

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Second Sunday of Easter
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: John 20:19-31

"Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." An astounding discovery! The Easter news was spread to all who would listen. The disciples told people, who in turn, told people, and to this day, we hear the message — a message of weeping and then of joy that comes with the morning of a new day. We, like the disciples, weep **AND** then delight in the joy bursting forth in us. We too are called to bring this message with our lives, and, if necessary, with words, to those who have not yet heard it.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

The women brought an account the men could not grasp. That evening, the exhausted band of men and women who followed Jesus, huddled in the locked room. They were terrified that they would be killed next. To their amazement, Jesus was right there in their midst proclaiming the Peace he had been teaching them to trust. Breath sweeping over the earth brought life in the beginning; now Jesus was breathing new life in the Holy Spirit.

Theme: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

Before: If this is the first session of this series for you, be sure you know the names of all the children and they know each other's names. (There are "Get to Know You" activities under the Resources tab of Lesson Plans that Work.)

During this Easter season the class is invited to create "Pictures of Easter" to collect in your classroom. Plastic lids from cottage cheese or sour cream containers can form frames if you like. You could also make frames from gluing popsicle sticks together into a square.

Children will probably also want to take home what they have made, so one picture each week can be made collaboratively to stay in the room and individual pictures to go home. We want to stay with the concept that Easter is a season, not just a day. Assemble as wide a variety of art materials as your budget and time will allow. Paper in different colors and textures, crayons, watercolors, glue, scraps of paper or cloth for a collage, and, glitter. For today, white paper, crayons and glitter will be needed. Disposable wipes or moist washcloths will be helpful.

During Lent an altar was suggested. If you were using one in Lent, you may wish to continue using one. If you want to use one in Easter, a small table waist-high to your shortest child is the beginning. Upon it you can place a votive candle safely contained in a glass jar (baking soda makes a good base and serves as an instant fire extinguisher if needed). You will also need a simple wooden cross, a tiny jar for flowers, and a simple cloth, if you choose. During Easter, the children can fashion items to place on the altar. If you do choose to light the candle, be sure to blow it out when it will be unattended.

Beginning: If the children do not already know each other, introduce yourself and ask the children to introduce themselves. It could be something like this: "Hi. My name is _____ and my favorite color is _____." Go around your circle until each child gets to make an introduction.

Option: If you were going to set up an altar, this would be a good time to do it.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for this time we have together to continue our celebration of Easter and your life with us. Amen.

The Story: If this is your first session with these children, or if you haven't met in a while, do a simple review of what has been happening, inviting the children to offer their observations. Cover the facts that Jesus went into Jerusalem on a donkey and everyone was so glad to see him that they waved palms and even their coats. Then, Jesus was killed by being crucified, which is being nailed to a cross. He died, and his friends were very sad. Jesus had told them this would happen but that he would not stay dead. On Easter, his friends began to see that Jesus was right there with them.

If you were with the children on Easter, invite them to tell you this story, filling in the blanks for them as they need it.

Then tell them that in today's story Jesus' friends were hiding. They were afraid, and they were very sad. How do we look when we are sad? (Slump in your chair and put on a sad face. Invite the children to look sad, also.) While they were all sitting there, being sad, suddenly they noticed that Jesus was right there with them. They could actually see him. This is what he said to them, "Peace be with you." Then he breathed on them. Jesus said, "Now, you have the Holy Spirit in you."

Ask the children, "I wonder how we could describe peace." (Here are some suggestions: Getting over being angry. Not being sad anymore. Feeling safe. Being happy. Being relaxed.)

Invite them to share times when they have felt at peace. (In their bed, being with a parent or grandparent, in church, playing with friends, etc.)

Activity: Tell the children that each week in church we remind each other that Jesus told us, "Peace be with you." We get up and shake hands with people near us and say: "Peace of the Lord be with you." Let's do that now. (Shake the hand of the child nearest you, encourage the children to shake hands with each of the other children, saying: "Peace of the Lord be with you." Be sure you also shake each child's hand.)

Activity: Invite the children to create artwork for our altar to show what we mean by "peace." Give each child paper and crayons, and work on a piece of art yourself. Then collaboratively create the piece that will go on the altar' preferably combining concepts the children have developed in their individual pieces. Clean up, as needed.

Getting Closure: Position your collaborative piece of art on your altar. Shake hands all around again saying: "Peace be with you." And, if there is a child new to your class, invite that child to come back next week or any time.

Closing Prayer: May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen. (Romans 15:13, Book of Common Prayer, page 126)*

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