

Lesson Plans for Younger 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: Be aware that some children may not be with you every Sunday through Lent and may also be watching television programs that present the events of Holy Week. As you talk with children, give them opportunities to ask questions.

Beginning: Tell the children that Jesus knows that soon he will have to do something very hard and now he wants to teach his friends. He spends much of his time teaching.

Praying: Thank you for sending Jesus to show us what you want us to know. Amen.

The Story: Jesus is trying to help the people understand that God loves us – all of us. And God wants us to be sure we know we are loved by God. That is why God sent me, says Jesus. Now that you hear me telling you that God loves you -- you will know it is true. We will also know that God is not just sitting there waiting for us to get in trouble. God wants to help us stay out of trouble. Listen to what Jesus said: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.” God loves us so much that he gave us Jesus. Jesus is the light of the world for us to follow.

For God So Loved: You may choose to give each child a piece of paper with these words on it:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.

The children may illustrate the words and take the sheet of paper home with them. If you want them to memorize the words, you could ask the children to repeat the phrase with you a few times, then sit in a circle and whisper it around the circle.

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

Cross: Some children may want to continue sanding the cross.

Outreach: If you are doing an outreach project, revisit the activities for it.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share what they created. You could say: “Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord.” What comes next? (“Thanks be to God.”) Or if I say “The Lord be with you,” what comes next? (“And also with you. Let us pray.”)

Closing Prayer: *Thank you, God, for helping us learn how to love and serve you. Amen.*