

Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Mark 1:29-39

Background

Epiphany means several things: a gift is received; the gift must be shared. Jesus appears to be suggesting a rhythm, a balance to our lives. We go inward to be with God, to receive; we go out in the world to share what we have been given – still with God. We are called to balance the pouring out of our love with the resting in God. We are called to heal by just showing up, by laying on hands, by sharing what we have. This good news that was for the few people who heard it up close and personal is ours because they reached out and shared it. It will belong to those who have not yet heard, if we accept our call to share the story by how we live out our lives and as St. Francis said, “with words, if necessary.”

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

A rhythm is surfacing. Out to teach or to heal – then in to pray and listen. Jesus goes to Simon's house after the first teaching in the synagogue to find Simon's mother-in-law ill. He takes her by the hand and helps her up. Right back into the kitchen she goes to cook supper. By evening, the whole town was crowding around – many in need of healing, and most were healed. Jesus gets a little rest and then long before dawn goes inward – to a lonely place to pray. We see the balance in which he lives.

Theme: Prayer and Action

Before Class: You will need paper, crayons and/or markers. Each child will need a Bible and to a Book of Common Prayer.

Beginning: Remind the children that we heard about Jesus being in the synagogue with his disciples. We now hear about Jesus leaving the temple

and his ministry. Invite them to listen, as we hear the story for two ways Jesus teaches: one, by doing things; and two, by taking time to pray.

Opening Prayer: *Thank you, God, for these stories we have of Jesus. Thank you for these stories that help us figure out what you want us to do and how you want us to live. Amen.*

The Story: Invite the children to open their Bibles to Mark 1:29-39. Have them follow along as you read the passage aloud (or if you have a really good reader in the class, ask them to read it before the session starts.)

Reflection Questions:

- What are some of the things we hear Jesus doing in this passage?
- Can you find the part in the story where Jesus was “doing stuff?”
- How did he find time to pray to God and listen to God?
- What would happen to us if we spent all our energy racing around “doing stuff?” (We would get worn out.)
- What would happen to us if we just sat and prayed all the time? (Not much would get done.)
- Are both (doing and praying) important to Jesus’ ministry? Are both important in our lives?

Activity: In our story today, we see the Jesus went off to pray as a way of feeding his soul, as a way of connecting with God, as a way of pausing to talk with the creator.

Give each child a Book of Common Prayer (BCP) or they can share one with a partner. Give each child a few pieces of paper, markers, and crayons. Invite them to look through the Book of Common Prayer and find a prayer or a few prayers that they like. You may want to have a few key page numbers and places from the BCP written up on a large sheet of paper or on the board so they can find the common places. (see end of the lesson for ideas).

Once they have found a prayer(s) that they like, have them copy it down on the pieces of paper you gave them, and then invite them to illustrate their prayer. If they have time they can do a few prayers or make a booklet of prayers.

Getting Closure: Jesus had to gift of healing and he offered it to those he encountered. It sure kept him busy. And he always remembered where those gifts came from: God. And he always remembered to say thank you to God. Let's take a minute to think about things we are able to do for other people. If you want to name them out loud, please do. And no matter where we are, we can always just take a minute and say "Thank you, God". (Be ready to share something yourself)

Closing Prayer: Read together one of the prayers you found that your class finds appropriate. Or simply say, "Thank you God for Jesus healing Simon's mother-in-law. Please be with (list names) who are also ill." Amen.

Pages and Places in the Book of Common Prayer

The Lord's Prayer - Page 364

Post Communion Prayers - Pages 365-366

Prayers for the Sick Pages - 458 - 461

Prayers and Thanksgivings - Pages 810-841

Morning Prayer, Rite 2 - Page 75

Noonday Prayer - Page 103

Evening Prayer, Rite 2 - Page 115

Compline - Page 127

Daily Devotions - Page 137

Collects, Traditional - Page 159

Collects, Contemporary - Page 211

Baptism - Page 299

Mark 1:29-39

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.