

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Fourth Sunday After the Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Younger 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: Note to the teacher: people turning away from Jesus, even running him out of town would be a very difficult concept for young children. So, we borrowed from Matthew (13: 53-58) the same story with a slightly different twist: Jesus can only do his work of healing when people are ready to believe that he can heal. Jesus looks for collaboration (working together), not magic. You will need sheets of paper and crayons. If the children decide on more than one page, you will also need a stapler.

Beginning: Ask the children if they have ever gone to a party where older relatives were there, and these people kept patting you on the head and saying things like: "My how you have GROWN!" Maybe they say things like: "I can remember when you were just a little kid!" How did that make you feel? (Perhaps you can share a story from your own childhood when you felt you were not really appreciated for who you were.)

Praying: Dear God, show us how to do what you need us to do to help you with your work in this world. Amen.

The Story: Remember last week how Jesus came back to his hometown and read the Bible to the people? In today's story, Jesus is still in the church with all the people and they are saying things like: "Pretty amazing!" Who knew Joseph's little boy would grow up to be so smart! Let's see what other things he can do for us." Well, Jesus knows that you can't always do really good work with people who just wait for someone else to do all the work. Jesus looks for people who will work along with him. Jesus doesn't do things for people who just wait for him to do it all, which would be like doing magic. So Jesus told these people he would not be able to do the things they wanted. And they were really angry. They tried to run him out of town, but he just went on his way.

Activity: Ask the children what we can all do to help Jesus. Write their responses on a board for them to see.

If they can't come up with anything, you could suggest that one of the ways we can help Jesus do the work he has to do is to pray. Tell them that there are really two kinds of prayer: "Please" where we ask God to help someone get well, for example and "Thanks" when something we wanted has happened. Give each child a piece of paper, folded in half.

Invite them to create a picture of how they can help Jesus today. How can we work together with Jesus? (help them brainstorm and invite them to illustrate these ideas.) Some examples might be: feeding the hungry, praying, standing up for people, etc.

Getting Closure: When the children have finished, come together in a circle and invite the children to share what they came up with, if they want, and feel free to share from yours.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for showing us all the ways we can help you be at work in the world today. Amen.

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