

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Fifth Sunday in Lent
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: John 11:1-45

Lent invites us to step off our mental treadmills, take a breath, and look around. Lent invites us to ask: Where are we demanding solutions? Where can we risk staying in tension? Where are we blind just not noticing? What do we thirst for? Where are we bound or stuck? What will we risk doing during these 40 days of Lent to clear a space in which Easter can break through?

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

He has been in the tomb for four days, Martha reminds Jesus. Yet Jesus stands before the tomb and cries in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” Then Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.” Where are we bound? What is keeping us from getting unbound?

Theme: Getting Free from What Keeps us Bound

Before: An activity is suggested for which you will need to use your own judgment as to whether it is appropriate. It would not be so if anyone close to the children has recently died. The entire concept of death is fascinating, but confusing to children who see cartoon characters die and reappear; bugs die and do not reappear. If the activity seems inappropriate, give yourself permission to skip it. If it appears appropriate to you, then bring a couple of rolls of toilet tissue for the optional activity. If you can bring a fresh flower from your garden if anything is in bloom this early (perhaps the Altar Guild could spare one flower), and if not, perhaps one purchased from a discount store, or a picture of flowers from a magazine or downloaded from the Internet.

Beginning: Tell the children we have a story today about a man who died, but Jesus brought him back to life. Sometimes Jesus did bring people back to life. And some people Jesus knew needed to go and be with God in Heaven.

Praying: Thank you, God, that you love us and always will. Amen.

The Story: This story is about a man named Lazarus. Do you know anyone named Lazarus? I don’t. It is not a name we hear a lot. Lazarus had gotten sick and he died. But Jesus decided it was not time for Lazarus to die. Jesus went to the place where they had buried Lazarus, stood outside, and called, “Lazarus, come out!” And Lazarus came out. He was all covered with white cloth, the cloth his sisters had wrapped him in when they buried him. “Take those things off of Lazarus, and let him go,” Jesus said to the people with him. So they did, and Lazarus lived for a long time after that.

Option: Tell the children we are going to act out the story. We need to find someplace to be the tomb, the place they buried Lazarus. It could be a table we turn on the side. Then we need someone to play the part of Lazarus and get all wrapped up in this toilet paper, someone to be Jesus and tell Lazarus to “come out!” and the rest of us can then unwrap Lazarus. (If more than one child volunteers to be Lazarus, act it out again.)

Activity: Lazarus Collage

Give each child a piece of dark colored construction paper and crayons to draw two pictures: one of Lazarus in the tomb (give them pieces of the toilet tissue and white glue to cover Lazarus) and one of Lazarus with all the cloth taken off and dressed in his favorite clothes.

Activity: Using more construction paper and crayons, invite the children to draw something else they are grateful for. If you brought the flower, show it to the children, and you could draw a flower as something for which you are grateful.

Getting Closure: Ask the children to tell you about their gratitude pictures. Be open to questions the children may have about today's session.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for flowers, and for all the things we noticed today. Amen.

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