

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

Scripture: Luke 4:21-30

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

Prophets don't do very well in their own hometown. It seems to be easier to hear hard sayings or even fresh insights from someone who comes from almost anywhere else. Perhaps it is because we remember when the prophet was a teen-ager, or because we helped raise this young person. Jesus is not spared this reality.

Theme: The path of the prophet

Before Class: Gather what the group is using to portray their "epiphanies". You will also need Bibles or copies of the scripture that can be found below.

Beginning: Recap last week's story: Jesus was in his hometown, Nazareth; he went to the synagogue, got up to read the scripture that described God's anointed one, and said that he was to fulfill the scripture and was, in fact, the one whom all had been waiting for. In today's reading we are going to hear the people's reaction to Jesus.

Ask the children if there has ever been a time they had a really good idea, or they knew how to do something, and no one would pay attention to them. Or, did they bring a good idea, and everyone put it down? If they do not immediately think of something, offer something from your own life: a solution you offered at work that was ignored, for example.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God that you are always there for us, especially when others are not. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 4: 21-30. (There are some awkward words in this passage, so you might point them out and pronounce them before asking for volunteers to read. The words are: Capernaum, Elijah, Zarepath, Sidon, and Naaman.) You will need three readers: the narrator, the people, and Jesus.

Questions:

Notice the mood change: what did the people say at first? (Verse 22). Then, notice what happens when they remember that they have known Jesus since he was a little boy.

What does Jesus notice in the people's response? (They may be expecting him to do flashy things for them while they just sit and watch.)

Who was Zarephath? (A widow from Sidon – she was not a Jew.)

Who was Naaman? (A leper from Syria – not from Israel.)

Who were the people in the synagogue? (They were Jews and Israelites.)

How do the people respond? (Verse 29. They run Jesus out of town.)

Why do you think they were so angry? (Jesus implied that since they would not accept him, a prophet, that God would not come to them, but to someone else)

Activity: Tell the children that we have 20/20 hindsight or that we can see more clearly things that have already happened. We see how this turned out. We also know who Jesus is. Invite them to imagine what they would have done in the same situation?

Invite them to come up with ways in which they might be pushing Jesus away today? (write them up on a white board or piece of easel paper.)

Invite them to come up with what things are we doing, now, here in our lives, to collaborate or work with Jesus? (Write them up on a white board or piece of easel paper).

You may want to apply this to those times mentioned in the beginning of class: how you felt, what you did, and how you would like others to respond.

Activity: Ask the children what should go on our "epiphanies" project and then allow time for them to express it.

Getting Closure: Ask the children to sit in a circle and be quiet for a moment. Invite the children to be reflect of things they can be doing in their own lives to help Jesus. Invite them to name those things as you pray together...

Closing Prayer: God of Epiphanies, thank you for being with us today and inviting us into the story of Jesus in his hometown. We pray that we can work together with Jesus in those ways that we name before you either silently or out loud...(leave room for the children to add their own prayers). Be with us as we go into your world to do your work. Amen.

Luke 4:21-30

Narrator: ²¹Then Jesus began to say to them,

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

Narrator: ²²All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said,

People: ‘Is not this Joseph’s son?’

Narrator: ²³He said to them,

Jesus: ‘Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, “Doctor, cure yourself!” And you will say, “Do here also in your home town the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.”’ ²⁴ ‘Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s home town. ²⁵But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up for three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁶yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.’

Narrator: ²⁸When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

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