

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

Scripture: Matthew 5:38-48

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

An eye for an eye not only doubles the grief, but also the blindness. Could it be that one of the reasons Jesus came was to help us see the futility of violence?

Theme: Choosing Peace

Before: Jesus was clearly speaking to adults – adults we can believe Jesus would have expected to protect children from people who would hurt them. The art activity comes early in the lesson, to allow the work to dry. To do the art activity you will need dark colored construction paper (gray or blue would be best), q-tips or small brushes, and a small container to hold a mixture of table sugar and water.

Beginning: If the children like the song, invite them to sing it:

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Praying: Help us, God, to be friends with each other and to love one another. Amen.

The Story: Jesus was talking to the people who came to hear him. Jesus said, "People say if you do something bad to a person it is OK for them to do something bad back."

"Well," said, Jesus, "there is a better way. Be a friend even to another person who is hard to get along with. God loves all of you. Look what happens when it rains: everyone out in the rain gets wet, not just the good people or just the bad people. In God's eyes we are all equal and we are all loved."

Art Activity: Rain Drops. Mix approximately equal parts of table sugar and water, so the sugar is dissolved and you have a fairly thick liquid in a small container. Tell the children to draw a picture of themselves and some other children, some doing good things and some not being so good. Then, show them how to make rain drops using the q-tips or brushes dipped in the sugar solution. Tell them that when the painted rain drops dry, they will be shiny.

Activity: Ask the children to think about children they know who sometimes make them mad: children who don't share, or break your toys. Ask the children if they agree that hitting is not okay. What do they think they could do instead of hitting? (You can look back to next week at the "cue sheet" to help them remember.)

Getting Closure: Tell the children that people who help people get along are called "peacemakers." Tell them we could add a verse to our song:

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
I can make peace right here, too.
I'm gonna let it shine.

Closing Prayer; Thank you, God, for showing us how to be peacemakers. Amen.

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