

Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: John 2:13-22

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

Events teach. Often the learning comes after the event. Jesus teaches with elements that have immediate impact as well as lingering meaning. And they usually land well outside the expected. So, with Passover looming, Jesus goes into the busy temple and proceeds to clean house. "Take these things out of here!" he demands of the money changers, the animal merchants – even those who sold doves. Then he announces: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." A temple that took 46 years to build? Could he mean the temple God has been building since the beginning of time? What "things" need to be removed from our own personal temples?

Theme: Cleaning the Temple

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible or Scripture for today, The Book of Common Prayer (BCP) for each person, paper, pens or pencils, and the journals, if you are using them.

Beginning: Ask the children to describe what your church looks like when we first walk in. Is there someone handing out bulletins for our service? Is there a place to hang coats? What else might we see? A coffee pot? People greeting us? Then ask them to picture this: they walk in, as usual, and instead of the things they have just described, there are a whole bunch of people buying and selling things. And some guys have set up a big table and are making change -- step right up, get your temple money here. What in the world would we think?

The Story (John 2:13 – 20): Tell the children: This is what Jesus found when he went into the Temple, which was the Jewish church in Jerusalem.

You can invite one child to read the passage, or invite 4-8 readers and use the script found at the end of the lesson.

Reflection Questions:

- What did Jesus find in the Temple?
- What did he do about it?
- What does this passage tell us Jesus said?
- What did the disciples remember from their reading of Scripture? (“Zeal for your house will consume me,” which could mean: “I love this place and it just kills me to see what is happening.”)
- Then Jesus gave the people in charge of the temple a very strange answer. What did he say, and what do you think he meant? (Destroy this temple and in just three days I will raise it up. To figure out what he meant, what do we know was going to happen on Good Friday and then three days later on Easter?) They, of course, do not “get it.”

Prayer: *Last week one type of prayer was discussed: “noticing.” This week would be a good time to discuss another type of prayer. It could be called the “Oops!” type of prayer. We use this type of prayer when we have blown it – and we know it – and we now are sorry. We need to be so sorry about it that we are also willing to say: “I am going to do my level best to see that THAT does not happen again!” These kinds of prayers are almost always just between one of us and God. We could take a little time to think about things we are truly sorry for – sorry enough to want to stop doing them – and tell God about them. This type of prayer is called “penitence.” Look up what “penitence” means on p. 857 of The Book of Common Prayer. These prayers could go in a personal journal – they would not go in a class journal.*

Getting Closure: Open the BCP to p. 447 and explain that there is a whole liturgy called The Reconciliation of a Penitent. This is a short service (there are two forms to choose from) for when a person wants to share their wrong-doings with someone else and have that person pray with them. Then turn to the bottom of p. 359 to find the Confession of Sin. This is a whole community confessing that it has fallen short in what they think, say, and do.

Closing Prayer: *Thank you, God, for always being willing to forgive us. Thank you for forgiving us for the things we have remembered today. Amen.*

Reader 1: The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables.

Reader 2: Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of money changes and overturned their tables.

Reader 3: He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!”

Reader 4: His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

Reader 5: The Jews then said to him: "What sign can you show us for doing this?"

Reader 6: Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

Reader 7: The Jews then said: "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days? "But he was speaking of the temple of his body.

Reader 8: After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.