

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Third Sunday after the Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Mark 1:14-20

Background

Epiphany means several things: a gift is received; the gift must be shared. Jesus appears to be suggesting a rhythm, a balance to our lives. We go inward to be with God, to receive; we go out in the world to share what we have been given – still with God. We are called to balance the pouring out of our love with the resting in God. We are called to heal by just showing up, by laying on hands, by sharing what we have. This good news that was for the few people who heard it up close and personal is ours because they reached out and shared it. It will belong to those who have not yet heard, if we accept our call to share the story by how we live out our lives and as St. Francis said, “with words, if necessary.”

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

Jesus is putting together his team. He seems to understand that people learn best when they can see – in action – what is being taught. So Jesus takes these men with him when he teaches and when he heals. And most importantly, they are there with Jesus, day by day, as he gently reveals who he is. In today's passage, Simon and Andrew leap out of their fishing boats to follow this man who has told them he will make them fishers of men. James and John are next. Jesus is demonstrating the fellowship he invites us to accept.

Theme: Follow Me

Before Class: You will need an easel or white board, and markers. Each person needs to have either a copy of the scripture or a Bible from which to read.

Beginning: Invite the group to reflect on a time when they followed someone else even when they were not sure where that person was taking them or what they were going to be doing.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for the gifts you give us, and for accepting the gifts we offer to you. Help us to follow you more faithfully that we can also become fishers of people. Amen.

The Scripture: Mark 1:14-20 (Each person needs access to a Bible.) Invite people to be readers for the passage. You could have one reader for the entire passage. Another option would be to divide it between three readers: verses 14 - 15; verses 16 – 18; verses 19 - 20.

After it has been read, ask the group to take a couple of minutes to look back at the passage and see if any particular words or concepts spoke to them. Then invite sharing.

Reflection Questions:

- Verse 15: Notice what Jesus says – and what he does not say. Not "I am going to show you the way to get to God," but "the kingdom of God has come near." What do you think this implies?

- "Repent and believe." Why not believe first, which will cause you to want to repent?
- "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." What does this mean to you?
- What do you think of the decisions to leave a boat full of fish and to leave nets that still needed mending – with an elderly father to run the fishing business?
- Has there been a time in your lives (that you are comfortable sharing with us) when you were called to leave the equivalent of a boatload of fish to go and do something very different?
- In what ways might we, here today, be called to leave boatloads of fish and go?
- What “fishing for people” is waiting for our participation in our neighborhoods, our jobs, our community?

Getting Closure: There may have been gifts of learning today. Would anyone like to offer that gift back to the group?

Closing Prayer: Collect for the Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.* (Book of Common Prayer, page 215)

Mark 1:14-20

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

¹⁶As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁷And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” ¹⁸And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

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