

Lesson Plans That Work
Year B – Fourth Sunday After Epiphany
Gospel Lesson for Older Children

Scripture: Mark 1:21-28

Throughout the season of Epiphany, we follow Jesus' early ministry and calling of his disciples to be teachers, healers, leaders, and prophets proclaiming the Kingdom of God. In today's Gospel, we hear the story of Jesus healing a man who is very sick.

Note: This is the fourth in a four-part series on The Episcopal Church's refugee resettlement program, Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM). Today's lesson asks us to reflect on Jesus' miracles of healing, its relationship to the Jewish-Christian prophetic tradition, and what it means to nurture a healing or prophetic presence in our own day.

Theme: Heal the World

Before:

If possible, review and queue up the following videos for use in your discussion:

- New Haven, CT – A Different Kind of Care (<http://vimeo.com/24232808>)

If you haven't yet explained who refugees are to the children, you may want to take a moment before showing the short video to introduce them to the idea of human migration and why some people might move. Some people move in search of jobs and a better life for their families. Some people are forced to move for their own safety. Refugees are people who are forced to move for their safety; if they stayed in their homeland, they may be hurt very badly by people who do not want them there. Some refugees are able to return to their homes after some time, but many are never able to return home. A small number of those refugees are able to resettle in the United States. The Episcopal Church helps refugees to resettle in the United States through Episcopal Migration Ministries. Episcopal Migration Ministries resettles over 5,000 people refugees annually from places like Nepal, Burma, Afghanistan, Iraq, Congo, and many other countries that are not safe for them.

If you would like to teach the children a little bit more about particular groups of people The Episcopal Church and other resettlement agencies resettle, you can find up to date statistics on the status of refugees in the world using this link: <http://www.unrefugees.org/>. Finally, if you have time, research the status of refugees in your community. Use the EMM network affiliate map to identify a resource in your area: <http://bit.ly/1swkPif>.

If you have questions, feel free to email or call Allison Duvall, EMM's program manager for church relations and engagement, at (212) 716-6027 or aduvall@episcopalchurch.org. She will be happy to assist you in enriching your lesson plan with information about Episcopal Migration Ministries and refugee resettlement.

Beginning: Welcome the children as they arrive. Ask for a volunteer to pray aloud the opening prayer.

Opening Prayer: Loving God, we come together to learn about how you care for each of us, and how we should care for each other. Help us always to remember that each person we meet is your child, and that you love them and you call us to love and care for them, too. Amen.

The Story: Mark 1:21-28

The Gospel reading appointed for today is an important one. It is from the Gospel called the Gospel of Mark, and it is the first story of Jesus' miracles in the Gospel. Prior to this story in the Gospel, John the Baptist has spoken about Jesus' coming, Jesus has been baptized, and he has called the first of his disciples. We don't know much about Jesus, yet, in Mark's Gospel. Read Mark 1:21-28.

Reflection Questions:

Choose the reflection questions most appropriate for your group.

- Why do you think this story is important?
- What does this story tell the reader about Jesus?
- What was the miracle in the story? What happened?
- How do you think the people in the story reacted? What did they think when they saw Jesus heal the man? What would you have done?
- What do you think healing means?

Activity:

Now, we're going to do a journaling/writing activity. I want you to think of a memory of a time when you were healed physically, and then a time when you were healed in another way. What happened? Who cared for you? How were you healed?

Activity:

Let's hear a story about healing for refugees, people who are new to our country and have come here seeking safety and a new home. They had to flee their first home because they were in danger of being hurt very badly by people who did not want them there.

Watch the video:

- New Haven, CT – A Different Kind of Care (<http://vimeo.com/24232808>)

Reflection Questions:

- Who were the healers in this story?
- How do you think your church can be a healer?
- How can you be a healer?

Closing:

Ask the children to think of words to complete this sentence, which will become part of the closing prayer:

Lord, help me to be a healer who is _____.

As you say the prayer below, ask the children to speak their words aloud to add to the prayer.

Loving God,

We thank you for our time together today.

We thank you for loving us and for calling us to follow you.

Help us to be healers like Jesus.

We want to be healers who are.....

.....

Help us to learn how to always be healers and share your love with everyone we meet. Amen.

Mark 1:21-28

Jesus and his disciples went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching-- with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Written by Allison Duvall

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Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), the refugee resettlement agency of The Episcopal Church, welcomes thousands of refugees each year from conflict zones across the globe. Working in partnership with offices and groups within the church as well as with governments, non-government organizations (NGOs), and a network of 30 affiliate offices in 26 dioceses, Episcopal Migration Ministries provides vital services for thousands of refugee families upon their arrival in the United States.

In 2015, Episcopal Migration Ministries is celebrating 75 years of refugee resettlement in The Episcopal Church through the year-long #ShareTheJourney campaign. #ShareTheJourney is a multi-media effort to educate, form, and equip Episcopalians to engage in loving service with resettled refugees and to become prophetic witnesses and advocates on behalf of refugees, asylees, migrants, and displaced persons the world over.