

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Fifth Sunday of Easter
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: John 13:31-35

"Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." An astounding discovery! The Easter news was spread to all who would listen. The disciples told people, who in turn, told people, and to this day, we hear the message — a message of weeping and then of joy that comes with the morning of a new day. We too like the disciples weep **AND** then delight in the joy bursting forth in us. We too are called to bring this message with our lives, and, if necessary, with words, to those who have not yet heard it.

A notation for this week's Gospel

Soon Jesus will not be appearing so concretely to the disciples. So, does he give them a complex strategic plan? No. He gives them a new commandment, and this will cover all they need to do. The world will recognize them as followers of Jesus because of the way they love each other.

Theme: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

Before: Mother's Day is coming soon, so you may want to include that in what you do. If there is a child in your group that does not have — for whatever reason — a live-in mother, do not use this activity. If you took photos last week they can form the center of a Mother's Day card for each child. Be prepared to take another photo to bring in next week (or mail to the child), if you have a child with you this week who was not there last week. Note: the kind of love Jesus is talking about here is vastly larger than what you will do with these children, but they will be able to identify with this level of love.

Beginning: Begin by asking the children, "Who loves you?" (their parents, their teacher or day care provider, grandparent, priest, etc.) Ask them if they think Jesus loves them. Then tell them we have a story about love that Jesus gave us.

Praying: (If you have a candle, light it. Gather the children by the altar.) "Thank you, Jesus, that you love us and send us people to love, who also love us. Amen."

The Story: Jesus knew that he would not be walking around much longer. He had been teaching his friends how to do the work of Jesus. So he said to them, "Here is a new rule. The rule is: love each other. Love each other as I have loved you." That's all. You don't need special clothes, no secret password. Remember that I love you, and love each other in that same way.

Activity: Wonder

I wonder we can show our love for each other. (They will probably tell you hugs, playing with a younger sibling, taking care of the dog, etc.)

I wonder how we can show love to a parent who is tired — like giving them a back rub or bringing them something like a drink of cold water.

I wonder how do we love people we don't like? (Give them another chance when we are playing at school, maybe just put up with them?)

Activity: Love Notes

Invite the children to either make Mother's Day cards to go home or make cards to give to someone they love. Help the children glue the photos you took on card stock and decorate the cards. If the cards go home, the group photo you took can go on the altar.

Getting Closure: Help the children plan things they can do when they get home to show love to members of their family. (Do the job assigned you without having to be asked. Offer to help, setting the table, for example. Make little notes to stick under a pillow or in a briefcase that say, "I love you," etc.)

Closing Prayer: Loving Jesus, Thank you for teaching us to love. Help us to remember to love others as much as you love us. Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Fifth Sunday of Easter
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: John 13:31-35

"Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." An astounding discovery! The Easter news was spread to all who would listen. The disciples told people, who in turn, told people, and to this day, we hear the message — a message of weeping and then of joy that comes with the morning of a new day. We too like the disciples weep **AND** then delight in the joy bursting forth in us. We too are called to bring this message with our lives, and, if necessary, with words, to those who have not yet heard it.

A notation for this week's Gospel

Soon Jesus will not be appearing so concretely to the disciples. So, does he give them a complex strategic plan? No. He gives them a new commandment, and this will cover all they need to do. The world will recognize them as followers of Jesus because of the way they love each other.

Theme: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

Before Class: Have a Bible or copies of the scripture for today as well as the materials for the icon making. See Easter 2 for a bookmark template. Be thinking of examples of love in your own community to add to what the children will notice. Is there, for example, a person who cares for infants in your church just because they love the children? Has there been a fire or other disaster and people came to the aid of the people involved?

Beginning: Ask the children to give you as many definitions or examples of love that they can think of. Yes, romantic love. What other kinds of love can they think of? Help them to notice love of our planet earth and people who are good stewards, people who volunteer their time or talents, people who are there to help us: firefighters, nurses, etc.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, that you help us notice your love for us, and help us love one another. Amen.

The Story: John 13: 31-35. Ask for a volunteer to read this passage.

Questions:

I wonder what you would say is Jesus' main message today. (Love.)

I wonder what the different kinds of love might be? (invite them to name different kinds of love and then give them the examples below, asking them how each of those are different from one another.

Examples: I love my toys, I love my job, I love my child, and I love Jesus.

Ask them to come up with some categories for types of love: Love that means it gives me pleasure, like my CD player; Love that means love between two people who join their lives

together; Love that means really caring about other people and looking for what God sees in them; Love that means doing stuff that needs to be done because you are so grateful to be living on this beautiful planet. Invite the children to come up with their own titles for each. How would they explain this to a classmate, who might not be a Christian, for example.

Which kind of love is Jesus talking about here?

I wonder how we "love" someone we do not even "like?"

Activity: Invite the children to create an icon for one definition of "Love." Make one to remain in class and one of their own to take with them.

Getting Closure: Talk about ways we can show this love for those in our worlds. How can we deal with "that kid" in class we do not like? How can we show love to people in our world? How can we do sneaky loving things in our families?

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for the love you have shown us and for the love we hear about today. Help us to love one another and remember your words as we leave this place today. Amen.

John 13:31-35

31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³²If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, “Where I am going, you cannot come.” ³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.’

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Fifth Sunday in Easter
Gospel Lesson for Adults

Scripture: John 13:31-35

"Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." An astounding discovery! The Easter news was spread to all who would listen. The disciples told people, who in turn, told people, and to this day, we hear the message — a message of weeping and then of joy that comes with the morning of a new day. We too like the disciples weep **AND** then delight in the joy bursting forth in us. We too are called to bring this message with our lives, and, if necessary, with words, to those who have not yet heard it.

A notation for this week's Gospel

Soon Jesus will not be appearing so concretely to the disciples. So, does he give them a complex strategic plan? No. He gives them a new commandment, and this will cover all they need to do. The world will recognize them as followers of Jesus because of the way they love each other.

Theme: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

Before Class: You will need Bibles and (optional) copies of *The Book of Common Prayer*. You might choose to write on a large sheet of paper the four suggested questions where all can see:

What does this passage tell us about:

God?

People?

The relationship between God and people?

My relationship with God?

Note: this approach is outlined by Linda Grenz in her book: *Pocket Bible Guide* published by Doubleday, page 164.

Beginning: Tell the group that the method of Bible Study for today could be called a Theological Approach. If you have written the four questions, show them to the group. If that is not an option in your setting, tell them the four theological elements we will be looking for as we work with the passage.

Opening Prayer: Dear God, we thank you for the simplicity of your message to us and for energy to keep listening to you. Amen.

The Scripture: John 13: 31-35

The Process: A Theological Approach

1. Invite one person to read the passage and then the group can maintain silence for a couple of minutes as they reflect on what this passage tells us about God. (God's love for Jesus, God "glorified" in Jesus. The relationship between God and Jesus.)
2. Invite another person to read the passage and then the group can maintain silence for a couple of minutes as they reflect on what this passage tells us about people. (Our need for rules and our difficulties obeying the one commandment given here.)
3. Invite another person to read the passage and then the group can maintain silence for a couple of minutes as they reflect on what this passage tells us about the relationship between God and people. (God's gentle, but tough commandment. Our difficulties figuring out what God wants from us. The relief — and the challenge — of this new commandment.)
4. Invite one last reading of the passage to discover how this applies to our life - our world - our relationship with God. Would the world know that we are disciples by watching the way we love? How do we "love" those who are hard to love? Our enemies? Those who could harm us? How do we think our relationship with God might improve if we made more of an effort to love?

Getting Closure: Evaluate this method of Bible Study and compare it with other methods you have used.

If you have time, you might invite them to share one thing that they will take away from your time together today. Consider how we might be able to love each other by praying for each other and checking in with each other during the week, etc.

Closing Prayer: God, thank you for the teachings of Jesus and your patience with us as we grow into your love. Be with us as we go into the world, and help us to remember how to love one another. Amen.

John 13:31-35

31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³²If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, “Where I am going, you cannot come.” ³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.’

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