

Year 1: *No session is associated with this lesson*

Class 25: John 7:1-13 – *Jesus and his brothers*

CONCEPTS that will be covered in the lesson

- Provide a reminder that “The Jews” is shorthand for “Jewish leadership” in the Gospel of John
- Note the interpersonal difficulties Jesus has with his brothers
- Note that the identity of Jesus is not clear to his brothers or the people – and why this is important (getting to know Jesus isn’t just automatic; it doesn’t happen by just living with him or hearing others talk about him)

Materials needed:

- Video clip from “Three days to kill” (can be seen on rfour.org)
- Electronics that show the video clip
- Playing cards for activity of “What are you hiding!?!”
 - You will probably want one deck per every 6 people playing
 - Note that this card game is usually called “BS” – obviously I’m not going to call it that for the lesson. But I let you know this because your students might know the game – mine certainly did – and I don’t want you to be caught unawares when they start shouting “Oh, this is BS!” That could be both disconcerting and confusing.

THE LESSON

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING QUESTION

- For the opening question for today’s class, I [the teacher] will ask the question, and then to give you some time to think of an answer, I will answer first.
- Once I answer the question, we’ll go around the circle.
- When it’s your turn, start with your name and then answer the question to the best of your ability.
- *Here’s this week’s question:* What’s something that you’ve changed your mind about?

INTRO to Activity

- Today’s story is about Jesus and his brothers
- In it, his brothers tease him and Jesus possibly misleads them
- And then, Jesus goes to a festival incognito – undercover Jesus! (or even, as one student put it, *Double-Oh Jesus*)
- Good stuff!

- So to help us get ready for this story, we're going to play a card game of deceit and hiding.
- It's called "What are you hiding!?!!" and this is how you play it

EXPLAIN Activity of "What are you hiding!?!!"

- All the cards are dealt out to the players
- The object is to get rid of all your cards. Select at random who should go first and continue clockwise.
- On the table is a discard pile, which starts empty.
- A turn consists of discarding one or more cards face down on the pile, and calling out how many cards you are discarding for the number you are discarding (For example, "Three kings" or "one two" or "Four aces")
- The first player must discard Aces, the second player then discards Twos, the next player Threes, and so on. After Tens come Jacks, then Queens, then Kings, then back to Aces, etc.
- Since the cards are discarded face down, you do not in fact have to play the number you have to discard. For example if it is your turn to discard Sevens, you may actually discard any card or mixture of cards; in particular, if you don't have any Sevens you will HAVE TO play some other card or cards.
- Any player who suspects that the card(s) discarded by a player do not match the number can challenge the play by saying "What are you hiding!?!!" Then the cards played by the challenged player are exposed and one of two things happens:
 - if they are all of the rank that was called, the challenge is false, and the challenger must pick up the whole discard pile;
 - if any of the played cards is different from the called number, the challenge is correct, and the person who *played* the cards must pick up the whole discard pile.
- After the challenge is resolved, play continues in normal rotation: the player to the left of the one who was challenged plays and calls the next rank in sequence.
- The first player to get rid of all their cards and survive any challenge resulting from their final play wins the game.
- If you play your last remaining card(s), but someone challenges you and the cards you played are not what you called, you pick up the pile and play continues.

DO a few rounds of ACTIVITY

ASK

- How many times were you hiding cards that you didn't want to be seen?
- Was it usually because you *wanted to* do so or because you *had to*?
- Was it better to have the cards or to not have the cards?

INTRO to Scripture Story

- So in today's scripture story, Jesus has to hide, not because he wants to, but because he has to – at least at first
- But before that happens, he has to deal with his brothers.
- Let's see what happens.

READ John 7:1-13 (recommend class reads it out loud; one person per verse, including teachers)

1 After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He did not wish an opportunity to kill him. 2 Now the Jewish festival of Booths was near. 3 So his brothers said to him, "Leave

here and go to Judea so that your disciples also may see the works you are doing; 4for no one who wants to be widely known acts in secret. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.” 5(For not even his brothers believed in him.) 6Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. 7The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify against it that its works are evil. 8Go to the festival yourselves. I am not going to this festival, for my time

has not yet fully come.” 9After saying this, he remained in Galilee. 10But after his brothers had gone to the festival, then he also went, not publicly but as it were in secret. 11The Jews were looking for him at the festival and saying, “Where is he?” 12And there was considerable complaining about him among the crowds. While some were saying, “He is a good man,” others were saying, “No, he is deceiving the crowd.” 13Yet no one would speak openly about him for fear of the Jews.

ASK

- Verse 1 – Judah is south of where Jesus lives in Galilee. Judah is also where the city of Jerusalem is and why most people would go there. Why doesn't Jesus want to go to Jerusalem? (Because the Jewish leadership was looking for a chance to kill him – seems like a good reason to not go)
- Verse 2 – What festival was happening in Jerusalem (Festival of Booths -- Festival of the Booths is usually happens in late September / early October. It is one of the big three “festival weeks” for the Jews (Passover and Shavot – aka Pentecost – being the other two.)
 - The festival consisted of building a booth – usually taking the first four days of the holiday – and then welcoming strangers with generosity into your booth during the last 4 days of the holiday. The idea of the festival is to remember the life of wandering in the wilderness and being at the mercy/hospitality of God and others.
- Verse 3 & 4 – What do Jesus' brothers tell him to do? (Go prove himself / make himself famous)
- Do you think Jesus asked for their input? (Most likely not – which means, if you've ever received unsolicited advice from your family members ... Jesus knows your pain!)
- What do you think – do the brothers really care about what Jesus is doing or are they just teasing him? (verse 5 suggests that they are teasing him OR possibly encouraging him – the brothers' words *could be* read as encouragement, but there's less likelihood of that being the case)
- Verse 8 – What does Jesus tell his brothers to do and what does he say he's going to do? (He tells them to go and that he'll stay at home)
- Verse 10 – What does Jesus then do? (He goes to the festival)
- Hmm – so what do you think: Did Jesus lie to his brothers? Or did he change his mind after they left?
- Verse 10 – HOW does Jesus go to the festival? (“not publicly” – which basically means: UNDERCOVER! We now have Undercover Jesus!)
- Verse 11 – And why is Jesus undercover? (Because the authorities are looking for him)
- Verse 12 – What does the crowd have to say about Jesus? (“He's a good man” and “He's a deceiver”)
- Verse 13 – Is Jesus the *only* person afraid of the Jewish leadership? (Nope – the crowd is too)

TELL

- So a number of interesting things happening here.
 1. Jesus' brothers tease him
 2. Jesus then lies to his brothers or changes his mind
 3. Jesus then goes to a festival undercover
 4. And good thing, too, because the authorities are looking for him!

- Here is most likely what happened with his brothers' teasing him: The brothers are making plans to go to Jerusalem together. Because lots of people go together. Remember the story of when Jesus was 12 years old and stayed in Jerusalem for three days before his family realized he was missing? We talked about how Jesus' parents weren't being bad parents, but were just assuming that he was with someone else. The same thing is happening here – the brothers are probably making plans about going (together) and Jesus has probably been saying “No” for quite awhile – and the brothers are probably slightly annoyed with him at this point.
- Jesus probably is NOT lying to his brothers. What we see in a number of Jesus stories is that Jesus changes his mind. So that's probably what happens here – possibly in prayer. It's quite possible that Jesus is afraid and then in prayer he hears that he need not stay away just because of fear.
- For those of us who are tuned in to irony (example of irony – when someone yells “BE VERY VERY QUIET”), it's very ironic that Jesus does not feel welcome and is NOT welcome at the festival that's about hospitality. This is probably the second best teaching point of this story: The Jewish leadership is so focused on enforcing their rules that they've scared *everyone* at the festival. So what should have been 8 days of remembering and sharing God's abundance and hospitality is instead turned into 8 days of whispering and hiding and fear.
- And probably the best teaching point of this story is that we are again reminded that getting to know who Jesus is is NOT an automatic process.
 - The crowd can't figure out who or what he is because they are not following him.
 - His BROTHERS don't know (or seem to care) who he is – and they've had to live with and put up with him all of their lives.
 - To really get to know Jesus, then, is about making the choice to learn from him – to be a disciple.
 - This is why Jesus tells his disciples (in another part of John – John 15:15): *I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.*

TRANSITION TO MOVIE

- To help us think about how learning from someone helps us to better learn about the person, we're going to watch the following movie clip from the movie “Three days to kill”
- There are a number of points of connection between this clip and the story we just read.
 1. The two characters in the clip are related to each other (a father and a daughter), but they don't know each other very well (like Jesus and his brothers)
 2. They don't know each other very well because the dad is an undercover (like Jesus) CIA spy (not like Jesus). And he stayed away from his family due to the dangers of his work for a very long time
 3. The dad is teaching the daughter how to ride a bike, and we'll see that as she learns to ride the bike that the nature of their relationship changes as well (like Jesus and his disciples).

NOTE TO TEACHERS: This clip can be a pretty powerful/moving scene and might stir some feelings for students who are either adopted or in one-parent families. You might want to consider giving parents/families a heads-up about this one before showing it.

WATCH MOVIE CLIP

ASK/TELL

- Do you think the daughter wants to learn to ride the bike at the start of the clip? (certainly not at first)

- As she gets better at riding the bike, the daughter starts to trust her dad – she even tells him at one point, “Don’t let go.”
- What questions does the daughter ask the dad as she learns to ride the bike? (Questions about why he wasn’t around during her childhood)
- At the end of the movie clip – what does the daughter tell the dad? (That she lies a lot)
- Would you say father and daughter are trusting each other more at the end of the clip than the beginning? (Yes)
- Would you say father and daughter know more things about each other at the end of the clip than the beginning? (Yes)
- A similar thing happens when we learn and then do the things that Jesus teaches about God and the Kingdom of God – we learn more about *who* Jesus is as well.
- In fact, we learn more about who Jesus is than his brothers seemed to know of him – at least at this point in Jesus’ life.

CLOSING PRAYER