

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Third Sunday After the Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Older Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Isaiah 9:1-4

Most of the lessons are from Isaiah. Isaiah was an educated man, as was Micah. Isaiah, a member of the nobility, preached justice and love in obedience to God's call. It should be explained to the children that someone who was a “have” thought it was essential that he listen and obey the call of God... to represent his relationship with God through his relationship with others less fortunate. He was to represent God's Light to the world and preach about that Light coming into the world.

A Notation for this Weeks Scripture: God spoke these words to the people of Israel through the prophet Isaiah: *“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, those who live in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.”* (Isaiah 2)

The prophet was called by God to bring justice and mercy, and the promise God made was kept. The word Church comes from the Greek word to be called. In today's scripture, we hear that God's signs point to the fact that there is radical reversal and a change for the people of God. Today we continue that ministry of the prophet to respond to God's call to us to make the world a brighter place for all God's people. God invites us to have a relationship that is deeply embedded in the acts of mercy, justice and love.

Theme: Changing Darkness into Light

Before: You will need a Bible or copies of the scripture passage for each child. Today you will need card stock for the activity. Before the children get there, think about what group in your community is easily forgotten. The elderly, the homeless, children of prisoners, prisoners, etc. so you have in mind who the children can make cards of encouragement for in the first activity.

Before the children arrive, write the word EKKLESIA in large letters on newsprint or on your white board. Ekklesia is the Greek word for Church which means to be “called out.”

Opening Prayer: Gracious God, as I listen to the story today, help me to hear how I am being called for your purpose. Amen.

The Story: Isaiah 9:1-4 Invite four children to read one verse of the scripture. There are a few tricky words in verse 1 and 4. You can either coach the child who is reading or choose to read those verses yourself.

Questions:

- I wonder if any images or words stood out for you today?
- In today's reading Isaiah is telling the people how life with God is going to be. Everything will be reversed and different – dark will become light, etc. Have you ever seen something be reversed or changed radically?

- God is always talking to the people through Isaiah. Are we like Isaiah or the people? How?
- What is the responsibility of being a leader like Isaiah?
- Is it harder to be a leader in the Church today? Why?
- What is the responsibility of your rector or priest-in-charge? Is it different from your responsibility?
- Are priests or nuns prophets? Explain your answer.
- I wonder what gifts you bring to the church? Help the children explore what gifts they bring to the church. Invite the child to explain her/his leadership gift and how they use it to help others.
- Point to where you wrote EKKLESIA. Explain to the children that Ekklesia is the Greek word for Church which means to be “called out.” We are a part of the church wherever we go. We are all called out to be God’s presence in the world.

Activities

Notes of Encouragement: Invite the children can write encouraging short notes saying, “I’m thinking of you” or something similar for those who are rarely remembered as a group (homeless, elderly, children of prisoners, etc.) They to be loved and cared for and this is a simple gift we can give them. Remind the children they can only sign with their first name. Arrange with a homeless shelter, elderly group, nursing home, etc. so the cards can be given to people for Valentine's Day. **PLEASE remember NOT to let the children give their last name, their address, phone, cell phone or email numbers.**

Reversals: In the lesson we hear Isaiah saying that darkness will turn to light. Invite the children to think about the ways they can create reversals in the world today. How can we stand up to bullies? Can we go spend time with the elderly? How can we serve the homeless? Etc. Encourage them to figure out how they can do something in the next few months or maybe during Lent to help those around them so that they feel empowered to be God’s words and actions in the world. Help them create an action plan to either take home or to do when your group is together.

Closing Prayer: Thank you God for calling me to speak out for you wherever I may be. Help me to be a part of changing darkness into light. Amen.

This Week's Reading: Isaiah 9:1-4

1 But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan. Galilee of the nations.

2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.

3 You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

4 For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

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