

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

Scripture: John 13:31-35

"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

Soon Jesus will not be appearing so concretely to the disciples. So, does he give them a complex strategic plan? No. He gives them a new commandment, and this will cover all they need to do. The world will recognize them as followers of Jesus because of the way they love each other.

Theme: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

Before Class: You will need Bibles and (optional) copies of *The Book of Common Prayer*. You might choose to write on a large sheet of paper the four suggested questions where all can see:

What does this passage tell us about:

God?

People?

The relationship between God and people?

My relationship with God?

Note: this approach is outlined by Linda Grenz in her book: *Pocket Bible Guide* published by Doubleday, page 164.

Beginning: Tell the group that the method of Bible Study for today could be called a Theological Approach. If you have written the four questions, show them to the group. If that is not an option in your setting, tell them the four theological elements we will be looking for as we work with the passage.

Opening Prayer: Dear God, we thank you for the simplicity of your message to us and for energy to keep listening to you. Amen.

The Scripture: John 13: 31-35

The Process: A Theological Approach

1. Invite one person to read the passage and then the group can maintain silence for a couple of minutes as they reflect on what this passage tells us about God. (God's love for Jesus, God "glorified" in Jesus. The relationship between God and Jesus.)
2. Invite another person to read the passage and then the group can maintain silence for a couple of minutes as they reflect on what this passage tells us about people. (Our need for rules and our difficulties obeying the one commandment given here.)
3. Invite another person to read the passage and then the group can maintain silence for a couple of minutes as they reflect on what this passage tells us about the relationship between God and people. (God's gentle, but tough commandment. Our difficulties figuring out what God wants from us. The relief — and the challenge — of this new commandment.)
4. Invite one last reading of the passage to discover how this applies to our life - our world - our relationship with God. Would the world know that we are disciples by watching the way we love? How do we "love" those who are hard to love? Our enemies? Those who could harm us? How do we think our relationship with God might improve if we made more of an effort to love?

Getting Closure: Evaluate this method of Bible Study and compare it with other methods you have used.

If you have time, you might invite them to share one thing that they will take away from your time together today. Consider how we might be able to love each other by praying for each other and checking in with each other during the week, etc.

Closing Prayer: God, thank you for the teachings of Jesus and your patience with us as we grow into your love. Be with us as we go into the world, and help us to remember how to love one another. Amen.

John 13:31-35

31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³²If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, “Where I am going, you cannot come.” ³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.’

Printed by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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