Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Older Children
Epiphany 1 (B)
Old Testament: Genesis 1:1-5

BACKGROUND
The Sundays after Epiphany contain stories that show forth the divinity of Jesus and the great power of God. We hear miracles, teachings, and events that make manifest God's saving action in the world. We begin at the beginning: Genesis and the creation of the world. Then we hear stories of the prophets God called to tell the world of God's goodness and mercy and often of the people's need for repentance. We hear stories of healing, of promise, and of hope. We come to know that we are part of a long history of God's love and redemption. We consider how we might share this good news with others.

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK'S READING
The story of the first day of creation is powerful and creative. We consider what the world was like before God called forth the light. We explore the difference that light makes in our world. We give thanks to God for the gift of light.

THEME
Light and Dark

BEFORE CLASS
Gather art supplies for your chosen response activity (some require advance purchase, easily available in craft stores or online). Choose and learn music.

BEGINNING
Gather the children together and sing "Peace Before Us" from Wonder, Love and Praise or My Heart Sings Out. Be sure to include the verse with Light.

OPENING PRAYER
Loving God, you made the whole world around us. We give thanks for light and dark, for day and night. Amen.

THE STORY: GENESIS 1:1-5
Invite a child to read the passage or read it yourself. If you use the NRSV, you may need to explain what "void" means. The Common English Bible is a good version to use: http://www.commonenglishbible.com.

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder what it was like before God created light?
- I wonder how you would feel if you were there?
- I wonder if there was any sound when the light was created?
- I wonder what other powerful things God has done?

ACTIVITIES

Art Responses

- Consider purchasing sun print paper (from craft stores or online) and allowing the children to place objects onto the paper, then setting in the sunlight to make their prints.
- Use pastels to create sunrise pictures - encourage the children to use as many different colors as possible.
- Use chalk dipped in water to draw on black or dark blue construction paper - create images of the light entering the dark void.

Game

Play charades by pantomiming activities we do during the day or during the night and letting the children guess the activities.

Music

Create your own group song about light. Work as a group (or in small groups) to think up as many kinds of light as you can. Try to arrange these into 2 syllable words/phrases as best you can. (Sunlight, moonlight, flashlight, nightlight, etc.) Then lead the children in singing their word list to the tune of Amazing Grace. You could do another verse with adjectives for light (pretty, helpful, brightness, morning, etc.)

Consider playing a recording (or YouTube version) of "Morning Has Broken" 1982 Hymnal or "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light" 1982 Hymnal while the children create their art.

Dramatic Reading

Encourage the children to think of movements to illustrate/act out each verse of the reading. (The whole group can work on all five verses, or you can break into pairs or small groups and assign different verses.) Then perform the dramatic reading from beginning to end. Consider recording a video to share with parents and the congregation later.

OR - use the poetry of these verses to inspire some poetic commentary. Assign the verses and ask children to decide what words to emphasize by repeating, which phrases call for a comment on them, etc. Then read the "elaborated" version - often effective for one person to read the scripture and the rest to add the echoes and commentary.

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Example: In the beginning, beginning, beginning…when God the Almighty, the All Powerful One! created out of nothing! nothing, I tell you! the heavens heavenly, heavenly…and the earth our earth, our home, Mother Earth.

GETTING CLOSURE

Take some time for the children to share their artwork and/or their dramatic readings. Ask them what they are most thankful for.

Sing "This Little Light of Mine" LEVAS II or "Siyahamba" Wonder, Love and Praise

CLOSING PRAYER

Creator God, we thank you for all the gifts of creation, and especially today for light. Help us to remember how powerful and how loving you are, and to share your love with all we meet. Amen.

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