

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – All Saints Day
Lesson Plans for Older Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Isaiah 25:6-9

Background

Every year on All Saints' Day we gather to remember the Saints of the Church who have shaped our faith and furthered God's message in this world. We also take time during that service to pray for "all the faithful departed" who have died since the previous All Saints' Day. Oftentimes we think of All Saints' Day as the feast when we pray for our friends and family members who have died, but that is actually All Souls' Day, which is celebrated the day *after* All Saints Day. The two feasts are connected, but it is important to remember the difference. The celebration of All Saints' Day is an opportunity to thank those brave women and men who lived their lives in such a way that, through their example, we have learned more about the living God. As the hymn "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God" (293 in the Hymnal 1982) teaches us, we celebrate those who lived and died fighting to spread God's word – and we can *strive* to be one too.

A Notation for This Week's Hebrew Scripture

This is the promise! This is the dream! Today's scripture passage features Isaiah's prophesy that God will provide a feast for all people, remove the shroud of death, take away all of our sadness, and bring us to God, "for whom we have waited." Whew! If that doesn't warrant an "Alleluia!" I don't know what does. As Christians, we believe that this prophesy is a foretelling of Jesus coming to walk amongst us, teach us, and carrying our sins to the cross for us – eliminating the finality of death with his resurrection. This image of the heavenly banquet assures us on this All Saints Day that the saints who lived and died telling the story of Jesus are now sitting on the right hand of God, "rejoic(ing) in his salvation."

Theme: God Will Care for Us

Before Class:

- Find a king or queen size white or ivory sheet that can be used and drawn upon.
- Gather permanent markers or fabric markers
- Cover your classroom table with newsprint.
- Print 4 copies of today's scripture lesson. Highlight a different verse on each copy.
- Ask your rector if there is an upcoming service when the "banquet cloth" the kids are making can be used as an altar cloth.

Beginning: Invite all of the children to sit in a circle. Ask them if they know what a Saint is... if your church is named after a saint you could use the example of your namesake's life to help illustrate the point. After talking a little about saints, ask the kids what makes someone a saint. Make a list of the kids' ideas for "what makes a saint" on the board in your room.

Opening Prayer: Holy and Loving God, thank you for sending the saints to care for us in this world and for loving us enough to show us the way to heaven. Amen.

The Story: Isaiah 25:6-9 Select four students (or ask for volunteers) and instruct each of them to stand in one of the four corners of your classroom facing the center. Invite the other children to remain seated where they are. Assign each of the children one of the four verses of today's lesson from Isaiah. Invite the four students to *proclaim* their verses "triumphantly" from where they stand.

Reflection Questions:

- How did this passage make you feel?
- What are the four things God promises in this story?
- Why do you think it was important to put this in the bible?

Activity: Today we do an activity in two parts. For the start of the activity invite the four students who did the reading to stand back in their corners. Give them the sheet you brought and have each of them hold a corner of the sheet so that it is over the heads of the kids in the middle of the room. You should be sitting under the sheet with the students. After everyone is under the sheet, invite the four students to drop the corner of the sheet so it rests on top of the group – invite the four students to join the group under the sheet.

After the whole group is under the sheet, ask the children how they feel. After everyone has a chance to share how they feel, invite the group to toss off the sheet on the count of three. As soon as the sheet is off ask them how they feel now. Make note of the differences out loud.

After completing this first part, set the sheet out on the table like a tablecloth. Now, it has gone from being a shroud to being a tablecloth for a banquet! (Make sure your table is lined with newsprint.) Give the children fabric markers or sharpies and invite them to decorate this "hopeful" banquet cloth. They may use words, pictures, scripture references, etc... The goal of the activity is to have a cloth that can "communicate the hope of God without words." (You might choose to have some music playing in the background and when the song changes you can invite the students to move to another spot on the cloth.)

***Note:** after it is finished, this cloth could be used as an altar cloth at a service! Make sure to ask your priest and altar guild!

Getting Closure: Have all of the children stand up and walk slowly around your newly decorated banquet cloth. Invite them each to choose one picture or word on the cloth (one that they did not design) and to share with the group why that image or word is special to them.

Closing Prayer: Wonderful God, thank you for promising to love us always. Help us to live into the example of your saints by sharing your love with the world. Amen.

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