

Lesson Plans for Younger Children

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 class: You will need paper and crayons or markers. Decide how to put the story into your own words.

Beginning: What has been happening in the lives of the children this past week? Invite them to tell you something funny – or something sad. Be prepared to offer something that happened to you (seeing a special friend, holding a tiny puppy – whatever).

Praying: Thank you, God that we can be here today. Thank you for (and NAME each child) and for this time we have this morning to hear a story you want us to hear. Amen.

The Story: John 1:43-51 Jesus wants to share. There is work to do, and he knows things he wants to show others. So Jesus starts looking around for some people to help him. “Hmm,” said Jesus. “Hmm. Philip? Yes. Philip.” “Come with me,” Jesus said to Philip. And Philip said, “OK!” Philip had a friend with a long name: Nathanael. “Hey, Nathanael, you should come with me and my friend Jesus.” Nathanael is not sure. “Aw, come on, Nathanael, come with me and you’ll see.” “OK,” says Nathanael. He goes with Philip and then he becomes one of Jesus’ followers and friends.

Acting it Out: When Jesus chooses people, they go out and find someone else to join the group. We need someone to be Jesus who tells Philip to “come with me;” we need someone to be Philip to go tell Nathanael; and we need someone to be Nathanael to be not so sure, but to go anyway. (Invite the children to switch roles, or let a new set of children act out this passage.)

Art Activity: Each child needs a piece of paper and access to some crayons. It would be good if you choose to draw also. Invite the children to draw Jesus calling Philip and Philip going out and bringing in Nathanael. You might draw these three in a circle. You could invite the children to write these words in the middle of the circle: Come with me.

Do the children think these three people kept Jesus a secret? Do they think they probably told a bunch of people? Think about people telling people, who tell people, who tell people (etc.) right up to this day, with us hearing the story – and we can go tell people! We hear the stories from the Bible, from our priest (be sure to add the name), from our friends, and from each

other. (If you heard the story from a particular person, you might want to tell the children about it, briefly.)

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share who they would invite to come and see Jesus.

Closing Prayer: *Thank you for John the Baptist, Philip, and Nathanael, who went out and found people to come hear Jesus. Thank you that we, too, get to hear these stories. Amen.*

Edited by the Rev. Shannon Kelly