

Eight Sunday after Epiphany – year A

Preparation

Read [Matthew 6:24-34](#). Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump at you. Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://www.textweek.com/yeara/epipha8.htm>

http://www.episcopalchurch.org/109452_115820_ENG_HTM.htm

http://www.cyberfaith.com/proclaiming_faith.cfm?id=431

http://www.sermons4kids.com/lilies_of_the_field.htm

<http://www.msscrafter.com/newtestament/sermononmount.htm>

<http://www.ebibleteacher.com/children/lessons/noworry.htm>

<http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/a/8-a/A-8-a.html>

<http://www.efree.mb.ca/lectionarypuzzles/in-awjj.htm#ep08>

Gathering

Materials needed

- Small table or end of one table
- Candle and candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- Green cloth
- Newsprint and markers

Print up the prayer on the newsprint so that the readers can say the prayer with you. Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. With the children place the cloth on the table. Have them help you place the candle and the Bible on the cloth. Light the candle. Pray the following prayer together:

**Learning new things, we walk with God;
Loving new ways, we walk with Jesus;
Looking for hope, we walk with the Spirit. Amen.**

Blow out the candle. Print the word '**Worry**' up on the newsprint. Have one of the children read the word. Ask the children if they know what the word means. *Wait for their responses.* Explain that to worry is to almost make yourself sick thinking about something that is coming or may be coming. *Give an example to the children of being worried.* Ask the children to name some of the things that they get worried about. *Wait for their responses.*

Then ask them what they do to make themselves less worried. *Wait for their responses.* Explain that in today's story they will hear what Jesus has to say about worrying and what we should do with our worries.

Story Time

Materials

- poster from previous weeks
- world image at the end of the lesson
- scissors
- wall tack or tape
- a picture of some birds and a picture of flowers
(from a magazine or printed up from the internet)

Instructions

- Copy the world image at the end of the lesson and cut it out. Place it near the poster with the wall tack or tape. Have handy the two pictures for use during the story. Get comfortable with the children to share the story.

Jesus had been teaching on the mountain for a long time. He had been telling his friends and others about how God wanted them to live their lives. Jesus had been sharing with the people what the kingdom of God was going to be like.

Jesus said, “You have to make a choice. You can’t serve two things at the same time. For if you do, you will love one and hate the other. Then you will love one and hate the other. You can’t serve God and being rich.”

“Here is what I want to tell you,” continued Jesus, “do not worry about your life. Do not worry about what you will eat or what you will drink or what you will wear. Life is about more than food and our bodies need more than just clothes.”

Bring out the picture of birds and show it to the children. Jesus said, “Take a look at the birds who fly in the air. They don’t worry about where their food is going to come from. They know that there will be seeds and insects for them to eat. They know that God will look after them. Are you not more important to God than the birds?”

Bring out the picture of the flowers and show it to the children. Then Jesus said, “Take a look at the flowers that are in the field. They don’t work, they just grow and show us God’s beauty. Some of them are here today and then they are gone tomorrow. The flowers use the sun, rain and soil to grow and flourish. All the gifts from God. Are you not more important to God than the flowers?”

“So, don’t worry,” said Jesus, “about you what you will eat. About what you will drink. About what you will wear. You need to work first for the kingdom of God. You need to follow in God’s way and look after the world and the people that live in it. Don’t worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will bring its own needs. Just focus on what needs to be taken care of today.”

Point out the poster to the children. Explain that each week that they are going to add a symbol (an object that reminds us of something) to the poster. Bring out the world image. Ask the children why we put the world on for today? To remind us of that we need to only serve God and therefore look after God’s world. Have one of the children tape it onto the poster on the side of the hill/mountain.

Response

Project Idea 1: Worry Not Beads

These beads will be a concrete reminder for the children on Jesus' instruction to not worry and work for God's kingdom.

Materials needed

- yarn
- beads
- sticky tape
- scissors
- small containers

Instructions

Place the beads in some small containers. Cut the yarn into 60 cm inch lengths – one for each child. Explain to the children that in times past people would have 'worry' beads to help them keep calm. They are going to make 'worry not' beads to remember how Jesus called us to not worry but to work for the kingdom of God. Give each child a piece of yarn and help them to tie a good knot in one end of the yarn. On the other end wrap a piece of scotch tape around it to make a stiff point for the beads to go through. Have the children choose a bead and thread it on to the yarn and then tie a knot in the yarn. Keep threading beads on and tying knots until there is about 15 cm left at the end. Take the tape off and then tie the two ends together. Encourage the children to use the beads to remind themselves not to worry and to trust that God will be with them at all times and take care of them.

Project Idea 2: Bird and Flower Bouquets

Jesus told us not to worry just like the birds and flowers. These bouquets will help the children to remember those words of Jesus.

Materials needed

- bird image and flower image from end of lesson
- construction paper
- scissors
- markers
- pipe cleaners
- strong tape
- yarn

Instructions

Make a copy of the bird image and the flower image. Trace onto construction paper two of each for each child. If the children are older they can cut them out themselves. You will probably want to do this for younger children. Give the children 2 birds and 2 flowers. Once they are cut out (if not already done so) have the children decorate them with the markers. As they are decorating them ask the children what the birds and the flowers remind them of – hopefully they will tell you that Jesus told us not to worry and to rely on God. Once they are done decorating the birds and flowers help them to tape a pipe cleaner on to the back of them. Cut a piece of yarn and tie it around the birds and flowers to make a bouquet for the children. Suggest that they place them somewhere at home to remind their families about Jesus' instruction to not worry and work for God's kingdom.

Project Idea 3: Worry Not Litany

This response will be especially good with older children as they will get to write a prayer together to share with their families.

Materials needed

- newsprint
- markers
- white paper
- pencils

Instructions

On the newsprint, print: **‘We will not worry. We will rely on God’.**

Ask the children to name all the things that they worry about – print them up on the newsprint. Give each child a piece of white paper and a pencil. Have the children write out a litany on the paper. Here is an example of what could be written:

We worry that we won’t have any friends.

We will not worry. We will rely on God.

When the children are finished have them share with each other (if they are comfortable doing that). Encourage the children to share their litanies with their families later that day or through the week.

Closing

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

Thank you God for being with us;

Thank you Jesus for loving us;

Thank you Spirit for leading us. Amen.

Image of the World



Image of a Bird



Image of a Flower

