

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Second Sunday After the Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: John 2:1-11

Epiphany: Shimmering glimpses of the abundance of the Kingdom of God. Perhaps we, too, noticed a star and followed it. Or maybe someone led us to the gift of faith. Now we take the Light – the Good News – out into the world. Will others see the light shimmering in us? Will they risk taking a journey into faith with us?

A notation for this week's Gospel

Jesus begins his ministry not behind a pulpit, but at a party: a wedding banquet, the most extravagant celebration a village could contain. "They feasted upon the abundance of your house; you give them drink from the river of your delight." (Psalm 36:8) And the best wine is saved for the last.

Theme: Invited to a party

Before Class: Before class get enough clear plastic glasses so that each child will have one, 2 pitchers (you probably can find them in your parish hall kitchen), and a quart-sized jar with the label removed. Purchase a large bottle of grape juice. This is how you will use all of these things:

- 1) Estimate the ounces of juice so that each child has 1 ounce. Pour that amount into one of the pitchers. Dilute it quite a bit by pouring an equal amount of water (or more) into the pitcher.
- 2) In the 2nd pitcher, half fill it with water.
- 3) Place the empty jar, the pitcher with water and pitcher with diluted juice on a table. (It might behoove you to place them on a tray and have a towel near by.) Place the full strength bottle of juice off to the side somewhere in the room.
- 4) At the time of your choosing – perhaps just before the story, give each child a clear glass and pour 2-3 ounces of very diluted grape juice in each glass. Invite them to drink and enjoy it. At the time in the story when Jesus tells the servants to fill the jugs with water, you (acting as the servant) will go over to the bottle of full strength juice that is somewhere else in the room and pour it instead into the empty jar. At the point in the story where the Steward tastes the fine wine, pour some grape juice in each child's cup – for all to taste together.

You will also need paper and crayons for the children to illustrate the story. (Glitter and/or paint would be a fun addition, if you have a place that accommodates the inevitable mess.)

Beginning: Ask the children if any of them have been to a wedding. Especially if you are aware of a wedding recently in your church that you and the children might have attended, help them remember the occasion. Tell the children that we have a story today about a wedding Jesus went to.

Praying: Thank you, God, for weddings, birthday parties, and all kinds of parties that help us celebrate important things in our lives. Amen.

The Story: Jesus was just starting his work telling people about God. He had only been working for two days when his mother told him that there was going to be a wedding. So Jesus and his mother, Mary, and all Jesus' helpers went to the wedding. Weddings lasted a long time then. A wedding could go on for a week. The people used this time to come together, get caught up on all their doings, and dance and eat and talk to one another. And they had lots of food to eat and lots to drink. (Offer a small amount of diluted grape juice in the clear glasses, if you have not already done so, and set the empty pitcher in the middle for all to see.) They were all having a great time at this wedding, when Jesus' mother, Mary, whispered in Jesus' ear: (You can use a stage whisper here.) "They have run out of wine!" Then Mary went to the people who were serving the food and the wine and told them to do whatever Jesus told them to do. Jesus went over to the serving people and said: "See those big jars? The ones that probably hold at least 20 or 30 gallons? Well, fill them with water and then take a cup of what is in the jars to the person in charge of serving the guests." And the servants filled the jars to the brim. (Now go fill the empty jar with the bottle of juice, *not* the water.) And they took what was in the jars to the person in charge. (Pour the juice into the children's glasses for a taste – and all taste together.) "Wow." Said the man in charge. "You have saved the very best wine for the last!"

Option: First assure the children that they are not drinking wine, but grape juice. Then invite them to act out the story using the jar, pitchers and bottle. Tell them that we are acting out the story. The children can take turns being Mary, Jesus, the servants, the server, and most importantly the surprised guests and bridegroom. You may find it works in your setting to let the children play with the water and juice.

Option: Using the length of tulle folded a couple of times, see if any girl would like to pretend to be the bride and wear the veil. A headband or hair clip will secure the "veil." Invite the children to act out what happens at a wedding party.

Activity: Give the children paper, crayons (and, if it works for you, glitter) and invite them to illustrate the story. Feel free to draw along with the children inviting them to tell you about their drawings as they work.

Getting Closure: Gather the children in a circle and ask them to share what kinds of parties they have been to and what kind of special food or drink was served.

Closing Prayer: Thank you for all the marriages, birthdays, and celebrations in our church. Thank you for showing us to share the best of what we have. Thank you for all the times we can have a party. Amen.

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