

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year A – Third Sunday after Epiphany**  
**Lesson Plans for Older Children**

**Scripture: Matthew 4:12-23**

*Because in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of your glory in the face of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*  
(Book of Common Prayer, page 378)

Accept the light we have received and shine it forth! It is not about shining the light in other's faces, blinding them, but holding the light in open hands.

**A Notation for this Week's Gospel**

The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. And what does Jesus say? The kingdom of heaven has come near. What is this kingdom of heaven and how do we get ready to receive it?

**Theme: A Light has Dawned**

**Before Class:** You will need copies of the scripture for day, paper, and pencils.

Find an ad or a photo in a magazine or a newspaper that has a succinct scene: two children eating supper, people getting into a family car, an adult reading to a young child, etc. The purpose is to show the children the picture, briefly, then ask them, either working in two groups or individually, to remember what they saw, take some notes, and be ready to report what they saw. The purpose of the activity, obviously, is to notice that we do not all see the same event the same way.

**Beginning:** Give the children paper and pencils. Tell the children that you are going to hold up a picture for them to look at for just a moment. Then, put the picture where they cannot see it and suggest that either working in two groups, or alone, they make some notes about what they saw in the picture: how many people were in the picture, how old do you think they are, what color shirt was each wearing, etc. If they want to, they can decide what was going on (where were the people going, why were they together, etc.) When they have had a few minutes to collect their thoughts, invite each group to tell what they saw. Why do they think that although everyone saw the same picture, they noticed different things?

You will need markers and something for each group to make posters (poster board or large paper.)

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, that we have many people to tell us the story of Jesus so we may see you from many different sides. Amen.

**The Story: Matthew 4:12-23** Tell the children that today's passage has three parts, so be noticing when each part begins. Notice, also, that we had some of this story, last week, from a different point of view. Invite one child to read the passage OR you can invite the children to each read a sentence and just go around the circle having them read and saying 'pass' if they choose not to read.

**Questions:**

- I wonder what you noticed in this reading? What was interesting for you?
- I wonder what you were curious about as we read this?
- When did the moods change in the passage? (From Jesus considering what he was being called to do to his decision in verse 17, to his actions from verse 18 on.)
- What does this passage tell us Jesus was considering? (Verse 12, John is now in prison. Verse 13, he goes back home to think and because that is how he understands what Isaiah had said in verses 15-16).
- What does this passage tell us is the conclusion that Jesus has come to? (Verse 17)
- I wonder what “the kingdom of heaven” means? (Jesus knows that God is not “off somewhere” but right here. It would be Jesus’ task to try to help people stop doing what was not helping them, and turn to God.)
- What does Jesus do next? (He calls some people to help him do the work.)

**Activity:** Invite the children to choose a person to identify with from our stories – John the Baptist, the disciples Jesus is calling, Jesus, or a bystander who is witnessing all of this. Have them group themselves by who they are choosing. Once they are in groups, invite them to wonder with you, writing down their thoughts rather than sharing them.

- I wonder how John the Baptist felt and what he was doing now that Jesus was around?
- I wonder what Jesus saw in the fishermen to call them to follow?
- I wonder what made the fishermen drop their nets and follow Jesus?
- I wonder what you would give up if Jesus called you to follow?
- I wonder what qualities Jesus saw in them that he sees in us?

After they have had time, invite each group to create a response poster. It can be a reflection about the final question, it can be a response to who they chose to identify with, or it can be a combination. If they are stuck with what to do, they can list qualities that they see, they can draw a picture of a disciple and label the things that Jesus may have wanted in a disciple, they can do a combination, etc.

**Getting Closure:** Invite each group to share their posters they have made.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, that you call us, too, to follow. Help us to be your disciples that we may follow you faithfully. 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.*

*© 2013 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.*