

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Feast of the Transfiguration, August 6
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Luke 9:28-36

Background: During this “Ordinary Time” our lives may well include exceptionally un-ordinary events, such as births and deaths. As we take this journey, nourished by the scriptures appointed for the season and empowered by our baptisms, we are invited to be on the lookout for all the blessings found in the ordinary – to see God at work here and now. And we are compelled to share our blessings with others.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

Jesus takes Peter, John, and James up a mountain to pray. The trek energized Jesus and exhausted the disciples. Through eyes heavy with fatigue, the disciples strained to understand what they were seeing. As Jesus prayed, "the appearance of his face changed and his clothes became dazzling white." Then they saw Moses and Elijah conferring with Jesus on what is ahead in Jerusalem. Peter felt compelled to "do" something. What was required was that he "be."

Theme: God Is A Surprise!

Before Class: You will need copies of the script found at the end of the lesson. Find out how your church will be celebrating the Feast of the Transfiguration. Decide with your clergy person whether the children will be in the service for all or part of the service so you can determine how much time you will have with the children. If there are to be refreshments after the service, you may choose to skip refreshments with the children during the time you have with them.

Beginning: Ask the children what preparations they would make if a very famous person was coming to our town. Let the children decide who it is -- a sports figure, a rock star, a movie star or a political figure. They might suggest that TV crews would ready with cameras, people would show up with camcorders, lots of cameras, maybe even someone with a tape recorder. Tell the children to remember how we do things now as they read the story we have for today.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for sending Jesus to help us figure out what you want us to do. Amen.

The Story (Luke 9:28-36) Invite volunteers to read the parts outlined below. When you get to the end of Peter's statement in verse 33, ask the class to stop reading for a minute (as marked in the script)

Reflection Questions:

- Where is this happening? (On top of a mountain.)
- How did they get there? (They climbed up the mountain.)
- What are the disciples doing? (Trying to stay awake, they are so tired)
- What is Jesus doing? (He is praying to God.)
- Who else do they see with Jesus? (Moses and the prophet Elijah.)

- Who is Moses? (The first leader of the Hebrew people. He guided them out of slavery in Egypt to the Holy Land.)
- Who is Elijah? (One of the main prophets and one who the Hebrews expected to return. The children may not know that Jewish people, to this day, still leave one chair vacant when they celebrate Passover – in case Elijah chooses to come join them.)
- Why didn't Peter just whip out his camcorder and record all that was happening? (Of course, none of the things we discussed earlier had been invented. Building a "dwelling" was what occurred to Peter.)
- What could be "terrifying" about a cloud on the top of a mountain? (It might be the sign of a fierce storm and they had no cover.)
- What did the "voice" say? ("This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!")
- What else happened after "the voice" spoke? (Moses and Elijah were no longer to be seen.)
- Who would you say was "the voice?"
- Why do you think the three disciples told no one about all this? (Accept their answers. Probably they were still trying to figure out what they had seen. Possibly they were beginning to understand that Jesus would have to be killed. Maybe they just didn't think anyone would believe them if they did try to describe what they had seen.)

Option: Ask the children to comment on Jesus' coaching technique. What does Jesus do to "teach?" (He meets them right where they are and leads them as far as they can go.)

Ask the children to think of a time when they were just learning to do something and couldn't do it very well yet. Ask if anyone can remember being afraid of the water because they could not swim. How about someone tossing them a baseball before they could catch it? Ask if anyone can remember wanting to be able to read, and struggling with each little word. Tell them that this is what it feels like to be in training for something.

Wondering: Invite the children to wonder about what questions they might ask Jesus, Moses, and Elijah if they had the chance.

Getting Closure: If you have brought a snack, this would be a good time to offer it. Tell the children that this Feast is so important in our church that we celebrate it every August 6 and then again on the last Sunday in Epiphany in November (just before Lent begins). Invite the children to respond to your wondering question "I wonder why we celebrate this feast?" See what theories they might have as to why this is so. (One option is that it shows us that God is a patient teacher, Jesus a faithful son of God, and the disciples were willing to keep on learning.)

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for being patient with us as we keep on learning about you. Amen.

Luke 9: 28-36

Narrator: ²⁸Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³⁰Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. ³¹They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³²Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus,

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

Narrator: —not knowing what he said. ³⁴While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. ³⁵Then from the cloud came a voice that said,

Cloud: “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!”

Narrator: ³⁶When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

Published by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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