

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B: Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Older Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Isaiah 40:21-31

Background

The Sundays after Epiphany contain stories that show forth the divinity of Jesus and the great power of God. We hear miracles, teachings, and events that make manifest God's saving action in the world. We begin at the beginning: Genesis and the creation of the world. Then we hear stories of the prophets God called to tell the world of God's goodness and mercy and often of the people's need for repentance. We hear stories of healing, of promise, and of hope. We come to know that we are part of a long history of God's love and redemption. We consider how we might share this good news with others.

A Notation for This Week

The reading for today offers a poetic reminder of the glory of God, and of God's constant presence and mercy. Even when life is challenging, God is already present with us, more powerful than we can imagine, and gathering us ever closer. We have as much need of this reminder as the people who first heard Isaiah's words. It rights our perspective and cheers us on.

Theme: The Lord is Everlasting

Before Class: Gather materials for art response - mural paper, paper or yardstick for pocket cards. Select and bring music. Find feathers for the guided meditation.

Beginning: Welcome the children and gather in a circle. Spend some time working together to come up with a cheer for your class.

Opening Prayer: Everlasting God, you created the earth and you continue to be with us. Strengthen us and empower us, O God. Amen.

The Story: Isaiah 40:21-31 (You may choose to read the whole thing through once, then focus on verses 28-31.)

Consider using the Common English Bible version. <http://www.commonenglishbible.com/home>

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what kinds of things were making the people so tired?
- I wonder what makes you tired?
- I wonder if there was a time before God, or a time after God?
- I wonder what cheers you up when you are sad, or makes you feel refreshed when you are tired?

Art Response:

Work together to create a group mural illustrating this passage. Use the imagery from the scripture as well as contemporary images arising out of your discussion of the reading. Choose a verse to caption your mural.

Reporters:

Send teams of two or three out to coffee hour or some other location with people who can be interviewed (could be another class). Have the children ask people what keeps them going when they are tired or challenged. Collect the answers and have the groups return to the classroom and report to the whole group. Ask the children to add their own ideas to the list.

Pocket Cards:

Using the class list, invite the children to choose one to make a pocket card. Have them list key words and draw pictures to cheer them on in challenging times. Invite them to make several - one to keep and others to share.

Music:

Sing or play “You Who Dwell” from Wonder, Love and Praise. Invite children to make up movements for the refrain. They can listen on the verses and sing and move along on the refrain.

Sing or play “O Bless the Lord My Soul” from Hymnal 1982 or from the Godspell soundtrack. The Godspell version is nice to dance to because it starts out slow and then becomes fast.

Guided Meditation:

Hand out feathers and allow each child to take one. Encourage the children to get comfortable, either sitting cross-legged in a circle or lying down on the floor with enough space that they are not touching one another. Ask them to close their eyes and take a few deep breaths to relax. Using a soft, relaxed voice and a slow pace, remind them of all the activity they have been engaged in during class. Encourage them to relax the muscles of their bodies and to rest. Invite them to feel the soft feather in their hand as you continue talking. Read them the passage again, very slowly. Give a moment for silence at the end. Then gently invite them to first set their feather down, then wiggle their fingers and toes, then open their eyes. Lead them in a few more deep breaths. Then close by saying “Amen” softly.

Getting Closure: Gather the class into a circle. Invite them to share their artwork. Read today’s passage.

Closing Prayer: Everlasting God, you do not grow weary. Give us strength when we feel weak, cheer us on when we are discouraged, so that we can run and walk and continue to serve you all our days. Amen.

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