

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

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: Two Sundays ago, children created a “me” quilt, which depicted the gifts for ministry each child saw in himself/herself. This week, children will imagine what things refugees might need when they first arrive in our country. Gather similar materials that were used for the “me” quilt activity: 4”x4” pieces of material or paper, markers, newsprint, and any art supplies that the children can use to imagine what things their newest neighbors might need.

Beginning: In today’s Gospel, Jesus reads from a book in the Bible called the Book of the Isaiah that was written by the prophet Isaiah. After he reads, he says, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” Today, we’ll explore what that means and how we, as Christians, can be like Christ in our communities and our world by sharing God’s love with our newest neighbors.

If you haven’t yet explained who refugees are to the children, you may want to take a moment 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 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>.

Opening Prayer: Dear God, Guide us as we learn what it means to be like Christ in our world, and how we can share your love with our community and our newest neighbors. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 4:14-21 Ask the adult teachers or assistants to read the voice of the narrator, and ask the children to read aloud, together, the words of Jesus. You might need to read the passages twice as the first time they may be confused about the parts.

Reflection Questions:

- Where was Jesus in this passage? (Explain that a synagogue is a house of prayer for the Jewish people, like Jesus.)
- What did Jesus do in the synagogue?
- What did Jesus mean, when he said, “Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing”?
- When we are baptized, we become Jesus’ hands and feet in the world. What do you think this passage means for us, if we are called to be like Jesus?

Activity: Give the children the material scraps, paper, crayons, markers, glue and any other art supplies you have. Remind them about your discussion, two weeks ago, about refugees and how some refugees must be resettled to the United States so they can be safe and free.

Ask them to think of how they can be like Jesus to their refugee neighbors. What is one thing they could do to be kind and welcoming to children who are new to their school, to people who are new to their community and country?

At the end of class, ask each child to hold up their square to describe what they could do to be kind and welcoming to the new refugee neighbors. Ask them to place their square in a designated space so they can continue to work next week.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for your love and care for us. Help us always remember to share your love and kindness with everyone we meet. Amen.

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>.

If you have questions, contact 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.

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