

Episcopal Migration Ministries
Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Third Sunday after the Epiphany
Gospel Lesson for Adults

Scripture: Luke 4:14-21

Background: This is the third in a four-part series focusing on refugee resettlement through Episcopal Migration Ministries. Today's lesson focuses on our baptismal ministry to proclaim the Good News of God in Christ, to seek and serve Christ in all persons, and to respect the dignity of every human being.

Theme: The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible or copies of the lesson, copies of The Book of Common Prayer, and copies of the activities you intend to use.

Beginning: In today's Gospel reading, Jesus reads from the Book of the prophet Isaiah and proclaims that "today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." As Christians baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus, we have been united with Christ. Our call, through our baptism, is to be Christ's hands and feet in the world. We are the Body of Christ. How do we fulfill the words of the Prophet Isaiah in our own time? How do we proclaim the Good News, the year of the Lord's favor? Building upon last week's gifts discernment activities, today we will continue our dialogue to explore how the Spirit of the Lord is calling us to proclaim the Good News by welcoming our newest neighbors.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, by our baptism into the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, you draw us close into relationship with You and one another. You knit us together into One Body, and call us to be the Body of Christ to the world. Guide us, O Lord, as we discern how your Spirit is calling us to proclaim the Good News in our lives, our families, to our neighbors, our community, and our world. We ask this in the name of Christ. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 4:14-21 Request that a volunteer read the opening verses and closing verses, Luke 4:14-17 and Luke 4:20-21a. Ask the remaining members of the group to read, aloud and together, the verses where Jesus reads from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (verses 18-19), and the final statement that Jesus makes, the second part of verse 21. After the passage has been read once, sit in reflection and silence for about a minute. After this time, read the passage again, in the same way.

Reflection Questions:

- How do we, individually and as a congregation, proclaim the Good News to our community?
- Where are we called to be and to go, as baptized members of Christ's body, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor?

Option: If you opted to use one of the gifts discernment activities from Called to Transformation (www.calledtoformation.com) last week, briefly revisit the results of the activity – be it in the form of discussion, reviewing what was shared and written on newsprint, on sticky notes, etc.

Continue your discussion by identifying and brainstorming what things refugee resettlement agencies and refugee families might need to support initial welcome, cultural orientation, employment readiness, English acquisition, and integration into the community.

One idea is to use three separate pieces of newsprint, each with its own header/title written at the top: “Before Refugees Arrive,” “Short-Term Opportunities, 1-3 Months After Arrival,” “Longer-Term Opportunities, 3-12 Months After Arrival.” Provide sticky notes for each participant, and ask that they brainstorm three tasks/activities for each category. Allot 3-5 minutes for this activity. When each participant finishes, ask them to place their sticky notes on the appropriate newsprint.

Engage the group in discussion about the ideas displayed on the newsprint. What other ideas bubble up? Be sure to write them and include them in the appropriate category.

As the discussion comes to a close, encourage the group to do some online research in the week ahead, before the group comes together again. Learn which local resettlement agencies are working in or near your community or state.

If you have questions and would like any assistance to help guide your search, feel free to email or call Allison Duvall, EMM’s 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 and to help guide your search and your congregation’s discernment and planning process.

Closing Prayer: In place of a traditional prayer, return to the words that Jesus read from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, reading aloud, together:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Episcopal Migration Ministries

Episcopal Migration Ministries 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, nongovernment organizations, and a network of 30 affiliate offices in 26 dioceses, EMM provides vital services for thousands of refugee families upon their arrival in the United States. More information at www.episcopalchurch.org/emm.

The Episcopal Public Policy Network

The Episcopal Public Policy Network (EPPN) is a grassroots network of Episcopalians across the country dedicated to carrying out the Baptismal Covenant call to "strive for justice and peace" through the active ministry of public policy advocacy. EPPN is part of The Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations located in Washington, D.C. The actions, programs, and ministry of the Office of Government Relations are based entirely on policies approved by the church meeting in General Convention or by the Executive Council. More at <http://advocacy.episcopalchurch.org>.

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