

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Trinity Sunday
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20

When the Emperor Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire in 313 C.E. he wanted the religion to have unity and consistency in beliefs and practices. There were many varying sects at the time. Constantine assembled all the great theologians and church leaders of the time at the Council of Nicaea. For the next four hundred years there was great conflict and debate over doctrines such as the Trinity and other councils were also convened when there were conflicts. The Apostle's and Nicene Creeds emerged from these councils. Trinity Sunday was incorporated into the church year in 1334. It is always the Sunday after Pentecost Sunday. The doctrine states that God is revealed to us in three distinct persons existing in a mutual relationship of love. The Trinity represents the total revelation of God: God the Father as Creator, God the Son as Redeemer, and God the Holy Spirit as Sanctifier and Comforter. This belief is supported in the Bible, creeds, and doctrines of the Church.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel and Reading

This passage is known as The Great Commission. It is Jesus giving the disciples authority and telling them instructions so they understand what their mission is in the world. The formula, “in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,” is the Trinitarian wording that we all hear in baptisms and in our creeds.

Theme: God's Call to Us to Mission

Before Class: You will need Bibles or copies of the scripture for each child. You will need have copies of the Five Marks of Mission for each child or you can print them up on easel paper so they can all see them. You will need poster making supplies – poster board or easel paper, paper, markers, etc.

Beginning: Invite the children to gather together, and ask them to think of a time that they have done something nice for someone else. Have they ever done something to care for the earth?

Opening Prayer: Loving God, be with us as we explore what your call to us means in our lives. Help us to hear your call and discover how we can live into the mission you have given us. Amen.

The Story: Matthew 28:16-20 Invite one of the children to read the scripture for today.

Questions:

- The text says, “When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.” I wonder what we would do if we were in the disciples shoes – worship him, doubt, or a little of both?
- Jesus gives them and us authority over heaven and earth to spread the Good News. I wonder what that means?
- I wonder what that mean for us today?

Activity: Marked for Mission

In the Gospel lesson today, Jesus is giving the disciples a mission. He is giving them instructions on how they are to live in the world. The Episcopal Church has adopted the Five Marks of Mission as a way inviting people into mission as disciples today. Let's look at the Five Marks of Mission together and see what they might mean for us today.

Invite the group to explore the Five Marks of Mission that we are committed to as the Anglican Communion and as the Episcopal Church. You can write these up on the white board or give copies to each person to reflect upon. (<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/five-marks-mission>) If you have enough children, you could split them into five pairs and give each pair one mark to look at or you can brainstorm as a group what each one might mean for them and for your community.

Five Marks of Mission: The Mission of the Church Is the Mission of Christ

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

The Five Marks of Mission can also be summed up in these five words.

- Tell
- Teach
- Tend
- Transform
- Treasure

After you have explored, each mark, invite them to create a poster for the Five Marks of Mission. They can do this by creating one big poster, five posters, or each person can pick a mark and make their own. It is up to you and how much time you have left.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share what they created. Hang the posters up for all to see.

Closing Prayer: Gracious God, you have called us to create disciples, followers of Jesus, and to spread your word. Bless us and guide us as we go out into the world to respond and to live into your call to each of us. In the name of the Holy Trinity we pray. Amen.

Matthew 28:16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

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