

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Last Sunday after Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Matthew 17:1-9

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

Mountaintop experiences! Moses received the Law — to obey. Jesus is revealed as the person — to follow.

Theme: The Disciples See the Brightness of Jesus

Before: You will need butcher paper (a large roll of paper), markers, crayons, art supplies, etc. for them to create a mural. Try to have a variety of supplies to fuel their creativity. Make sure you identify a place to hang the mural once they are done.

Beginning: Today, we hear a story about Jesus transforming right in front of his disciples. I wonder when you have seen things change right in front of your eyes? (storm clearing and the sun coming out, a friend's sadness turns into a smile, first snow of the year, etc.)

Praying: Loving God, we thank you for all the ways you show us yourself. Help us to see you each day. Amen.

The Story: One day, Jesus took his friends Peter, James, and John up to a high mountain so they could pray. When they were on the mountain, all of the sudden, Jesus began to shine like the sun and his clothes became dazzling white. As Jesus was there, Moses and Elijah came and stood with him and the three began to talk. Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, was so excited about this that he wanted to stay and build houses for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah.

As Peter was saying this, God came in a bright cloud and said, 'This is my son, the one whom I love, listen to him.' When Peter, James, and John heard this, they were scared and amazed and fell to the ground in prayer. Jesus came to them, comforting them, and said, 'Get up and don't be afraid.' The disciples looked up and only found Jesus standing there with them. They were all amazed and walked down the mountain together.

Questions: This is an amazing story.

- The disciples saw Jesus begin to shine like the sun. I wonder how you picture Jesus? (Give them opportunity to answer.)
- I wonder what you think God looks like? (Give them opportunity to answer.)

Activity: What Does God Look Like to Us?

Invite the children to create a mural of what God looks like to them. Roll out the butcher paper roll/rolls and have them gather around, each adding their own pictures, words, ideas, images, etc. to the mural.

Getting Closure: If you have time, invite the children to share what they added to the mural. Hang the mural up for all to see. Invite the children to comment on what they see in other peoples work. Do we all see God the same?

Closing Prayer: God of Light and Love, thank you for all the ways you show yourself to us. Helps us to see you each and every day. Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Last Sunday after Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Matthew 17:1-9

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

Mountaintop experiences! Moses received the Law — to obey. Jesus is revealed as the person — to follow.

Theme: The Disciples See the Brightness of Jesus

Before: You will need Bibles or copies of the scripture for each person. You will also need butcher paper (a large roll of paper), markers, pens, pencils, magazines, glue, art supplies, etc. for them to create a mural. Try to have a variety of supplies to fuel their creativity. Make sure you identify a place to hang the mural once they are done.

Beginning: Today, we hear a story about Jesus transforming right in front of his disciples. I wonder when you have seen things change right in front of your eyes? (storm clearing and the sun coming out, a friend's sadness turns into a smile, first snow of the year, etc.)

Opening Prayer: Grant us, God, that as we see the light of Jesus' life, we may be changed into his likeness and bring light into the world. Amen.

The Story: Matthew 17:1-9 You can invite each child to read one sentence and just go around the room. Alternatively, you can ask one or two children to share in reading the passage.

Questions:

- I wonder what you liked most about this story?
- I wonder what it was like for the disciples to witness/see all of this?
- I wonder why Peter wanted to stay and build an altar there?
- I wonder how the disciples saw Jesus differently after this?
- In hearing this story, I wonder, how do you see God?
- I wonder if we see God in other people like Jesus saw God in Elijah and Moses?

Option: What Does God Look Like to Us?

Invite the children to create a mural of what God looks like to them. Roll out the butcher paper roll/rolls and have them gather around, each adding their own pictures, words, ideas, images, etc. to the mural. They can draw, use magazine pictures, write words or a poem, etc.

Getting Closure: If you have time, invite the children to share what they added to the mural. Hang the mural up for all to see. Invite the children to comment on what they see in other peoples work. Do we all see God the same?

Closing Prayer: God of Light and Love, thank you for all the ways you show yourself to us. Helps us to see you each and every day. Amen.

Matthew 17:1-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ²And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴Then Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’ ⁵While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!’ ⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Get up and do not be afraid.’ ⁸And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, ‘Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.’

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

Scripture: Matthew 17:1-9

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

Mountaintop experiences! Moses received the Law — to obey. Jesus is revealed as the person — to follow.

Theme: The Disciples See the Brightness of Jesus

Before: You will need copies of the Bible or copies of the scripture for each person, paper for notes, and pens or pencils.

Beginning: Remind the group that this is the last Sunday in the season of Epiphany. Wednesday is Ash Wednesday followed by 40 days of Lent. The Season of Epiphany has been a time to hold out our light inviting and drawing others in. Today, the Transfiguration gives us a glimpse of what is to come.

Opening Prayer: Grant us, God, that as we behold by faith the light of Jesus' countenance, we may be changed into his likeness from glory to glory. Amen. (*Adapted from The Book of Common Prayer, Collect for the Last Sunday after the Epiphany, page 217*)

Option: As a means of attempting to identify with the difficulty the disciples must have had describing what they witnessed on the mountain, invite each person to identify a life-changing event in their lives that they would have great difficulty conveying in words. (Perhaps seeing your newborn for the first time, standing with a person who is dying, watching an incredibly beautiful sunset.)

Invite them to identify an experience of watching a person's face change in a life-changing situation? (A child who has finally discovered how to read, a person who has just finished an incredibly difficult race, etc.)

Beginning: Invite the group to be noticing, as the passage is read, how Jesus intended this trip up the mountain to (1) change the disciples into his likeness, and (2) call us to be so changed. Offer paper and pencils or pens for those who prefer to make notes while the scripture is being read.

The Scripture: Matthew 17:1-9

Invite one reader to read the entire passage and then maintain a moment or two of silence. Then ask for another volunteer to read the entire passage again (possibly in a different translation) followed by another moment of silence.

Questions:

- I wonder what stood out for you in this passage?
- What is the significance of Elijah and Moses talking with Jesus? (To the disciples it would have signified that Jesus truly is the Messiah for it was expected that Elijah would return just before the Messiah arrived. Moses was the key authority figure for the Hebrew people, so his presence would further authenticate Jesus' mission.)
- Why might Peter have come up with his idea in verse 4? (Events significant to Hebrews were often marked by creating "booths" tent-like structures. In our own time, how do people tend to mark the location of a tragedy? (With teddy bears, flowers, and candles.)
- What is the response of the disciples to hearing "the voice?" (Stark terror and awe as they fall on the ground.)
- How does Jesus minister to them? (He "touches" them and then reassures them.)
- Why do we suppose Jesus told the disciples to say nothing of what they had seen until "the Son of Man has been raised from the dead?" (Clearly people would either be unable to believe what the disciples could say or they would mob Jesus for all the wrong reasons.)
- I wonder what the disciples understood of what Jesus said? (Even if they suspected Jesus was on a collision course with death, they probably still thought it could be avoided. The answer must have been unsettling for them.)
- What evidence do we have that the disciples understood that they were being "changed into his likeness?" (Perhaps their continuing to follow Jesus as they became more aware of the risk.)
- What evidence do we have that we, too, are being "changed into his likeness?" (Encourage the group to "notice" the manifestations of Jesus that they see in each other.)

Getting Closure: Invite the group to maintain a moment or two of silence to reflect on what it means to each one that they are being "changed into his likeness, from glory to glory." Invite them to respond if they wish.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for seeing Jesus in each of us. Help us to see Jesus in each other and to live into the call Jesus has given to us. Amen.

Matthew 17:1-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ²And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴Then Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’ ⁵While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!’ ⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Get up and do not be afraid.’ ⁸And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

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