

“Jellybean Days”

(A lesson about priorities and time management)

For The Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

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Key verses:

Ephesians 5:15-17

Objective: to think critically about the time we have been given and how best to use it to accomplish the things that are important to us as individuals, as well as followers of Christ.

The Set up: Moderate

The Plan:

- Hook: Your Life in Jelly Beans (10 mins or less)
 - You will be watching a video that uses jellybeans to show how we spend our time
- Book: Use your time wisely (10 mins)
 - Considering what it means to be foolish with our time
- Look: Jelly Bean Priorities (15 mins)
 - Thinking about how we can best use our time to have a lasting impact
- Took: Making the most of every Jelly Bean (5 mins)
 - Challenging them to do something that matters EVERY day

The Supplies:

- Copy of lesson
- The Jelly Bean video
- Whiteboard and markers
- Jelly Bean voting pages (back of lesson)
- **82 jelly beans per kid, counted out and put in cups** <<----- Don't forget this important prep step!
- Processing questions from the voting rounds: copies for pairs, or written on a white board

(Open in prayer, announcements, and any other start of gathering traditions)

Your Life in Jelly Beans (Hook, 10 mins. or less)

In this section, you will be watching a video of people playing with jellybeans, and each bean represents a day in your life. The point of the video is to make each day count.

- Show the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOksW_NabEk

Discussion Questions

- Does anyone wish they had some jellybeans to eat?
- What about this video was interesting to you?
- Does anyone remember how many days were left after all the other things had been removed? (2,740)
- What are some ways that people use up that time?
- How would you use that time if money weren't an object?
- Generally speaking, do you think that people use those "left over" jelly beans to their fullest? Why or why not?

Transition:

This jellybean video brings up an interesting point. No matter who you are or how hard you work, one thing that everyone in this world has in common is that we are restricted by time. All the money in the world cannot buy you more time. We all get 24 hours a day... and yet, we don't always treat each moment as the precious commodity that it is. Let's take a look at what advice the Bible has around the use of our time...

Using Your Time Wisely (Book, 10 mins)

In this section, we are looking at several different translations of the same verses about using your time in an important way. More specifically, we are wondering what constitutes spending our time in a way that is "evil."

- Explain that we will be looking up the same verse, but in several different translations so that we can understand it's fullest meaning.
- Choose 3 youth to look up Ephesians 5:15-17, in at least 3 different translations (they may have to get out their phones to look these up!) My suggestions of the translations are NIV, The Message, and NLT.
- Before you read the verses, ask the youth to, **"listen for anything in the 3 different translations that sticks out to you- good or bad."**

- If you chose the translations that were suggested, here they are for your planning purposes:
 - **NIV:** Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.
 - **The Message:** Don’t waste your time on useless work, mere busywork, the barren pursuits of darkness. Expose these things for the sham they are. It’s a scandal when people waste their lives on things they must do in the darkness where no one will see. Rip the cover off those frauds and see how attractive they look in the light of Christ.
 - Wake up from your sleep,
 - Climb out of your coffins;
 - Christ will show you the light!
 So watch your step. Use your head. Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times! Don’t live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants.
 - **NLT:** So be careful how you live. Don’t live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.

Discussion Questions:

- Was there anything in those verses that stuck out to you?
- What was the main idea?
- How are the people who waste their time described?
- What word(s) is used to describe the days that these time wasting people are living in?

This would probably be a good time to make sure that the verses are understood in context- you may even want to go back and read the entire chapter. Specifically, the chapter is a reminder that we shouldn’t be doing things in private that we wouldn’t want other to know about. Instead, we should let every moment of our lives shine in the Light of Christ. When Paul writes about the “evil days” he isn’t necessarily talking about wasting time (which is what we are focusing on), but his advice to, “be careful how you live,... making the most of every opportunity,” is still solid instruction that applies to our conversation.

For the sake of conversation, you may want to ask them:

- Could not making the most of every “jelly bean” day be considered “evil”? Why or why not?
- How is wasting our time an insult to God?

- What are some ways that people “waste” their time? (list them on the white board)
- Are doing these things wrong? Evil?

Jelly Bean Priorities (Look, 15 mins)

In this section we are going to go back to the jellybeans and use them to sort out how we prioritize the things in our lives and use our time. Jellybeans will still represent time, but for this section, they will represent hours, not days. You don’t need to explain this difference until the second candy voting section.

Say something like:

Since it is fun to play with our food, we are going to use jellybeans to think about some of the things in our lives that are important to us. Everyone is going to get a cup of jellybeans and a voting sheet. You WILL be able to eat your jellybeans, but not until we are done. Please do not eat any of them or share them until I let you know we are all done with them.

Jelly Bean Votes, Part 1: Current Values

- Have them pair up with someone. There will be times when they need to discuss their votes with someone.
- Each youth should have a voting sheet and a cup of jellybeans.
- Explain that they are going to use the candies in their cup to show what CURRENTLY the most important thing in their life.
- All they have to do is distribute their candies on their sheet of paper to represent what is most important to them at this stage in their life. They will have these 5 categories: academics, extra-curricular, relationships, faith/God, other. Each bean represents one vote- if something is of great important to you, put more beans in that category; if something is NOT important to you, then you shouldn’t put many beans there.
- Let them ask questions
- Give them 1 minute to complete the activity
- When they are done voting, count the candies in each category and write it at the top. Put candies back in the cup- STILL DON’T EAT!
- Processing Questions to do in their pairs/small groups:
 - What is most important to you?
 - What doesn’t matter to you at all?

Jelly Bean Votes, Part 2: Time Spent

- We are doing the candy activity this time but with a TWIST:
- You are not voting for what is most important to you, but how you spend your time. You have 82 candies, which is ABOUT how many hours you have a week where you are awake and not at school. In other words, this is about how many hours a week where you and your parents get to choose how you spend your time. (If they push back and say that they don't have that much free time because of sports/band/etc., push right back! Those are all things that they CHOOSE to stay busy with!)
- 1 candy represents 1 hour- put the candies in the categories where you spend the time (not how you want to- how you actually spend it!)
- You may want to help them think critically about this. For example, if they keep their phones next to them when they are doing their homework, how much of their homework time does that eat up? 15 minutes of every hour? Their charts should reflect how they are actually using their time, not just how they intend to use their time
- Give them a little longer to complete this activity so they can really consider how they spend their time- 3 to 4 minutes should do the trick
- When they are done voting, count the candies in each category and write it at the top. Put candies back in the cup- STILL DON'T EAT!
- Processing Questions to do in their pairs/small groups:
 - If you look back at the way you voted for the first round, does it match up with the way you voted on this round?
 - Are you using your time in ways that could be considered "foolish", or are you using your time in ways that reflect what is most important to you?
 - What makes it so difficult to spend our time in ways that reflect what is important to us?

Jelly Bean Votes, Part 3: Long Term Plans

- The last part of the candy votes is going to look just like the first one, where we will vote on what is important to us, but instead of what we value today, imagine what you would value when you are about your parent's age... so, ancient!
- Let them ask questions
- Give them 2 minutes to complete the activity
- When they are done voting, count the candies in each category and write it at the top. Put candies back in the cup- STILL DON'T EAT!
- Processing Questions:
 - Do your numbers from this last round look the same as the numbers from the first round? Or the second?
 - Is there any reason why you can't start using your time NOW to make an impact on what you want things to look like in the future?

Mini-lecture/Transition

It's easy to claim that something is important to us, but it's much more challenging to actually use every moment that God has blessed us with to do something that is important. This is not to say that you shouldn't rest or do things just for the fun of it, but it does mean that we should think critically about how we spend our time. Just like Paul said, it is "foolish" to act thoughtlessly and not make the most of every opportunity.

If we think back to the video we watched at the beginning, you may remember that the average American gets a total of 28,835 days on this Earth, and yet, in the video, they widdle the number down to 2,740 to represent the days where you get to choose how to spend your time. Furthermore, they say that the first 5,475 days don't count at all- those are the first 15 years of your life. Why do those days not count?!

What if, instead, we looked at each of the 28,835 days as opportunities to not be foolish, but to shine the Light of Christ?

Making the Most of Your Beans (5 mins)

In this section, we are challenging them to do one thing each day for the next week that will shine the Light of Christ!

- Have each kid take 7 jellybeans out of their cups and set those aside. The beans that are still in the cup may be eaten after the closing prayer, but the 7 that were pulled out should NOT be eaten.
- Thinking back to the video, each bean represents one day. They have 1 bean for each day between now and the next time you gather. (feel free to adjust the jellybean number to whatever fits for your group)
- The jellybeans should be taken home and put somewhere to remind them that each one represents an opportunity to do something that is not a foolish waste, but something that will have a lasting impact and will shine the light of Christ.
- Each morning, before they do anything, they should eat the jellybean and say a prayer, asking God to show them something they can do that day to make the day count- it can be something huge, or something really simple, but it should be intentional.
- If you are able, have them take a picture of the bean each day, and post to your group's Instagram page (or their personal ones) about how they did something meaningful that day. They can use the hash tag #jellybeandays

Close in prayer:

Thanking God for the days and moments that he has blessed us with and

Asking him to show us how to use each day in a way that will make it count!

Candy Votes

You should have 82 candies. Please do not eat or share your candies until we are all done.

Round 1					
Round 2					
Round 3					
	Academics (includes homework)	Extra Curricular (sports, band, dance, drama, etc.)	Relationships (parents, siblings, friends, bf/gf, etc.)	Faith/God	Other (anything that doesn't fit into one of the other categories)