

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

Scripture: Luke 9:28-36 (optional 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?

Before Class: You will need copies of the scripture found below. You may choose to use the Old Testament Scripture (Exodus 34: 29-35) along with the Gospel (Luke 9:28-43) if you have enough time. If you use the Old Testament, make sure to either have copies of the passages or Bible for the children. If they are curious as to who Elijah is, there are several passages in I Kings and II Kings; 2 Kings 2: 1-12 is Elijah's being taken to heaven in the whirlwind.

You may want to spend a bit of time looking at the Gospel to see if you see the hints of the Trinity in this passage and how it contrasts with what we had in the Baptism of Jesus in the first session of this season. Bring "bookmarks" (could be simply slips of paper) two per child.

Beginning: Tell the children you are going to make a statement and you invite them to think of examples to affirm your statement. The statement: You know, we tend to start to look like what we spend the most time doing. You might offer this example: a little boy who loves baseball and is often striking the pose of a batter or a pitcher. Ask the children what they think people look like who are always in a bad mood, or those who are always hopeful.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for sending Jesus to teach us who he was, by what he said and what he did. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 9: 28-36. The voices in this passage are: the narrator, Peter, and God. Ask for volunteers to read the parts.

Questions: Tell the children that today's passage acts like the a second half of a pair of book ends — the first half being the passage we had the First Sunday after Epiphany Luke 3: verses 21-22. If you are using Bibles, suggest they keep a bookmark at today's passage and then find the first passage and mark that one also. (Both passages are found in the scripture below as well.)

Who is the "voice" speaking to, primarily, in Luke 3:21-22? (To Jesus: to assure him that he does understand the work he has been given to do.)

Who is the "voice" speaking to in today's passage from Luke 9? (To the disciples, and therefore also to us, to keep the faith after Jesus is no longer here in person.)

If the Holy Spirit is represented by a dove in the first passage, in what way might the Holy Spirit be represented in today's passage? (The cloud, perhaps?)

If the children are curious about Moses and Elijah and want to give each a chance to "speak for himself" ask them to keep the two Luke passages marked and then find Exodus 34:29-35 for Moses and II Kings 2: 1-12 for Elijah.

In what ways did both Moses and Jesus "change" as they made time and space to listen to God? (Moses: Exodus 34:29b; Jesus (Luke 9: 29)

Activity: Invite the children to pretend we are Peter, James, John and the other disciples (include Mary, Mary Magdalene, and Suzanna) are all sitting together at a table. It is after Pentecost. Jesus has been crucified, died, buried, risen and ascended. And now we are looking back at these two events (Jesus' baptism and Jesus' transfiguration) to figure out what WE are supposed to be doing. Encourage them to express doubts as well as assurances. Ask them if they think this "voice" is available to them also?

And, once the disciples get it together, how does the story get to us? And how will the story get to others?

Getting Closure: Suggest the children "write" a paragraph describing what happened and what this means, with you scribing what they say. Once they are satisfied with their version it could be added to your epiphanies graphic. If they are feeling creative, they could write it as a "news release" or "story of the day" as if they were telling others about what happened.

If you have a larger class, you can divide them up or have them self-select into smaller groups – one group can write, one can respond in art, one can respond in song, one can respond in poem, etc. Let them be creative in how they depict today's lesson.

Once they have had time to respond, invite them to share with one another.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God for showing us what you want us to do and for staying with us as we do it. Amen.

Luke 9:28-43

Narrator: 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,

Peter: ‘Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’

Narrator: ...not knowing what he said.³⁴ While 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,

God: ‘This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!’

Narrator: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.

Other “bookend” of this lesson:

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.’

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