

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Trinity Sunday (B)

New Testament: John 3:1-17

BACKGROUND

This is the first Sunday after Pentecost. The day we celebrate and look at the Trinity as we move into the long season after Pentecost. In these summer months we hear the history of God's people, called by God, striving for right relationship, often failing and trying again. We hear of personal relationships with God, and the call to serve and lead God's people. And we consider how we might be called by God to listen, to serve, to repent and try again.

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK'S READING

Learned leaders of the church struggle to communicate the concept of the "Trinity," our God who is three-in-one. A learned leader named Nicodemus went to Jesus in the night to struggle with the concept of "born again." We stretch for a deeper understanding of God's longing for us and with our call to respond, as John 3:16b says that eternal life is for those who believe in God.

THEME

The Trinity

BEFORE CLASS

Look over the lesson and decide which activities will work for your group. If you want to share a trinity symbol with the children, you will need green chenille stems – at least one per child. You will need: A doll or two, a big tub of water if you can go outside or a smaller bowl of water and a bath towel if you are to remain inside. A Book of Common Prayer, opened to page 307, will help you with the prayer said at baptism.

BEGINNING

Greet the children. Be sure you know their names and that they know each other's names. Tell the children that this Sunday has a name in our church: Trinity Sunday. Tell them that trinity means three all together in one. Ask the children to stand three together. (If you have more than three children in your group, take turns.) Hold your hands together way out in front of you, making a circle with your arms, as if wrapped around a big tree trunk.

Ask one of the children to do the same. Then ask a second child to stick one arm through the circle the first child made and then hold their own hands so their arms make a circle, linked to the first circle. Then ask the third child to loop one arm through the first child's arm and the other through the second child's arm and then hold 1



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their own hands together. Tell them they are acting out a trinity! Make sure each child has a chance to be part of a trinity. Participate in one of the circles yourself, if needed. Tell the children that for the church, Trinity also means: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit.

OPENING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for being God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit and for loving us. Amen.

THE STORY: JOHN 3:1-17

There was a man who had heard Jesus. The man's name was Nicodemus. Well, Nicodemus was a very important person. Nicodemus wanted to understand what Jesus was saying, but he just couldn't get it. So one night, when it was dark, Nicodemus decided to go find Jesus and ask him to explain things so he could understand. Jesus told Nicodemus that he really needed to start over if he was going to understand.

"But how CAN I start over?" Nicodemus asked. "I cannot go and get born. I can't go get back inside my Mother!"

"No, of course you can't," Jesus told him. "But water can help you get started all over."

We help people get started all over here in our church with water. We call it Baptism.

BAPTISM

Note: If you can go outside, and the children are dressed so that water splashed on them will not be a problem, use a large tub of water. If you will remain inside, use a small bowl of water and a towel. If you think the children will have seen a baptism recently, ask them about it. Otherwise, simply describe baptism, in your own words, using the following as a guide.

When we are baptized, the priest puts water on our heads and says: "I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Take one of the dolls, dip your fingers into the water, and then make a sign of the cross on its head and say, again, the words said at baptism. Invite each child to pretend to baptize its doll or one of the dolls you have available.

THE TRINITY

Tell the children we can make something to take home to tell our families about Trinity Sunday. Give each child three lengths of chenille stem. (If you have enough stems, cut each one in half; otherwise, cut each stem in thirds.) Show the children how to bend the stem into a circle and pinch the two ends together to secure the circle. (If you bend each end back over the other end and pinch it tightly, it will be secure.) Then, just as we looped our arms together earlier, take another stem and loop it through the first circle and secure the ends in a circle. Now you will have two circles linked together. Take the

third stem piece and loop it through BOTH circles and secure it. Now we have a Trinity symbol for God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit.

ACTIVITY

If you are combining this group with the older children, let the older children act out the story for the children. The younger children can show the older children how to make the trinity symbols. (You will need sufficient chenille stems for these children also.) And all can do the Baptism exercise together. In addition, the older children may be writing with chalk on the sidewalk and the younger children could draw their trinity symbols with chalk.

GETTING CLOSURE

Gather the children into a circle, holding hands. Tell the children you are glad they could be here today and that we will end this time together with a prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for our circle here, holding hands. Thank you for your circles: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.