

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

CONTRIBUTOR NAME: RACHEL MOSHER

JUSTICE ISSUE: ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER AS A SACRED RIGHT

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE/ LECTIONARY WEEK:	Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16 and Exodus 17:1-7
SOCIAL PRINCIPLES/ BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS REFERENCES:	¶163 The Basic Rights and Freedoms “all individuals...are entitled to basic human rights and freedoms”
OBJECTIVE:	encourage students to find needs in the community around them, and be open to allowing God to work through them in order to meet those needs.
SUPPLIES NEEDED:	whiteboards and markers OR scrap paper and writing utensils.

LESSON PLAN STRUCTURE (1 HOUR)

CENTERING MOMENT (5 MINUTES)

Say: When someone is thirsty, they are missing one of our most basic human needs, water. But people don’t just thirst for water. We all have other needs, too.

Let’s begin with a game that helps us think about the things people truly need.

(Give each student paper/pencil.)

Say: Number your paper from 1 to 10. When I say, ‘Go, you’ll have 30 seconds to write down as many basic human needs you can think of.

(Allow 30 seconds)

Say: Now let’s score the game but with a twist! Normally in Scattergories, you earn points for answers that no one else has. Today, we are going to do the opposite.

For every answer you wrote, you’ll earn one point for every person who wrote the same thing. For example, if five people wrote, ‘water,’ everyone who wrote ‘water’ earns five points. If only one person wrote ‘designer bags,’ that answer earns just one point.

NOTES

Many students don’t feel comfortable answering questions out loud. Especially if they are new to the group, or haven’t experienced this type of setting before. Using a game format will help them to hopefully feel a little more comfortable!

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST CONT'D

(Lead the group in comparing answers and calculating scores.)

Say: Today's winner receives the Good Neighbor Award for recognizing the needs we share as human beings!

(Announce winner)

SCRIPTURE STUDY (25 MIN.)

Say: In the United Methodist Book of Resolutions, Paragraph 163 reminds us that 'all individuals...are entitled to basic human rights.' These are the essential needs every person deserves because each person is created in God's image and deeply loved by God.

Throughout Scripture, we see God meeting people's needs and calling God's people to care for one another. As each generation learns these stories and lives them out, they pass God's love on to the next generation, just as families and churches have passed these stories on to us.

In biblical times, many people learned through storytelling. Today's Psalm is a good example. It reminds God's people of an important moment in their history so they will never forget what God has done.

As we read our passage for today, imagine you are gathered around a family campfire or inside a family tent. Read as though you are a grandparent sharing an important family story that everyone needs to remember.

(Invite a volunteer to read Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16)

Ask:

- What story is this psalm remembering?
- What does it tell us about God?

Say: This psalm highlights the joyful parts of Israel's journey out of Egypt. But, like many family stories, it doesn't tell every emotion people experienced. Their journey was exciting, but it was also difficult.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST CONT'D

Let's look at verse 15, "God split rocks open in the wilderness and gave them plenty to drink.

Ask:

- What problem was God solving?

(Invite another volunteer to read Exodus 17:1-7)

Say: The Israelites were thirsty. They wondered whether leaving Egypt had really made things better. Water wasn't a luxury; it was something they needed to survive.

God responded by providing water through Moses. Moses became the person God worked through to meet the people's needs. He listened to the people's concerns, brought them before God, and helped God's provision reach the community. God works through ordinary people to meet extraordinary needs.

GROUP ACTIVITY (25 MIN.)

Say: Think about a large meal you shared with others. It might have been a holiday dinner, a church potluck, church camp, a mission trip, or another gathering around a table.

At almost every gathering like that, someone eventually says, 'Can you please pass the...'

(Invite students to fill in the blank with examples)

Say: Whether it's mashed potatoes, ketchup, rolls, or napkins, someone passes what's needed from one person to another until it reaches the person who needs it.

Moses did something similar. The Israelites needed water. Moses brought their need to God, and God worked through Moses to provide what the people needed.

We probably won't strike a rock and watch water flow from it. But every day we have opportunities to help pass along God's love, peace, compassion, and provision.

(Ask students to partner up)

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST CONT'D

Say: With your partner, think about your school, church, neighborhood, or community.

Discuss:

- What need do you see around you?
- Who might be hurting, left out, or lacking something important?

Say: You don't have to solve the problem today. Moses didn't have the solution either, he simply brought the people's needs before God.

(Invite each pair to write one community need on a small piece of paper.)

CLOSING MOMENT (5 MIN.)

Say: Let's bring these needs to God together.

(Invite each pair to place their paper in the center of the room. Gather everyone in a circle around the papers.)

Say: These papers represent real people and real needs in our community. As followers of Christ, we are called to notice these needs, pray for them, and remain open to the ways God might work through us to meet them.

(Invite a volunteer to pray or use the following prayer.)

Prayer:

Creator God,

Your beautiful creation occasionally finds themselves lacking. We pray that you take these moments and allow us to pass the plates of peace amongst us all. May we keep these needs in the forefront of our minds this week and open our hearts in order to allow you to work through us to meet the needs of our neighbors. In your name we pray, Amen