

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Fourth Sunday of Easter
Lesson Plans for Older Children

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 Bibles or copies of the scripture and sufficient copies of *The Book of Common Prayer* so each child can read from it. Bring the art supplies you have gathered for the icons the class is making, including the template from Easter 2 if you have been using that for making icons.

Beginning: Ask the children if any have ever seen sheep grazing in a field and a shepherd caring for the sheep. If you are fortunate enough to have a child in the class who has, ask the child to describe what he or she has noticed. If none have had the experience, simply suggest they look for times we act like sheep and who are the people who "shepherd," take care of, us. You may also want to tell the children that the rest of the stories we have in Easter all happened before the crucifixion, when Jesus was walking with and teaching his disciples.

Opening Prayer: Loving God, help us to hear your voice and to follow you. Be with us as we listen to your word that we might know you better. Amen.

The Story: John 10: 22-30. You will need the narrator, the Jewish people, and Jesus if you wish to read it in parts. (See below for script.)

Questions:

I wonder why the Jewish leaders did not recognize that Jesus was the Messiah? (Some were afraid they would lose their powerful positions. Jesus had not come the way they understood the Bible to say he would come.)

How else could we say, "The works I do in my Father's name testify to me?" (Actions speak louder than words, watch what I do to see what I mean, etc.)

I wonder why Jesus refers to his followers as "sheep?" (They are being pulled in different directions by different leaders, but they trust Jesus.)

What is Jesus declaring to the leaders in verse 29? (Those who follow Jesus will always belong to Jesus.)

I wonder why the leaders were so threatened by Jesus saying: "The Father and I are one?" (If you do not believe Jesus is who he says he is, how could he be "one" with the Father?)

Activity: Let the children choose which words to translate into their icon for the day. It could be something like actions speak louder than words, a parallel for sheep that follow, or Jesus and God working together. Then provide the art supplies and encourage the children as they develop their icons. Have them produce one for the class and a copy to take home and use as a bookmark.

Getting Closure: The Psalm appointed for today is the 23rd Psalm, probably the most well known psalm in the Bible. Read together the psalm as it appears on page 612 of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for choosing us and not giving up on us. Help us to hear you as you call our name. Amen.

John 10:22-30

Narrator: 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,

Jewish People: ‘How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.’

Narrator: Jesus answered,

Jesus: ‘I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me;²⁶ but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep.²⁷ My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.²⁹ What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand.³⁰ The Father and I are one.’

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