

Lesson Plans for Younger 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: If your budget permits, purchase enough glow-in-the-dark stars so that each child can have one to take home and at least one can go on your Easter tree or Easter mobile. If this is not possible, glitter and construction paper can substitute. You will also need some yarn to attach the stars to the Easter tree or Easter mobile. This may be your last session with these children as it is the end of this unit. You may also choose to have a simple

party with treats and games. This session forms a bit of a review of what has been considered in this unit. The older children have been invited to produce a mini play and they may want to present it to your group. Check with the teacher of that group to see if that is the plan.

Beginning: Greet each child, and when all are assembled, tell them what you will be doing today. (If there is to be a party, or a presentation from the older children, let them know ahead of time.)

Praying: Thank you, Jesus, for helping your friends get ready to do their work and for helping us to get ready to do ours. Amen.

The Story: John 17:6-19 This past week we celebrated what we call the Ascension. It is the time Jesus went back to be with God and his friends were now ready to do the work he had given them to do. Now that Jesus is with God, he is right here with us. And he is with everyone, everywhere. He had to go back to be with God so he could do this. Before he left to go be with God, he had a long conversation with God. He told God that he was sending his friends out to do God's work. His friends taught their friends, who taught their friends, and today we are learning together.

Activity: To help us remember that Jesus is right here with us in a special way that we cannot see, we have these little stars. In the daytime, we can see them. And at night, before we go to sleep, we can see them because they soak up light in the day and shine in the night. (Find a dark place so the children can see that the stars do glow in the dark. First let the stars soak up a bit of light.)

If you do not have the stars, tell the children they are going to make stars to take home to remind them that stars glow in the dark and are there in the day – even though we cannot see them. Give each child a pre-cut star shape and let them decorate the stars – adding glitter if you have that.

You can also have them decorate one of the Easter symbols found at the end of the lesson.

If you are going to have a party, now is the time! If the older children are coming in, and they are not yet ready, play a game with the children.

Possible Game: Hide a Star One child takes one of the stars while all the other children close eyes tight. When the child has hidden the star, the child says: OK, come find the star! If the children are looking in the wrong place, the child says: "Cold!" As they get closer, the child says: "Warmer!" And as they get very close the child may say: "Hot!" When the star is found, another child takes a turn hiding the star, while all the other children close their eyes.

Getting closure: Tell the children to take their star home and put it where they can see it when they get into bed at night. Tell them the star will help remind them that Jesus is right here with them.

Closing Prayer: *Thank you, Jesus, for the time we have had together. Thank you for always being right here with us – wherever we go. Amen.*



