outward with the next important traits.

Have those who are comfortable share their lists to compare. As a class, decide the most important "inside" for those who call themselves Christians. With this list, discuss how people with these traits would act—what "outside" actions would they display.

Today is World Hunger Emphasis Day when our faith movement joins with others to address the human need of poverty and hunger. Discuss why we should be concerned with the needs of those who are hungry.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson
might be lived
(10% of total lesson time)

Watch the video *Fighting Hunger in Clay Cross* about a congregation in the United Kingdom who chose to address hunger in their area: www.CofChrist.org/resources?tags=World%20Hunger#/1500/mission-story---clay-cross,-fighting-hunger.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise,
blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Sing together "Brothers and Sisters of Mine" CCS 616.

Share the video *Community of Christ: World Hunger Meditation Video* as we remember those who are hungry and need our action as disciples of Christ: www.CofChrist.org/resources?tags=World%20Hunger#/1074/world-hunger-meditation.