

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

Scripture: John 17:20-26

"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

One. Not diluted to a monotonous sameness. One. The abundance of diversity and people choosing to be together. One. Each of us, all of us, with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. The Trinity, sufficiently huge, invites each one of us in.

Theme: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

Before Class. This is the last session of the Easter Season unit. You might want to bring refreshments, have a party, and bring forth each of the icons you have made during this session to the party and let the children take turns explaining the meaning of each icon and the story behind it. If they would like to display them or offer them at coffee hour you might want to think about a way to display them for the church to see.

The passage for today is written in beautiful but very abstract language. You might want to offer a translation in more contemporary language, such as *The Message*.

Beginning: Describe to the children what you plan for today. (Party? Review? The activity described for today?) If this is to be your last session together for the year, tell the children.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for the Easter messages we have been receiving and for the reminders of your love for each of us. Amen.

The Story: John 17: 20-26 Invite a few children to read the passage, having them alternate by each sentence or two.

Questions:

When, in Jesus' time on this earth, does this passage occur? (Just before the Crucifixion)

Put in your own words what Jesus is praying in verse 21? (Jesus wants us to be "at one" with each other as Jesus is with God.)

I wonder, if we really were "one," what kinds of things would be different in our lives? In what ways would we be "the same" and in what ways would we be "unique?" (To be "at one" with

Jesus is to bring every bit of our individuality and see it 'shine' along with the individuality of every other person.)

What does Jesus ask for from God in verse 24? (That all of us would be with Jesus wherever he is.)

What things help us know that God said "yes!" to Jesus? (People told people, who told people, right down to today so we now know this truth.)

Let's see if we can put into our own words what Jesus is praying in verse 26. The elements are:

Jesus told us what God is like

Jesus will keep on telling us what God is like

God loves Jesus and that love will energize us

As a result, Jesus will be a part of one huge one that includes all of us.

Activity: Invite the children to create an icon that expresses this huge concept of "one." You might ask if people of other ethnicities not represented in your classroom, or people from other countries (other planets?!) need to be represented in the icon. When they have developed their icon, allow time for them to make one to go home with them. Who and what can be represented?

Getting Closure: Spread the icons out on a table and ask for volunteers to tell things about each of the icons. If they are going to be presented to the church, ask the children to arrange them on the poster board and write where each Bible verse can be found. If you have brought refreshments, serve them and give them time to reflect on the year. If appropriate, you can also play music as the children eat their feast.

Closing Prayer: Gracious God, we thank you for the gift each of us, for our uniqueness, for our unity, and for your movement among us. As we go into the world, help us to see, feel, and experience where you are moving among us. Amen.

John 17:20-26 (NRSV)

20 'I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word,²¹ that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.²² The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one,²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.²⁴ Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

25 'Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me.²⁶ I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.'

John 17:20-26 (The Message)

²⁰⁻²³ I'm praying not only for them
But also for those who will believe in me
Because of them and their witness about me.
The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind—
Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you,
So they might be one heart and mind with us.
Then the world might believe that you, in fact, sent me.
The same glory you gave me, I gave them,
So they'll be as unified and together as we are—
I in them and you in me.
Then they'll be mature in this oneness,
And give the godless world evidence
That you've sent me and loved them
In the same way you've loved me.

²⁴⁻²⁶ Father, I want those you gave me
To be with me, right where I am,
So they can see my glory, the splendor you gave me,
Having loved me
Long before there ever was a world.
Righteous Father, the world has never known you,
But I have known you, and these disciples know
That you sent me on this mission.
I have made your very being known to them—
Who you are and what you do—
And continue to make it known,
So that your love for me
Might be in them
Exactly as I am in them.

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