

Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: John 3:14-21

Background

As in Advent, when we went inward to prepare to go outward with Christmas and Epiphany, in Lent we again go inward – in preparation. In the first two Sundays of Lent, Mark, brilliantly succinct, reveals the preparation Jesus experienced. During the next three Sundays John adds shimmering lights on Jesus' ministry before we plunge into the Crucifixion, where we watch, from wherever we are, what Jesus must go through in order to give us Easter. These six vignettes invite us to take a closer look at the choices we are making in our lives and what we might choose to jettison, correct, or add.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

Jesus patiently prepares his followers for what is to come. Jesus is to be “lifted up” so that he may then lift up all of us. The light has come into the world – a light some will seek at all costs. For others, the darkness is preferable to the penetrating brightness of the light. God reaches out to all of us, sending the Son into the world so that all might be saved through him. We do not know what the disciples made of this revelation. Our concern is what we make of it and what re- alignment we may be called to make.

Theme: Come to the Light

Before Class: You will need Bibles or copies of the Scripture for you and the children, paper (or the journals), and pencils or pens.

Beginning: Ask the children the name of the season we are in (Lent). Ask them what Good Friday is about. What is Easter about?

Opening Prayer: *Thank you, God, for loving us so much. Thank you for being so patient with us. And thank you for Jesus. Help us to follow him. Amen.*

The Story (John 3:14-21): Ask the children to find the passage in the Bible or hand out the copies of the Scripture. Tell them they can follow along as you read the passage, but to read verse 16 together.

Reflection Questions:

- Jesus knows that Good Friday and Easter are soon to come. It's important for children to see the two events as being connected. If they are not sure what to say, remind them that on Good Friday Jesus dies on the cross and everyone thinks the story is over, but on Easter, they see that Jesus is resurrected and will show us the way to be with Jesus even after we die.
- What is Jesus telling the people when he says, "the Son of Man must be lifted up?" (That he will be resurrected and bring all of us with him – in time.)
- Jesus talks about darkness. Who likes to be in the dark? (People who are doing stuff they should not be doing.)
- What happens in the light? (Everyone can see what is happening.)
- What happens when we do "what is true" – when we choose to follow Jesus? (The light of Jesus shines on us and helps us to do what we are supposed to do.)
- I wonder where you see light or Jesus' love in the world today?

Prayers: *If you are working on prayers this Lent, a type of prayer for today could be "Obedience."*

Obedience means doing what we are supposed to do, doing the very best we can. It is not about getting an "A" but about faithfully doing the homework. It may not mean getting the soccer goal, but it is about showing up for

practice and for the game. Ask the children to share how they might be obedient in their lives.

Another way of looking at obedience is to look at the prayer of oblation (BCP p. 857). "Oblation is an offering of ourselves, our lives and labors, in union with Christ, for the purposes of God."

Invite the children to write prayers about obedience and oblation. You can do this as a whole group, working in pairs, or individually.

Come to the Light: Invite the children to create pictures, poems, or an piece of art that reflects where they see "the light" or God in the world today.

Project: If you are working on a Lenten project in conjunction with the rest of the parish, talk about what is happening.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to either share the "light" creation they made or to share the prayers they wrote.

Closing Prayer: *Close with the prayers the children composed. Or pray:*
"Thank you, God, that you so loved the world that you gave us your only Son. Amen."