

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

Scripture: John 3:1-17

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

What color is the wind? What shape is the love of a parent for a child? Some things are easily quantified. In some matters, we simply fall, trustingly, into the arms of faith.

Theme: The Choice to Risk Believing

Before: The next four sessions in Lent come from the Gospel according to John. They are rich, abstract, and lengthy passages. The children will hear these stories again and again as they grow up, so we will only dip into the parts that will speak to them now.

Beginning: Tell the children something you noticed this past week that made you glad. Ask the children if they can think of anything they noticed this past week that made them glad. (Make a mental note of anything they offer to include in the opening prayer).

Praying: Thank you, God, for all the things we noticed this past week. Thank you for... (add the things noticed by you and the children). Amen.

The Story: Today's story is about Nicodemus. Nicodemus? Do you know anyone named Nicodemus? I don't either, but isn't it a fun name? Nicodemus. Nicodemus wanted to be a good man. Nicodemus wanted to follow the rules. He had spent a lot of time learning all the rules. So Nicodemus came to see Jesus to ask him about the rules. Jesus told Nicodemus that rules are good. Jesus also told Nicodemus that rules are not the only important thing. Lots of things are happening that we cannot see. Jesus asked Nicodemus if he could see the wind. We can't see the wind, but we know the wind blows. Jesus told Nicodemus that many important things are happening that we might not be able to see. God sent Jesus into the world to tell people that God loves them and God hopes that we will love God.

Activity: Nicodemus, can you see?

Ask for a volunteer to be Nicodemus and the rest of you will ask Nicodemus questions. "Nicodemus, Nicodemus, can you see the window?" Nicodemus can answer: "Yes, I am Nicodemus and I can see the window." Then you and the children can ask Nicodemus: "Nicodemus, Nicodemus, can you see the wind?" And the child can answer: "I am Nicodemus, but I cannot see the wind." Other questions, which you and the children can come up with could be: can you see your breath? Can you see new skin growing? Can you see your hair growing?

Can you see the stars in the daytime? Etc. Let the children take turns being Nicodemus until everyone who wants to has a turn.

Activity: Gratitude Box

You and the children can use whatever art supplies you provide to create your grateful pictures and put them in the box. Perhaps your grateful picture could be of the bright red, juicy apple you ate this week. (Help the children remember simple things.)

Getting Closure: Sit in a circle, each of you holding your picture and invite those who want to do so to tell us about their picture. Then put the pictures in the Gratitude Box.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for the things we noticed this week. Help us to keep looking for more things to share next week. Thank you for all you give to us. Amen.

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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