

Early Summer - Cycle C - Revised Common Lectionary
Pentecost through Proper 10
May 27, 2007 - July 15, 2007

We remain Easter people, now with the wind of the Holy Spirit in our sails. Our task for the months ahead, in this season of Ordinary Time, which extends to the end of November, is to look at what Jesus so tenaciously taught his disciples and see what is in these teachings for us, as we carry out the work we have been given to do. Jesus promised his disciples a helper, an Advocate, who would stand with them making the work possible. This same helper, the Holy Spirit, hovers over us, still eager to quench the fire of fear and replace it with the powerful energy of love.

Proper 7
June 24, 2007
Luke 8: 26-39

A notation for this week's Gospel

Demons. Not a likely topic for a meeting of psychiatric medical professionals. And the prescription — tossing demons onto the back of pigs and subsequently driving the pigs off a cliff — equally unlikely. Yet who among us has not been taunted by a demon in some other disguise? ("I am not qualified, I can't do it, it is too hard." etc.) And, oh, the delicious relief when the wind blows the demons away.

Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Theme: Demons blown away.

Before. Consider the option suggested, and decide whether it will be "doable" in your setting: Going outside and blowing bubbles into the wind. A second option is offered for settings where "outside" is insufficiently safe from traffic or otherwise unavailable. Children, just like adults, have many fears — some likely to occur (parents fighting, bullies at school, etc.), but some can be controlled like the fear of tigers in the closet or monsters under the bed. Perhaps this scripture can help with what is in closets and under beds. You will need containers of bubbles — either home made to use outside or purchased and plastic wands. Option (2) If you cannot go outside and bubbles would not be an option inside: lots of pieces of paper and crayons, plus a trash can.

Recipe for homemade bubbles: For every cup of water add 2 tablespoons of Dawn dishwashing liquid (this brand simply works best) and 1 tablespoon of Karo light corn syrup.

Note: Young children would be horrified that Jesus drove a batch of unsuspecting innocent pigs off a cliff to their death below. So we have soft-peddled the way the demons are dispatched. We hope you will find it acceptable.

Beginning. Offer this story from when you were a child — tailoring it to be true to you. When I was about 6 (or whatever the average age of your group is) I used to be afraid that monsters were under my bed. I would call my mother and she would come and turn on the light and look under the bed with me to show

me that the monsters had gone away, and I could go back to sleep. Has this ever happened to you? Maybe it is something in your closet — or outside your window? Invite the children to share their stories.

Praying. Thank you, Jesus, that you do not want us to be afraid. Thank you that you love each of us. Amen.

The Story. A man was going crazy with all kinds of demons. A demon is something that makes you afraid. The story doesn't tell us whether it was monsters under his bed he was afraid of, just that he had all these demons. Jesus did not want the man to be afraid. So Jesus said to the demons: "You come out of that man this instant and go away and do not ever come back to him — ever. You demons just go fly away off the cliff and into the ocean and never come back!" Well, the man felt better right away. He said "Thank you, thank you, thank you to Jesus." The man went home to his friends and told them Jesus had sent his demons away, never to come back.

Option. Tell the children we are going to go outside and blow bubbles in the wind. With each bubble, we can say "go away and do not ever come back, bad dream!"

Inside Option. Give the children pieces of paper and crayons. Tell them we are all going to draw our bad dreams and then tear up our drawings into a zillion pieces and put the pieces in the trash. Tell them you will take the pieces home and bury them in the ground (or take them to the dump, or something you can promise that is equally final).

Getting Closure. Gather the children and tell them that IF the bad dream comes back, you can tell it you have already gotten rid of it, and it is not allowed to come back! Tell your parents to come into your room and remind the bad dream that it has been blown to the wind (or torn into a zillion pieces).

Closing Prayer. Thank you, God, that you want us to have happy dreams, good sleep, and no bad dreams. Amen.