

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

Scripture: Isaiah 61:10-62:3

A Notation for this week’s Scripture: Leviticus is a collection of laws related to worship, priests, sacrifices and holiness. It is named after Levi, the tribe of priests. Leviticus reminds us that the people of Israel are called to have a relationship based on justice and love. They are to be holy in their relationship with each other just as God treats his relationship with them as something sacred. This book underscores the holiness of God and the hope for Israel to reflect that holiness in all aspects of life. “Be holy, for I am holy” is the heart of this book. Israelites believed holiness was accomplished by keeping God’s commandments and codes.

Theme: Be Holy, For I am Holy

Before: You will need art supplies, paper, a large box or boxes for each child, and art supplies for decoration.

Beginning: Invite the children to think about rules they might have to help them behave fairly and kindly to one another.

Opening Prayer: 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

God is divine and holy. This means God is special or separate. God wants all people to be holy, to live wholesome lives and make wise, good choices. So God gave us guidelines for us to be the best we can be.

In the Bible there is a book called Leviticus that is dedicated to help us live clean and holy lives so we can be more like God. Hear some of the words: (Lev. 19:1-2)

“The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.”

Questions:

- What do you think it means to be holy? (Be patient and give children ample time to fully exhaust wrestling with the meaning of holy – they might surprise you.)
- If God is holy and wants us to be holy, what does that look like? How can we be holy? (Again, give ample time, ask them to explore the ramifications of what they suggest.)

God has given us some guidelines to be holy. Hear more of what the LORD tells us to do: (19:9-18 paraphrased for young children) inviting the children to say the refrain, “says the Lord after each sentence.”

Take care of your land and the food you grow on it. Share it with those in need.

Says the Lord.

You should not steal, make bad deals, or lie to one another.

Says the Lord.

You should not use my name in bad ways.

Says the Lord.

You should not lie or take things from your neighbor.

Says the Lord.

You should not abuse and ignore those who are deaf or blind.

Says the Lord.

You should not give out an unfair judgment.

Says the Lord.

You should not say bad things about those around you.

Says the Lord.

You should not hate anyone who is family, insult your neighbor, or do things that will make you guilty.

Says the Lord.

You should not hold grudges against anyone.

Says the Lord.

You SHOULD love your neighbor as yourself.

Says the Lord.

Questions:

- After hearing all these things, I wonder what God is trying to tell us?
- I wonder how we take care of the poor today?
- I wonder why it isn't good to steal? Or lie? Or say things that aren't true about someone? Or hold a grudge?

We have talked about loving God and our neighbor as ourselves. It's not always easy, but we can try to make good choices; to be intentionally helpful and nice when we don't want to. God is there to help us. We can ask for help through prayer. Sometimes there are adults and friends to help us be the best we can be. God wants us to be ourselves, but God also wants us to be holy.

Today we have some activities to show us how about holiness; that God wants us to see the light and know the love God has for us.

Activities:

Holy Art

Invite the children to create art that pictures holy things from their lives or holy things that come from God.

Holy Box

Tell the children about the tabernacle in the church – the place where we keep consecrated bread and wine. Tell them that we keep them there because they are holy and special. Invite them to name things they would place in a “holy box” if they had a holy box.

If you have boxes for each child, give them supplies to decorate them. Alternatively, you can have one large box for them all to decorate and then place pictures of holy things into the box.

Closure/Prayer Time: Loving God, thank you for your helping us to know how to treat one another and how to follow your ways. Help us to be Holy as you are Holy. Amen.

This Week's Reading: Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

⁹ When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰ You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of our vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien; I am the LORD your God.

¹¹ You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; and you shall not lie to one another. ¹² And you shall not swear falsely by my name, profaning the name of your God: I am the LORD.

¹³ You shall not defraud your neighbor; you shall not steal; and you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a laborer until morning. ¹⁴ You shall not revile the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind; you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

¹⁵ You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. ¹⁶ You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

¹⁷ You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall not reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. ¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

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Printed by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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