

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

Scripture: Isaiah 9:1-4

The theme is about going from darkness into light, a common metaphor the prophets used to speak to God's people. It is about opposites: light vs. dark; insight vs. ignorance; listening to God vs. not listening; following God vs. waywardness. The easiest way to explain to children is compare and contrast. God's love is always there to direct us into the light of Christ by giving us guidelines on how to treat each other. This unit includes words of the prophets and the commandments.

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 various art supplies today. Look at the options below and choose which one/ones you want the children to do. For chalk art, you will need dark colored construction paper and chalk. For the Candle Mosaic, you will need black paper with the shape of a candle drawn onto it with either pencil or chalk. You will also need strips of white or yellow paper for the children to cut up and glue sticks. For the Light and Dark Games, you will need flashlights.

Opening Prayer: Gracious God, as I listen to the story today, help me to hear how we can be a light in the darkness, like you are a light in the darkness. Amen.

Beginning: Today we have some activities to show us how light and dark are opposites; that God wants us to see the light and know the love God has for us. Open your time together with singing. Choose one to use each session of this unit. It could give structure to sing the same song before the story as a cue to the children it is circle time. Suggested songs:

- This Little Light of Mine
- He's Got The Whole World in His Hands
- The Hymnal 1982, #490 - I want to walk as child of the light
- Wonder Love and Praise, #787 – We are marching in the light of God

The Story:

People who lived before Jesus waited a long time for him to be born. While the people waited God began to get them ready to receive the gift of Jesus. God told particular people called prophets what was going to happen. Prophets listened to God in a special way. The prophets reminded the people of God's love and the great things God had promised to do.

God spoke to Isaiah and told him about what was coming. He used these words: "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." This prophecy is about light and darkness.

Questions: (Give them time to answer the questions, making suggestions if they get stuck.)

- I wonder what it was like to wait a long time ago?
- How does it feel when we have to wait for Christmas, birthday, etc.?
- What do you think is the light we hear about in this story?
- I wonder how the prophets knew it was God speaking to them?
- What kind of light do we have at Christmas?
- How is Christ the light for the whole world?
- I wonder how we can see the light of Christ in this room, in the Church, in the world?
- We often see candles to remind us of the Light of Christ.

Activities

Chalk Art: Invite the children to make pictures by using chalk on dark paper. Give them black or dark blue construction paper and chalk. Once they are done, spray with hairspray to seal the chalk from smearing.

Candle Mosaic: Invite the children to create a candle mosaic. Give them a black piece of paper with the shape of a candle drawn onto it in pencil or chalk. Let the children cut pieces of white or yellow construction paper and glue on the candle shape on the paper. Scissors are fine motor skills. Small children can spend time just cutting but may need assistance in holding scissors.

Light and Dark Games

- Use flashlights and make shadow puppets with hands.
- Flashlight tag – you will need at least two flashlights, more if you have them. Invite the children to lay down on their backs, with the flashlights shining on the ceiling. Turn down the light and let those with flashlight "chase" one another until the one light catches another. Pass the flashlights around so everyone gets a turn.

Closure/Prayer Time: Thank you God for calling me to be a light in the world. Help me to be a part of changing darkness into light. Amen.

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