

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

Scripture: John 14:23-29

"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

Letting go of the companionship of Jesus to receive him in a larger way. Letting go of certainties to be open to the promised Holy Spirit. Letting go of our need to be in control to trust the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Theme: Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Church

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible and art supplies.

Beginning: As the children if they have ever heard the saying, "Seeing is Believing." Invite them to wonder: I wonder if we can think of things we cannot see that we believe? (Some examples: Stars too far away to see, the wind, electricity, microwaves cooking our food, phone conversations, the Internet, etc.) Tell them that today's scripture passage tells us about another thing we cannot see but that is right here with us. Invite them to listen carefully to the scripture for today and keep in mind images or words that come to them.

Opening Prayer: God, thank you for the love you have given us. Send us the help we need to do the work you give us to do each and every day. Amen.

The Story: John 14: 23-29. Suggested ways to break up the passage: invite three readers to read the three sections: 23-24, 25-26 and 27-29.

Questions:

Jesus tells us he is sending us the Advocate, the Holy Spirit. I wonder if anyone can tell me what an "advocate is?" (Someone who helps, who stands in for. Lawyer's are called advocates.)

If we cannot see the Holy Spirit, what are some clues that the Holy Spirit is here with us? (We can do things that we would have thought were too hard to do, we remember to pray for people, we are able to love difficult people, etc.)

What does Jesus say to comfort the disciples and, therefore, to comfort us? (verse 27)

If you were going to describe the Holy Spirit to someone who didn't know what the Holy Spirit is, what words would you use? How might you describe the Holy Spirit?

Activity: Brainstorm with the children

Invite them to name the ways the Holy Spirit has been represented in passages we have read previously. (The Dove that descended on Jesus at his baptism, for instance.)

Invite them to discuss what they would like to create as an icon for the Holy Spirit to add to our collection of icons. When they have come up with ideas, work together to create the icon that will stay in your classroom and then allow time for each child to create one to take home.

Getting Closure:

Decide where to display this icon.

Discuss strategies for noticing the Holy Spirit at work in our lives during the week. (A person who has been a pest becoming easier to be around. Finding yourself praying at a time you don't usually pray, etc.)

Closing Prayer: Gracious God, thank you for sending us the Holy Spirit. May we recognize it in our lives as we walk with you each day. Amen.

John 14:23-29

²³Jesus answered him, 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

²⁵ 'I have said these things to you while I am still with you. ²⁶But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. ²⁸You heard me say to you, "I am going away, and I am coming to you." If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. ²⁹And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.'

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