

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Matthew 5:1-12

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

We make it so complicated. The prophet Micah told us: "Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God". Jesus invites us to follow him and describes the attributes of those who follow. Where does Jesus go? What does he value?

Theme: Life-giving Attitudes

Before: The Beatitudes (the focus of today's passage) are beautiful, abstract, and way over the heads of the children. Because the children will hear these beautiful words again and again, we offer something to build upon in later years. And so the concept becomes: What do Jesus' friends do? You will need paper and crayons and transparent tape.

Beginning: One more verse of the song is offered: (see previous weeks)

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
Won't let anyone blow (and make a blowing motion) it out. No!
I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Tell the children that when Jesus gathered some helpers around him and started to tell people what God wanted them all to do; they wanted to know the rules. What are we supposed to do? Jesus helped them understand what God wants them to be doing.

Praying: Thank you, God, for sending Jesus to show us what you want us to do. Amen.

The Story: Jesus looked out and a whole bunch of people were sitting there, waiting for Jesus to tell them what to do. What are the rules? What should we do? Jesus thought about it and started to talk to the people. Jesus told the people to be good friends to each other. Jesus said being good friends would make people Blessed – which is another word for happy.

Activity: Gather the children in a circle and ask them to tell you what things we do when we are friends. What happens when two of us want to play with the same thing? What do we do when one of us is really sad? When we have a job to do, like, for instance, putting all the toys back in their box, how can we make it easier for all of us? (Create opportunities for the children to notice cooperation, sharing, caring, and attending to each other.)

Activity: Invite the children we need a child to draw a pictures from the story today and from our discussion. They could be pictures of Jesus talking to all the people as well as pictures of children doing the things we talked about: sharing, working together, helping each other when something is sad; celebrating when something is happy. When the pictures are completed, ask the children to decide how to position their pictures around the picture(s) of Jesus – showing that the children who are being friends to others have Jesus in the middle of their work.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share their pictures.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that you need our help, too, to get Jesus' work done. Help us to remember how we can help. Amen.

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