

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Last Sunday After the Epiphany
Gospel Lesson for Adults

Scripture: Luke 9:28-36 (37-43a)

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

The Season of Epiphany that began with a hint of the Trinity closes with yet another glimpse. Jesus takes three of his disciples with him to the mountain to pray. They hear a voice again! This time it is not a dove descending, but a cloud. And even Jesus' clothes become dazzling white. What must have been going on in the minds of the three disciples, as they kept silent about all that they had seen?

Theme: Who IS this Jesus?

Beginning: You will need copies of the scripture found at the end of this lesson.

Tell the group, that unless we have a huge hunk of time, we will be unable to get through the optional part of the Gospel appointed for today, so we will concentrate on Luke 9: verses 28 - 36, adding Luke 3: 21-22 so we see both half of the "book ends" these Gospels suggest. (Pass out the participants' plastic bags and a fresh card for each person.)

Opening Prayer: God of Light, we thank you for continually drawing us into the hugeness of who you are and what your love means to us. Be with us as we explore your word and voice today. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 9: 28-36 and Luke 3: 21-22. Invite four people to read. One will read the passage from Luke 3:21-22, the others will each take a section of Luke 9:28-36. (see below for the divisions in reading).

Invite the participants to follow along and to be noticing clues about the nature of the Trinity as we read the passages. (participants may circle them, mark them in some other way, or take notes)

Questions:

Invite the group to share what insights they had as they listened to the scripture from Luke 3 and Luke 9.

(Work first with insights the group has come up with. If you need additional discussion starters, here are some suggestions...)

Notice the difference in the "audience" for the "voice". (Luke 9 - the "voice" is speaking to all those there — and by extension, to us here: equipping us for ministry. In Luke 3, the "voice" is equipping Jesus for his ministry.)

I wonder what the significance of Peter, James and John seeing Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus? (Perhaps they get clues that Jesus is fulfilling the work begun by these two.)

Notice the difference in the ways the transfigured appearances of Moses and of Jesus is treated in Luke 3: 28-36 and Exodus 34: 29-35. (Moses has to wear a veil after being in the presence of God; Jesus and his disciples are enfolded in a cloud.)

With the two Luke passages before us, what additional understandings of the Trinity have we discovered? (Notice the collaborative style: God affirming, Jesus responding, the Holy Spirit hovering, empowering, protecting, even praying for us.)

Getting Closure: Remind the group that Lent begins on Wednesday with Ash Wednesday and so the tone of our time together will change. Tell the group the 3 x 5 cards go home with them today. Ask if anyone has an insight from their cards that they would like to share.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for the gift of epiphanies we have received in this time we have had together. Thank you for your constant presence with us as we go out to do the work you have given us to do. Amen.

Luke 3: 21-22

21 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened,²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’

Luke 9:28-43

28 Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray.²⁹ And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white.³⁰ Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him.³¹ They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

³²Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.³³ Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, ‘Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’—not knowing what he said.

³⁴While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud.³⁵ Then from the cloud came a voice that said, ‘This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!’³⁶ When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

[Optional Scripture not discussed today

37 On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him.³⁸ Just then a man from the crowd shouted, ‘Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child.³⁹ Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once he shrieks. It throws him into convulsions until he foams at the mouth; it mauls him and will scarcely leave him.⁴⁰ I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.’⁴¹ Jesus answered, ‘You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.’⁴² While he was coming, the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.⁴³ And all were astounded at the greatness of God.]

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