

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Fourth Sunday in Easter
Gospel Lesson for Adults

Scripture: John 10:22-30

"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 too 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 voice of Jesus can be hard to hear in the halls of institutions and in the noise of our hectic lives. When we listen attentively we may hear his voice. Then we discover to our awe and delight that he knows each of us by name. He has chosen us and will not give us up. Jesus waits to see if we will choose to follow him.

Theme: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

Before Class: You will need paper for note taking, pencils or pens, and Bibles (possibly more than one translation). You will find the NRSV Translation at the end of this lesson. You may also want to bring a copy of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Beginning: Make available the paper and pencils or pens. Tell the group that the approach to Bible Study you will use today is to notice words or phrases that seem to jump out at you, either in a new way or in a familiar way, and then sharing those insights you want to share with each other. Agree to some ground rules. For example, instead of disagreeing with what a person shares, offer a contrasting observation. Be sure everyone has had the opportunity to fully describe his or her impression before another jumps in.

Tell the group that for our opening prayer you will read the 23rd Psalm, for it is familiar to most and comforting to many. (You could read it from the Bible, or read either of the versions in *The Book of Common Prayer*: pages 612 or 476)

Opening Prayer: Loving God, we thank you for the presence of your voice in our lives. Guide us today as we listen and wonder about where and how you call us. Amen.

The Scripture: John 10: 22-30. Ask one member of the class to read the passage and then maintain a period of silence for people to reflect and jot down words or phrases.

The Process: Key Words and Phrases

If it is obvious that several people have written things and are eager to share, invite people to share an observation.

If it seems appropriate, ask another person to read the passage so all can hear it again, possibly from another translation. Then keep silence long enough for people to hear and record new insights. Then invite people to share, reflect, and wonder together.

Getting Closure: Remind the group of the two other methods we have used and ask for candid evaluation of the methods. If one method was really preferred, be sure to use it again, even next Sunday.

If you have time, you may wish to read Psalm 23.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for the assurance that no one will snatch us out of your hand. Amen.

John 10:22-30

22 At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter,²³ and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon.²⁴ So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, ‘How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.’²⁵ Jesus answered, ‘I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me; ²⁶but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. ²⁷My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand. ³⁰The Father and I are one.’

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