

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Third Sunday After Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Luke 4:14-21

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, energized by the retreat he has just completed and filled with the Holy Spirit, comes to the synagogue in his own hometown on the Sabbath. Taking the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah, he reads: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." When he finishes reading the passage, he rolls up the scroll and sits down. What did those in attendance hear? What do we hear?

Theme: Called to trust

Before Class: If you have access to a map of the Holy Land in the time of Jesus, you might want to show it to the children. (Most Bibles have maps in the back and there are many you can find online.) You will need copies of the Bible, and the craft materials you are have been using to keep track of the class' 'clues'.

Beginning: If you have a map show it to the children. Remind them that Jesus had no motorcade, no car, no bike, and he went most places on foot. Notice the distance between Galilee and Nazareth, for example. They could consider the disadvantages of traveling on foot and how long it takes to get places. Advantages could be that people could walk along with Jesus and people along his path would have a chance to see him and hear him. Tell the children that the passage we have today finds Jesus refreshed from a time away in the desert where he overcame temptation and he is ready to go to work telling people what God wants them to hear.

Opening Prayer: Dear God, help us to hear what the Spirit is saying to us today and every day. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 4: 14-21. Two voices will be needed for this reading: the narrator and Jesus.

Questions:

Where had Jesus been just before this? (In Galilee, beside the Sea of Galilee.)

What town is Jesus in when he reads from the scroll? (Nazareth, the town he grew up in.)

Was Jesus reading from a Bible like ours, and if not, what? (A scroll, rolled up, with the words read from right to left.)

Perhaps the children would like to find in their Bibles the passage Jesus was reading (Isaiah 61: 1-2).

What do we think Isaiah was saying? (the Messiah would come, there would be new hope.)

What do we think Jesus understood as he read this passage? (This passage referred to him.)

What do we think Jesus meant by "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing"? (Jesus is the one sent by God to help us "get it.")

Activity: Using the Isaiah passage Jesus was reading, ask the children to think about a world in which all the things listed are happening.

I wonder what it would be like for the poor?

I wonder what it would be like for those who are "captives"? (in prisons, in addictions, stuck in miserable lives, etc.)

I wonder what kinds of "blindness" would be healed?

Who are the "oppressed" and what would freedom look like to them?

I wonder how we can be a part of the solution, instead of part of the problem? (Discuss with the children who they think is poor, captive, oppressed, in our community and what we could do.)

Activity: Continue the "epiphanies" project you are working on from the First Sunday of Epiphany.

Getting Closure: Help the children decide how they can do the work they have discovered, perhaps as simple a plan as choosing to befriend a child at school who seems to be left out.

Closing Prayer: Thank you God for loving all of us: rich and poor, captive and free. Help us to share your love as we meet people each day. Amen.

Luke 4:14-21

Narrator: 14 Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. 15 He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

Jesus: 18 ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’

Narrator: 20 And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 Then he began to say to them,

Jesus: ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’

Printed by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

© 2012 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.