

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Second Sunday in Lent
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Luke 13:31-35

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: Come, let us adore him. (Antiphon for Lent, Book of Common Prayer, page 81.) And what if, during this season of Lent, we sought a deeper understanding of this amazing gospel of grace? Will that image of grace energize us to do the spiritual housekeeping we need to be ready for the "new thing" God is doing in Easter?

A notation for this week's Gospel

Lights! Camera! Action! The drama is about to begin. The powers that be collaborate to extinguish the ministry of Jesus. Jesus, keenly aware that time is running out, continues his work. In this poignantly feminine image, Jesus muses that he had longed to gather these children as a hen gathers her chicks. The hollowness of power confronts the powerfulness of the gentle.

Theme: The power of gentleness

Before Class: Bring a shawl or a small blanket to help show the outstretched wings of a hen spread over her chicks, so the children can act out this passage. Also bring all the parts of the altar you constructed last week. Bring a batch of cornstarch clay tinted yellow (recipe follows). If you do not have immediate access to water to wash up with, bring either packaged wipes or a couple of moist washcloths in a plastic bag.

Cornstarch clay

2 cups baking soda

1 cup corn starch

1 1/2 cups of water

a few drops of yellow food coloring.

Mix in a sauce pan, cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until the mixture begins to look like mashed potatoes. Dump the "clay" onto a piece of aluminum foil or plastic wrap. As soon as it is cool enough to touch, knead it a few times. Stored in the refrigerator in a plastic bag, it will keep for weeks.

Beginning: Ask the children to help you assemble the altar and then gather around it.

Praying: Thank you, God, for Jesus and the stories he gave to us. Help us to hear your words in the lesson today. Amen.

The Story: Jesus knows what he is supposed to do. He is telling people that God loves them, that God wants them to love God, and he is telling people stories to help them understand. He also knows that the people in charge of the country want to get rid of him. They think people are listening to Jesus and not to the leaders of the country. Jesus sighs a great big sigh. (Take a big deep sigh and invite the children to sigh along with you.) Oh so many times, Jesus says. So many

times I just wanted to be like a big, warm, loving hen and gather all of you under my wings, as if you were my chicks. (Big sigh.) But you would not let me.

Activity: Offer the shawl or blanket to the children and invite one to be the mother hen, and the other the chicks. If the children have not been around chickens, tell them that the mother hen has to make a clucking sound and even then has to really work to get her chicks to huddle under her wings. Chicks are easily distracted. Then, if another child wants to be the mother, do it all again, continuing until each child who wants to can be the hen.

Activity: Give each child a little lump of the clay and ask them to fashion a hen and some tiny chicks. You can make a set also, to show them a way to do this. (Start with a little round ball of clay, and then pinch out the wings and "squeeze" out a head with a tiny beak.) Tell the children that the clay will be hard by next week and they can take their chicks home with them then. (You will need to find a safe place for the chicks to dry during the week. And save a little lump of the clay in a plastic bag stored in your refrigerator — in case a new child shows up next week.) Suggest the children make an extra chick to put on our altar.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to arrange a hen and chicks on the altar. Then sit in a circle around the altar. Ask the children if they have anything they want us all to pray for with them.

Closing Prayer: Read the prayer you and the group composed last week, or offer what came out of your time getting closure.

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