

# Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Acts 3:1-11, 12-19

## Background

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Alleluia, Alleluia! Christ is Risen! We are now firmly rooted in the Easter season and we continue to celebrate as Jesus' time with his disciples marches on. We've walked with Jesus through the wilderness into Jerusalem and to the grave. Easter is a season of 50 days in which we name and claim our identity in Christ as an Easter People. Easter is a season of baptism and rebirth. Many of the Scripture passages we will hear are about baptism or about Jesus' sacrifice for us. Many churches use this as a season for baptisms and receptions into the church. It is the season when we re-explore our identity as Christians as it is the key to our faith tradition: that Jesus, the Son of God, died for our sins and rose to new life again from the grave. In doing so, Jesus has opened the pathway to everlasting life for all of us. Thanks be to God!

## A Notation for This Week's Scripture

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During Eastertide, the Old Testament readings are replaced in the lectionary with passages from the book of Acts. This week Peter calls on the people to repent and turn their hearts to Jesus. Peter is addressing a crowd of people who did not believe Jesus was the Son of God when he was sent to the cross to die; however, after the resurrection, many people heard rumors of this miraculous event and questioned their own disbelief. Immediately before today's story, Peter and John offer the name of Christ to a crippled beggar on the road. At the name of Jesus the beggar is healed and jumps up and down in celebration. The people who witnessed that healing are amazed and confused. Peter's monologue from today's story is aimed at those people and at inviting them to believe in the One in whose name miraculous healing takes place.

## Theme: I Believe

Before Class: You will need:

- Bibles for each child
- Rectangles of Paper with the sections of the Nicene Creed written on each piece. (Printable provided in the appendix: Print the two pages, then cut along the dividing lines so that there are 10 sections to pass out)
- Pens/Pencils for the Children
- Tape

## Beginning:

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Celebrant/Teacher: Alleluia, Christ is Risen!

People/Children: The Lord is Risen indeed, Alleluia!

Learning to give voice to our beliefs is a vital part of our faith in God and our membership in Christ's body. What are some ways we give voice to our faith? (Singing hymns, praying, participating in communion – other ways, in our daily life, might include showing acts of kindness and mercy, volunteering to help others, sharing a story about God with our friends)

There are many ways to give voice to our faith. What are some ways you have given voice to your faith either in church or out in the world? (Give the children time to respond)

**Opening Prayer:** *Lord God, we pray that you would open our eyes to see you all around us. Amen.*

## The Story: Acts 3: (1-11)\*, 12-19

Today's story tells of a time that Peter gave voice to his faith to share it with a group of people who didn't yet believe in the ways Peter believed.

Sometimes we encounter God in big and small ways – what would it be like if we encountered God but we didn't know that it was God? In today's story we are going to hear about a group of people who witness a miracle in

Jesus' name and are struggling to make sense of that miracle. In response, Peter, one of Jesus' followers, explains the faith and encourages the people to find faith, too.

\*For the purposes of today's lesson we are going to read verses 1-11 in addition to the assigned 12-19. Verses 1-11 give the context with which the story from today's lectionary makes sense.

Read Acts 3:1-19 together, alternating every few verses.

### Reflection Questions

- I wonder how Peter felt when he spoke to the Israelites.
- I wonder what the Israelites thought when Peter spoke to them.
- I wonder what God would say if God were speaking to the people in this story.
- I wonder if it would be easy to believe in Jesus if you lived back then.

**Activity:** Is it always easy to believe? As Christians we believe in a God who came down to earth, in the person of Jesus, walked among us. He went to the cross and died for our sins before being raised from the dead. We believe in a God who is the Holy Spirit – the Spirit of God that we believe still speaks in the world today. We believe in God the Creator who made all the things we see, and even those things we don't see. We believe that God has made miracles, flooded the world, and loves us immeasurably.

In short, we believe in a pretty unbelievable God!

Every week in church we say together the words of the Nicene Creed. The Nicene Creed is an ancient statement of faith that unites us with Christians around the world. One of the neat things about the creed is that it gives us words to declare our faith when we might not be able to think of words on our own.

Something that can be hard about the Creed though, is that it was written so long ago that the words might not feel like they speak to us where we are.

In today's story Peter tells the Israelites it is okay that they were hesitant to believe before, but now that they have seen the miracles possible when they believe they should declare their faith in God. Today we are going to reword our declaration of Faith.

On each of these cards is one line from the Nicene Creed. We are going to work in teams of 2 to think of new words to describe the sentences of the Creed. When we are all done we will have a Creed, or statement of faith, all our own!

\*Divide the class into teams of 2. After the teams are together, deal out the cards with sentences from the Creed. Invite the children to work together to write a new sentence, in their own words, that means the same thing as the word from original creed. They will write their new sentence on the reverse side of the card you've given them.

**For Example:** The team that gets the first part - "We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen." - might write: "We have faith in God, who is the parent and maker of all things. God even made the things we cannot see."

\*\*Depending on the age and maturity level of your class, it might be helpful to do some of the sections together as a large group.

**Getting Closure:** After completing all of the sections of the Creed, tape them together in the correct order. Invite the class to recite their new Creed together.

**Closing Prayer:** *One God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, strengthen our faith, day by day. Amen.*

Celebrant/Teacher: Alleluia, Christ is Risen!

People/Children: The Lord is Risen indeed, Alleluia!

## The Nicene Creed divided into sections for the activity:

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1. We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
2. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
3. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
4. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
5. by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.
6. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
7. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.
8. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
9. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.
10. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.