

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Second Sunday after Epiphany
Gospel Lesson for Adults

Scripture: John 1:29-42

Because in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of your glory in the face of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
(*Book of Common Prayer*, page 378)

Accept the light we have received and shine it forth! It is not about shining the light in other's faces, blinding them, but holding the light in open hands.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

The transfer of power: "Behold the Lamb of God!" exclaims John the Baptist. He now knows for sure that this man that he has baptized (his cousin) is the long expected Messiah. John is no longer the lone voice crying in the wilderness. This Jesus is the light to the nations.

Theme: Following the Light

Before Class: You want to think about what the phrase "Lamb of God" conveys to you. Chapter 12 of Exodus reminds us what the symbol of the lamb would convey to Jesus' hearers who were devoted Jews. The following is from an early Church's Teaching Series (*Living in the Spirit* by Rachel Hosmer and Alan Jones, 1979)

"The church also understood the Lamb as the Servant of God, meek and silent before his oppressors. . . So the image of the lamb as both a sacrifice and as a sign of silent suffering for the people is very important for our entering more deeply into who Christ is." (Page 87)

You will need copies of the scripture, paper, and pencils or pens.

Beginning: Tell the group that today's Gospel takes the event we read in last week's Gospel (the baptism of Jesus) and tells us about disciples beginning to follow Jesus. It is written from the viewpoint of John the Baptist.

Opening Prayer: We ask you, God, for the grace to discover when to accept power given and when we are to surrender it. Be with us as we discover how to follow you as our Rabbi. Amen.

Option: Suggest the group take notes about how power is treated in this passage — where it is accepted, where it is released, and the lack of violence in each transaction.

The Scripture: John 1:29-42 Invite three people to read – the first will read verses 29-34, the second 35-39a, and the third 39b-42.

Questions:

- I wonder what John's hearers have understood by "Lamb of God?" (They would have been familiar with the Exodus (12) explanation of the lamb as sacrifice. Perhaps they were still a bit puzzled.)
- What do we think John understood and what did John want to convey in verse 29? (That this Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah.)
- If you were to explain to a new believer what John is saying in verses 30-32 how would you paraphrase it? (Invite current language and not just "church" terms. John knew that his job was to be an advance man, preparing people for Jesus' arrival. He was walking in faith because he was not sure what this person would look like or even how he would arrive.)
- Verses 33-34 are John's eyewitness accounts of what happened at the baptism, how would you paraphrase this event? (Again, do not use churchy language. John was ready and what he saw completely convinced him that this is the Son of God.)
- How does John convey to his own disciples that he is passing the baton? (Verse 35-36)
- What decision do two disciples reach? (Verse 37)
- How does Jesus respond to their showing up? (He asked them what they were looking for and then invited them to come and see for themselves.)
- What does Andrew do? (He goes and finds his brother, Simon, and tells him he has found the Messiah.)
- What is Jesus' response to Simon? (He gives him a new name: Cephas, the Rock.)

Getting Closure: Invite the group to spend a few minutes in silence considering the places in their own lives where they are accepting power (in their work, in their relationships to members of their families, possibly even over their own parents) and where they are releasing power (possibly to children growing into adulthood, ministries that have always been thought of as theirs, etc.)

Invite them to reflect upon the ways in which they are following Jesus as the 'Rabbi' or teacher.

Closing Prayer: We ask your continual guidance, God, as we accept and release power. Help us to follow you and come and see what you are showing us. Amen.

John 1:29-42

The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, ‘Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, “After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.” I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.’ And John testified, ‘I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptized with the Holy Spirit.” And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the son of God.’

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, ‘Look, here is the Lamb of God!’ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, ‘What are you looking for?’ They said to him, ‘Rabbi’ (which translated means teacher), ‘where are you staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and see.’

They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated Anointed.) He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, ‘You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas’ (which is translated Peter.)

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