

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year B – Second Sunday in Lent**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**

**Scripture: Mark 8:31-38**

**Background**

As in Advent, when we went inward to prepare to go outward with Christmas and Epiphany, in Lent we again go inward – in preparation. In the first two Sundays of Lent, Mark, brilliantly succinct, reveals the preparation Jesus experienced. During the next three Sundays John adds shimmering lights on Jesus' ministry before we plunge into the Crucifixion, where we watch, from wherever we are, what Jesus must go through in order to give us Easter. These six vignettes invite us to take a closer look at the choices we are making in our lives and what we might choose to jettison, correct, or add.

**A Notation for This Week's Gospel**

Just prior to our reading today, Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" And they offer the various responses that they have heard from others. "But who do YOU say that I am?" asks Jesus. Who are you following? Today, Jesus once again teaches those around him who he is, therefore, what is ahead for the Son of God and what that means for the followers of Jesus.

**Theme: Take Up Your Cross**

**Before Class:** You will need copies of the cross (found on the last page) for each child and any art supplies if you are going to do the craft activity. If you are doing the sanding of the cross (see Lent 1), you will need those supplies as well.

**Beginning:** Invite the children to gather together and ask them if they remember what season we are in at this time in the church year. Last week they explored what the season of Lent was and they may have talked a little bit about what they were giving up or taking on during Lent. Ask if they have done anything special this week to mark Lent in their home.

**Praying:** Gracious Lord, we ask you to guide us today as we discover more about who you are and how we are to follow you in our lives each day. Amen.

**The Story:** You might tell the story something like this.

Jesus and his friends had just had a long walk down the road as they journeyed to a new place. And on that walk, they were talking about who Jesus was. They disciples told Jesus who other people thought he was, and then Jesus asked the disciples who they thought he was. They said, "The Messiah." Who is the Messiah? Well, for thousands of years, people hoped the Messiah would come and be a good king and take care of them.

"Hmm," said Jesus. "OK, but it is not going to be the way you think. I am not going to be a fancy king. In fact, I am going to get killed for what I am telling you. But I will not stay dead. After three days, I will be alive again. So, if you want to be one of my followers, you need to keep remembering to do the things I do." Jesus said, "If anyone wants to follow me, they have to leave things behind and take up their cross and follow me."

**Sanding the Cross and Discussion:** If you are working on smoothing the cross, encourage the children to both sand and talk about the story they just heard. If you are using the doing an offering project, you will want to allow time for that. And if you have chosen to talk about either giving up -- or adding -- something for Lent, leave time for the children's input.

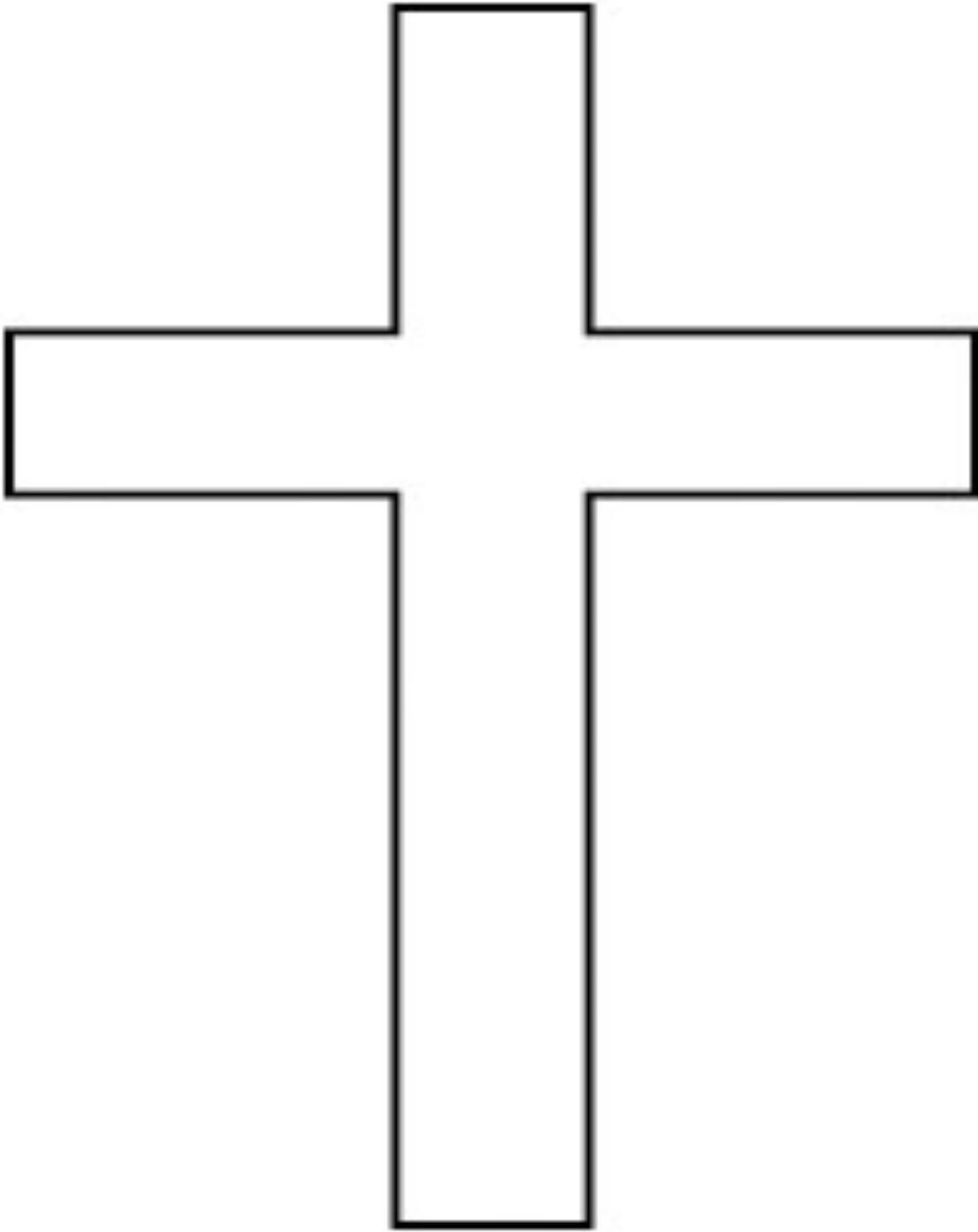
**Take Up Your Cross:** You can also hand out the cross illustration located at the end of the lesson and invite them to illustrate what it means to follow Jesus. What does it mean that they have to take up their cross and follow Jesus? If they have done anything special at home to mark the season of Lent, how might that help them follow Jesus?

**Getting Closure:** Ask the children to share any thoughts they have had during the time together – the story, the activities, etc. You may want to then incorporate them in the closing prayer.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, Jesus, for showing us the ways to follow you. Thank you for loving us as we learn how to do what you call us to do. Amen.

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**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year B – Second Sunday in Lent**  
**Lesson Plans for Older Children**

**Scripture: Mark 8:31-38**

**Background**

As in Advent, when we went inward to prepare to go outward with Christmas and Epiphany, in Lent we again go inward – in preparation. In the first two Sundays of Lent, Mark, brilliantly succinct, reveals the preparation Jesus experienced. During the next three Sundays John adds shimmering lights on Jesus’ ministry before we plunge into the Crucifixion, where we watch, from wherever we are, what Jesus must go through in order to give us Easter. These six vignettes invite us to take a closer look at the choices we are making in our lives and what we might choose to jettison, correct, or add.

**A Notation for This Week’s Gospel**

Just prior to our reading today, Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" And they offer the various responses that they have heard from others. "But who do YOU say that I am?" asks Jesus. Who are you following? Today, Jesus once again teaches those around him who he is, therefore, what is ahead for the Son of God and what that means for the followers of Jesus.

**Theme: Take Up Your Cross**

**Before Class:** You will need Bibles for the children, copies of the cross (found on the last page) for each child and art supplies.

**Beginning:** Invite the children to gather together and ask them if they remember what season we are in at this time in the church year. Last week they explored what the season of Lent was and they may have talked a little bit about what they were giving up or taking on during Lent. Ask if they have done anything special this week to mark Lent in their home.

**Opening Prayer:** Gracious Lord, we ask you to guide us today as we discover more about who you are and how we are to follow you in our lives each day. Amen.

**The Story: Mark 8:31-38** The theme of Lent this year is “Getting Equipped for Ministry” – getting ready to do the work we have been given to do. Jesus, also, was getting equipped for his ministry. And he was helping his friends get ready, too.

Ask the children to find this passage in their Bibles. (Mark 8:31-39). Ask them, “Which section of the Bible contains this book?” (Tell them it’s in the New Testament, in the gospels.) Ask for volunteers to read. You can have one child read, or ask for a few volunteers and ask them to read one or two verses at a time.

**Reflection Questions:**

- Jesus began to teach people openly about what was going to happen to him. What does Jesus say is going to happen to him? (He predicts rejection, then death and resurrection.)

- What is going on between Peter and Jesus in verses 32 and 33? (Peter wants to protect Jesus from the future that Jesus predicts, and Jesus tells Peter he is getting in the way.)
- Jesus then tells the crowd that “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” What do you think he means? What would it mean to take up our cross and follow Jesus? (If we want to follow Jesus, we have to be willing to let our old lives go and begin to take up the way of Jesus)

### **Take Up Your Cross:**

Invite the children to explore the meaning of “taking up your cross and following Jesus” by developing their own “crosses.” In these 40 days of Lent, as we give things up, take things on, or change how we are living our lives, how might those be ways that we are following Jesus?

Give them the print out of the cross illustration below and allow them to illustrate what it might mean to take up their cross to follow Jesus.

If they are having a difficult time thinking about this or figuring out what to do, invite the children to think about what it means to each of them to be a Christian. What are the hard parts? What are the comforting parts? Here are some additional questions that may help them as they ponder what it means to them.

Can you think of times when following Jesus will:

- make you seem odd to friends at school?
- will cause you to have to make difficult choices?
- invite you to be who you really are, using your gifts and talents?
- help you discover what is really true, valuable, and beautiful?
- maybe even change your priorities?

**Getting Closure:** Once they have spent some time with the activity, invite them to share either their illustration or some of the things that they came up with as they did their own cross.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, Jesus, for showing us the ways to follow you. Thank you for loving us as we learn how to do what you call us to do. Amen.

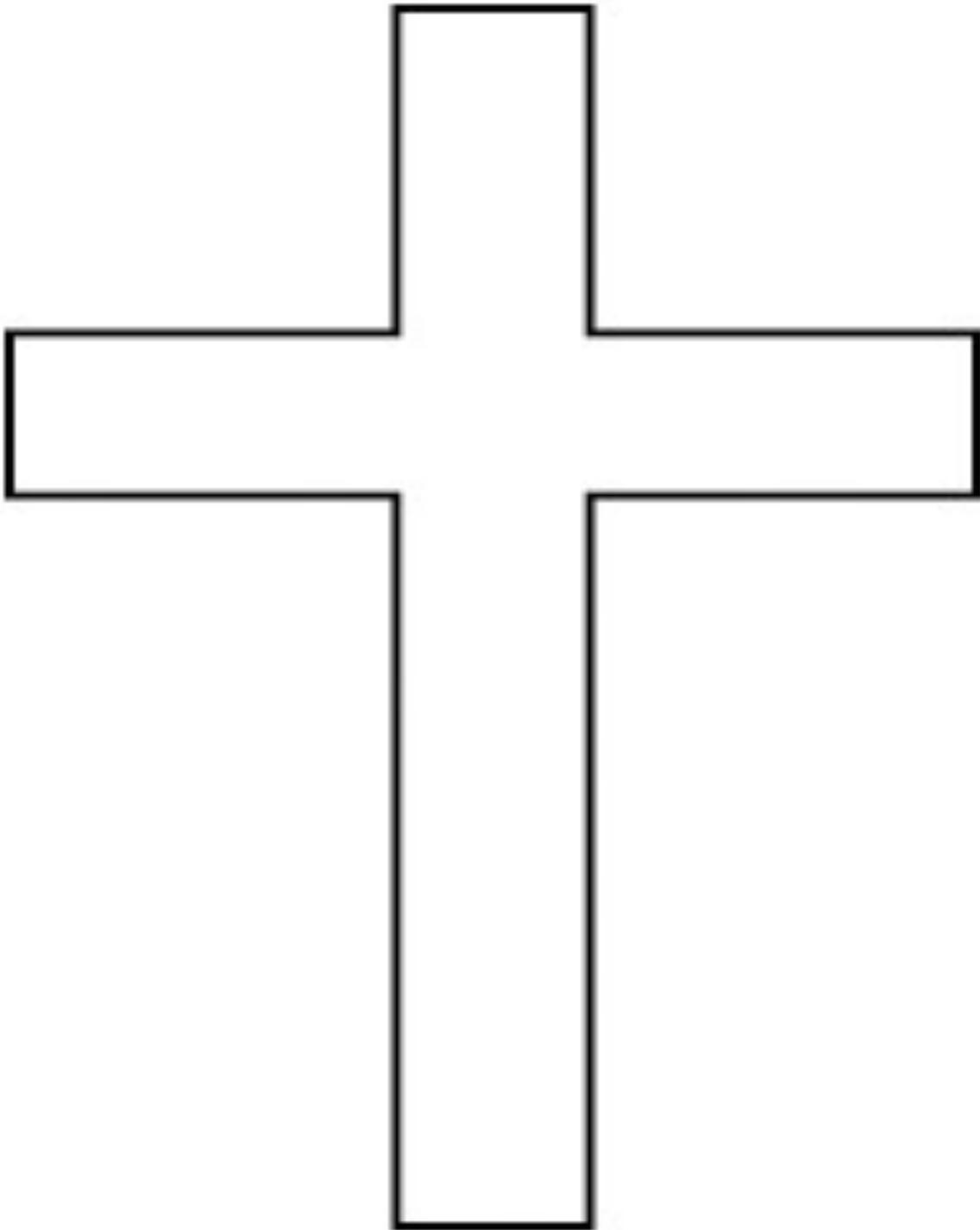
## **Mark 8:31-38**

<sup>31</sup>Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup>He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup>But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

<sup>34</sup>He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup>For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. <sup>36</sup>For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? <sup>37</sup>Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? <sup>38</sup>Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

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**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year B – Second Sunday in Lent**  
**Lesson Plans for Adults**

**Scripture: Mark 8:31-38**

**Background**

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**A Notation for This Week's Gospel**

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**Theme: Take Up Your Cross**

**Before Class:** You will need Bibles or copies of the scripture for your group, an easel, markers.

**Beginning:** Today you could begin your discussion around asking people what they may have given up or taken on for Lent. Have them share and you can come back to it later in the lesson as we talk about what Jesus is asking us to give up in order to take on the cross and follow him.

**Opening Prayer:** Gracious Lord, we ask you to guide us today as we discover more about who you are and how we are to follow you in our lives each day. Amen.

**The Scripture (Mark 8:31-38):** Invite someone to read the passage and ask the participants to write down the action words that they hear. Then invite someone else to read it again and have the participants write down words of instruction that stick out for them.

Invite the participants to share what words they came away with and write them up on the easel.

**Reflection Questions:**

- Jesus began to teach people openly about what was going to happen to him. What does Jesus say is going to happen to him? (He predicts rejection, then death and resurrection.)
- Why did Peter react so strongly against Jesus' description of what was to come? (Peter, understandably, wanted Jesus to continue to lead them and not get himself killed.)
- Why do we think Jesus was so hard on Peter? (Perhaps the actual wording is a bit hyperbolic, but the message is clear: his disciples must learn a new way of thinking about power and what it means to follow God's Son.)

- What does Jesus mean by the following statement? "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (To unpack this, look at two aspects of the statement: what we deny and what we take up.)
- What kinds of power trips, overblown prestige, and privileged positions does Jesus disdain for himself and therefore for us? What phony glory does much of our culture attempt to seduce us to embrace? What injustices, inequities, and prejudices does Jesus invite us to notice -- and work against?
- How might the causes we have noticed make us vulnerable?
- What responsibilities are we being asked to assume?
- What rights of others are we being called to notice?
- What talents do we have that we are expected to exercise?
- What gifts do we have that can help build up our families, our church, and our community?
- What help and encouragement can we offer each other, the children and youth in our midst, the elderly, sick, or the otherwise alone?

**Getting Closure:** As we look at all these callings, discuss how we can keep from getting overwhelmed by all that we see ourselves called to do. Discuss how we can support each other, hold each other accountable, and take care of our own selves? How does all of this inform our Lenten disciplines?

**Closing Prayer:** "Thank you, God, for calling us to a deeper life in you, and for giving us each other to share this journey. Amen."

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### Mark 8:31-38

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