

Lesson Plans for Younger 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: Make copies of The Lord's Prayer (attached – note the first page is the traditional Lord's Prayer and the last is the contemporary Lord's Prayer) or type or write it yourself so each child will have a copy. Print the words large enough so young readers can manage it, and make sure you

leave wide margins so the children can illustrate the prayer. You will also need markers or crayons.

Beginning: As the children arrive, ask them if they have a favorite prayer. Do they use prayer before meals? What is one they might know?

Opening Prayer: *Thank you God, for showing us how to serve and how to pray. Be with us as we go into the world and help us to feel your presence in our daily lives as we pray and play with you. Amen.*

The Story: Today we hear a story about Simon's mother-in-law who was sick. Do you know what a mother-in-law is? (The mother of Simon's wife.) (If you know these children well enough to point out who the mother-in-law of one of the children is, help them make that connection: "Your grandmother, Jane, who is your mother's mother, is your dad's mother-in-law.")

Well, she was really sick, and everyone was worried about her. Jesus and Simon went to Simon's house for lunch after they had been in the temple. When Jesus saw that this dear woman was

sick, he simply took her by the hand and helped her get up. After Jesus touched her and helped her out of bed, she felt so good, and was so grateful that she went right to the kitchen to prepare Simon's favorite meal. Later that day, people had heard that Jesus was in Simon's house and that he had been healing people. So people came to Simon's house. They brought sick people, people with all kinds of sicknesses and hurts. When they got to Simon's house, Jesus put His hands on them and they got well.

At the end of the day Jesus was really tired and stayed at Simon's house to rest. He got up very early the next day so he could go off to a quiet place to pray and talk with his father, God. So he could listen to his father, God, and listen to God wanted him to do.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what it was like to be Simon's mother-in-law who was sick and then healed?
- I wonder what people thought of this healing?
- I wonder why Jesus got up early the next morning to pray?
- I wonder what Jesus prayed about.

Activity: Ask the children what prayers they might know. Do they say prayers at home or in other places? What about simple prayers like, "Jesus, help me?" or "God, be with me?"

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. When people asked Jesus how they should pray to God, he gave them the Lord's Prayer. Some of the children may know it. Give each child a copy of "The Lord's Prayer" and some markers or crayons, and invite them to illustrate it. What could we draw to illustrate each part of the prayer? Our daily bread is pretty easy. What else might we add? Work with them, asking questions to draw out their own ideas.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share their Lord's Prayer illustrations.

Closing Prayer: Say *"The Lord's Prayer"* - inviting the children to say it along with you. Be sure to go slowly enough so they can!

Our Father, who art in heaven

hallowed be thy Name,

thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses

as we forgive those

who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power,

and the glory

for ever and ever. Amen

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your Name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those

who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and for ever. Amen.
