

Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: John 1:43-51

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

Jesus has begun to put together his team. In this passage, Philip hears Jesus say, “Come with me.” And he does. As it is dawning on Philip who this Jesus really is, he goes and finds his slightly skeptical friend, Nathanael, to tell him that they have found the one they had heard about. Nathanael remains dubious—how could anything good come out of Nazareth? Philip, confident that Nathanael will see what he has seen, insists, “Come with me.” Jesus sees Nathanael as he really is and calls him forth. Nathanael knows, now, that Jesus is the “Son of God.”

Theme: Come and See

Before: You will need copies of the Scripture for today for each person.

Beginning: Tell the class that for the rest of this season, Jesus will be building on this dual theme: receiving that creates the setting for giving, and giving that creates the space for receiving.

Creating The Setting: Invite the class to notice, as they read the passage for today, the way evangelism was done in Jesus' time: "Evangelism AD 30."

Opening Prayer: *Thank you, God, for being so patient with us as we try to hold in our hearts the messages you send to us. Amen.*

The Scripture: John 1:43-51 Invite one person to read the lesson for today. Invite the group to listen particularly for Philip's side of the story.

After it has been read, invite the group to share what they noticed about Philip's side of the story.

Invite a second person to read it again, this time invite the group to focus on Nathanael's journey.

After it has been read, invite the group to share what they noticed about Nathanael's story.

Reflection Questions:

- What do we think "grabbed" Philip and made it possible for him to so quickly choose to follow Jesus?
- Since Jesus had already called Andrew and Peter, who came from the same hometown as Philip, do you suppose they had had a conversation with Philip?
- What concept did Philip choose to try to convince Nathanael?
- Why was Nathanael so worried about anything "good" coming out of Nazareth? (Nazareth was not a classy city. Expectations were that leaders would come from someplace like Bethlehem.)
- What did Jesus notice under the fig tree that convinced Nathanael?

Option: This is Evangelism AD 30. How do we get the story out today?

The Episcopal Church, at General Convention in the year 2000 proclaimed the 20/20 initiative, which is to double the number of members in the Episcopal Church by the year 2020. What obstacles do we see in our community to doubling our population? What positive things do we see in our community that could help make this happen? What might we be called to do?

Getting Closure: Name one thing that we could do to tear down the obstacles or build up the strengths of the community to bring people to Jesus.

Closing Prayer: *O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer, page 100)*

John 1:43-51

⁴³The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." ⁴⁹Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" ⁵⁰Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." ⁵¹And he said to him,

“Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”