

Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: John 17:6-19

Background: Easter - the unearned gift of grace. The reflective season of “going in” that Lent provided (no matter what disciplines we undertook, nor even how well we attended to them) explodes on Easter. Of course, we cannot “figure it out.” How comforting, then, to have these Scriptures, showing first how the disciples struggled to grasp what had happened and then stories of Jesus before the crucifixion, which are written in the light of the Resurrection.

As Easter people we know, as Paul said, that nothing, not even death, shall separate us from the love of God. We are people who expect life out of death. And so, in Eastertide we celebrate the wonder and prepare ourselves to take the awesome message out into the world on Pentecost.

A Notation for this Week's Gospel

Jesus reports to God. Jesus has done the work given him to do. A little band of believers is trained to do the work Jesus has given them to do. Jesus lifts these people up to God. As he does so, we, and our ministries are also lifted up. We are not immune to pain, suffering, or even defeat. But God offers protection from the evil one, in all we do. And, in all we do, Jesus asks, “that they may have my joy made complete in themselves.”

Theme: God's Mission, Our Mission

Before: This is the last session in this unit, and if the class is not going to continue, you might want to have a small party with treats. Look at the options suggested and make the decision that works best for your group. If you are going to suggest the children do an impromptu play, look back over the earliest lessons in this unit, since they will be easier to adapt into a play. The children may want to “produce” their play and the younger children

may want to see the play. Check with the teacher of the younger children. Another option suggested is a “Silhouette” production. If you choose this option, you will need an old white sheet (the thinner the better), and either a couple of lamps or a couple of strong flashlights. You will also need dark construction paper and scissors – small sticks and masking tape are optional.

Beginning: Tell the children this is the last Sunday in the season of Easter. Next week is Pentecost, a special Sunday in the Church. Invite the children to make a choice between the two options for telling the Easter stories - or if you have made a decision, describe to the children what they are going to be doing.

Opening Prayer: *Thank you, God, for all the stories we have had in this season of Easter. Thank you for loving us so much that you sent your Son, Jesus, to be with us. Amen.*

The Story: John 17:6-19 (If your church had a service for Ascension and you think any of the children might have been to the service, ask the children if anyone knows what happened last Thursday in church. Otherwise, tell them that last Thursday was Ascension - the day we celebrate Jesus going back to be with God.) In the story we have today, Jesus is having one last conversation in prayer with God while Jesus was still here on earth.

Ask for a volunteer to read John 17: verses 15-19.

Reflection Questions:

- Who is the “them” Jesus is talking to God about? (His disciples and us as well.)
- What happens when we are “protected from the evil one?” (We make choices that help us stay out of trouble.)

- What does “They do not belong to the world” mean? (We turn our hearts to God. We look at the world differently than most people do. We are Easter People.)
- What does “sanctify them in the truth” mean? (Help them know what is really true, what is really the right thing to do.)
- Let’s see if we can remember some of the stories we have heard so we can figure out what to do in a short play. Can anyone remember the story we heard on Easter? (If there is no response, offer some hints: a tomb, some women, an angel)
- Where were the disciples, Jesus’ friends? (Hiding in fear, thinking they would be next to be killed.)
- What did Jesus say when he showed up where they were hiding? (“Peace be with you.”)
- What did Jesus ask the disciples to give him? (Something to eat.)
- What did the disciples give Jesus when he told them he was hungry? (Broiled fish)

Activity: Help the children decide how to produce their play, helping them choose which story they want to portray and helping them choose parts if they are going to act it out. (If you have insufficient children to take each part, some can play more than one part.)

If the silhouette is the choice, help the children set up the “stage” by stretching the sheet between the two lamps (or sources of light) and cutting out very simple silhouettes from the construction paper. Create a very simple pattern they can copy. If you have sticks or tongue depressors (or popsicle sticks) fasten them to the silhouettes with masking tape or transparent tape so the children can duck down below the “stage” and move their silhouettes to show the story. The narrator could read the passage from the Bible or simply describe what is going on.

When all is ready, the show goes on!

Getting Closure: Especially if this is the last session for the spring, invite the group to consider ways they might stay in touch with each other during the summer.

Closing Prayer: *Thank you, God, for this time we have had together. Thank you for loving us and for being with us in everything we do. Amen.*

John 17:6-19

6 "I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; 8 for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9 I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.

11 And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. 14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 15 I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. 16 They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.

17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.