

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

Scripture: Mark 9:2-10

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' status as Messiah is confirmed by the divine testimony that he is God's beloved Son (9:7) and is anticipated by the shining white garments of Jesus. The three that see the transfiguration are also those who witnessed the healing of Jairus's daughter (5:37) and will witness his agony in Gathsemane (14:33). Although this group of disciples have seen the healing and the transfiguration, they do not seem to demonstrate exceptional insight or fidelity.

The transfiguration story is a form of an epiphany, a sudden manifestation of the divine and when humans see or witness an epiphany, they generally have an ah-ha moment, followed by confusion (now what) or fear (what does this mean?) Peter (once again) demonstrates that he doesn't "get it" and Jesus once again has to explain his death and resurrection.

Theme: Epiphanies

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible or the scripture for today and *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Beginning: Today, we are given the gift of the story of the Transfiguration. The disciples that were present received a great gift as they witnessed Jesus transfigure and it confused them as well. God gives them the gift of instruction (listen to Jesus.) Jesus reminds them that their place is not on a mountain, but with the people of God, focused on the present.

Creating the setting: What is a time when we have had an epiphany or an ah-ha moment? When have we seen Jesus active in our lives or in others lives? When have we felt Christ’s presence? When have you seen Christ’s light in the world?

Opening Prayer: O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for

ever and ever. *Amen.* (Collect for Last Sunday after the Epiphany, Book of Common Prayer, page 217)

The Scripture: Mark 9:2-10 Invite someone to read Mark 9:2-10. If you have time, you may wish to invite another person to read it again from a different translation to give you a different outlook on the passage. As an alternative, you can read it with three voices. The script can be found at the end of this lesson.

Reflection Questions:

- What stood out for you in the reading?
- What do you think it was like for the disciples to witness this event?
- Peter attempts to secure the experience and make a marker of the event by building the tabernacles or dwellings. Why do you think this is Peter's response?
- Peter is instructed by God to listen to Jesus. Jesus tells them not to report the event to anyone until he has been resurrected. What must that have been like for these disciples to witness this and then not to be able to talk about it or mark the event?
- God tells Peter to stop and listen to Jesus. This was a way for God to tell Peter to slow down, to not react to the epiphany right away, to let it sink in and listen to his teacher. When have there been times in your life that, rather than reacting to an event, you slowed down and took it all in? What did that do to your reception and experience of the event?
- On mountains, one encounters the divine. The Transfiguration story is about having an encounter with the divine and walking away from it in awe and with a sense of mystery. When have you had such an encounter? Jesus wants us to remember that it is not about that place, or that time, or about that specific event (thus we don't need to build three booths to remember and come back and visit them). Rather it is about remembering the moment, the message, the encounter and translating that into how it will change our lives, our behavior, our love for God and for others. These men had just seen Jesus in a new way and are still grappling with what that means. How might this change your life?

Getting Closure:

How might you take the gift of God telling you to slow down? How can this message inform your journey as we leave the season of Epiphany and begin our journey through Lent?

Closing Prayer:

O God, the source of eternal light: Shed forth your unending day upon us who watch for you, that our lips may praise you, our lives may bless you, and our worship on the morrow give you glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

(From Evening Prayer BCP page 123)

Mark 9:2-10

Narrator: Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus,

Peter: “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

Narrator: He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice,

God: “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!”

Narrator: Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

Narrator: As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean.

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