

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Season after Pentecost, Proper 8
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Luke 9:51-62

We remain Easter people, now with the wind of the Holy Spirit in our sails. Our task for the months ahead in this season of Ordinary Time, which extends to the end of November, is to look at what Jesus so tenaciously taught his disciples and see what is in these teachings for us as we carry out the work we have been given to do. Jesus promised his disciples a helper, an Advocate, who would stand with them making the work possible. This same helper, the Holy Spirit, hovers over us still eager to quench the fire of fear and replace it with the powerful energy of love.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

Rejection. To the disciples' horror, the people of the village did not receive Jesus. Retribution, they insisted! "No," said Jesus, moving on. Follow, they decided. But what would follow mean? Maybe to follow is to hold focus. Staying on focus involves choosing the important and not getting bogged down in the urgent. What is the important that we follow?

Theme: Where do we go when we follow?

Before: The premise for very young children is that most of the following they do is defined by someone else. One area they have open to them is to be who they are, bringing their fresh insight to those who will listen to them. They are also deeply prayerful persons, so the focus of this session is that to pray is to follow. Think through where you and the children could go to look for places where they can pray for people and their work and the world around us. Inside, could you and the children tiptoe by the nursery, if you have one, and pray for the little ones and those who care for them? Could you go into some of the staff offices (clearing it ahead of time) and pray for that person and their work? Could you stand outside the worship space and pray for the people inside? Outside, could you ask the children to show you what they find (the little blade of grass growing in the crack in the sidewalk, a tiny bug making its way along a leaf, etc.) and stop and give thanks?

There is also a project that involves a camera, or finger paint, if you have it, or simply crayons and paper.

Beginning: Tell the children we have a story about following Jesus, and we will look at ways we, too, can follow Jesus.

Praying: Thank you, Jesus, for showing us ways we can follow you. Amen.

The Story: Tell the children you need their help to show this story. Ask someone to volunteer to be Jesus, and the rest of us will be Jesus' friends.

Teacher: “Jesus, tell us to go on ahead to the next town to get things ready for you. And off we will go.” (Invite the volunteer who is Jesus to tell the friends to go and then you and the rest get up and move from one end of the room to the other.)

Teacher: “But guess what? The people don't want to hear about Jesus in that silly town! Are we furious, or what? How do you think we can show that we are angry over this?” (Show outrage, stamp feet, etc. then quiet down.)

Teacher: But what does Jesus say? He tells us we will just keep on going to another town. (Invite Jesus to tell the friends to go to another town.)

Teacher: So let's walk and walk to the next town. We are saying to Jesus, “We want to follow you.” Jesus says to us, “to follow me, you have to do what I tell you to do.” (Invite Jesus to say, “to follow me, you have to do what I tell you to do.”)

Teacher: What does Jesus tell us to do? Jesus says following Jesus is praying for those Jesus loves. (Invite Jesus to say, “If you want to follow me, then pray for people I love.”)

Activity: Ask the children to sit in a circle with you and think about people Jesus loves. Be prepared to write down what they offer.

Does he love us? (For sure!) How about our parents? Who else does Jesus love? Does he love the people who come to this church? Who work in this church?

If we were going to show someone what it looks like to be praying, what might we do with our hands? (You could offer your fingers touching in the common gesture to indicate prayer, or the orans position that the priest uses during communion.) Accept what the children agree is a posture to indicate prayer. Then, tell them we will go on a walk, and anytime we find something we want to pray about, we can make that sign.



Activity: Tell the children we are going to follow Jesus around our space and pray for those who work here. Depending on time and your facility, tiptoe to the worship space, the nursery, the place where the people who clean store their supplies, the offices, another class space, etc. Stop at each place and ask the children to pray in their own words for what goes on there. If going outside is a part of your following, invite the children to point out things we can say thank you to Jesus for putting in our world: flowers, trees, buildings where people work or live, etc.

When you are done, you might want to help them think about what they can pray for at home and in their everyday lives. Brainstorm with them how they might do that each day.

Activity: (If time permits, and you have the materials.) Offer to photograph the hands of each child, held in prayer. To be sure you have the right photo for each child, have each child write his or her name on a piece of paper and place it right by the hands as you take the picture. When you have the photos either developed or printed out on your computer, send each child his or her photo. Tell the child they can put the photo someplace in their bedroom, to remind them that Jesus invites them to pray.

If you don't have a camera, use finger paint and make handprints, or have the children trace an outline each others' hands clasped in prayer.

Getting Closure: Gather the children in a circle and invite them to tell about a place we went, or something they saw, that they want to be sure we do not forget.

Closing Prayer: In your closing prayer, thank Jesus for the places the children remember, naming each in the prayer.

Loving God, thank you for teaching us to follow you in prayer. We remember those special places we visited today (especially _____). Be with us all and help us to follow you in love and prayer. Amen.

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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