

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

Scripture: Exodus 17:1-7

In the early Church the Easter Vigil was the only time that Baptisms were performed. The forty days leading up to Easter was used as a time of reflection, self-examination, and instruction for the catechumens, or new converts, in preparation for the new life they would receive at Baptism. Lent has always been a teaching season. All the lectionary readings during Lent point towards Baptism, either its promises and covenants, or its signs and symbols. Lent is often referred to as a short course in Baptism or a primer of our Christian faith.

Notation for This Week’s Scripture

The Israelites do not yet trust that the Lord will provide for them, and they question Moses’ leadership, as well as vent their fears and frustrations on him.

Today’s lectionary story relates to the waters of baptism.

“Now sanctify this water, we pray you, by the power of your Holy Spirit, that those who here are cleansed from sin and born again may continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our savior.” [*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 307.]

Theme: Trust in God

Continuing the Journey of Lent

Lenten Waiting Table

A wonderful visual reminder to the children would be to create a “Waiting Table.” A purple cloth covering a table, a box or even a ledge would provide the display space. At the beginning of the season you could plant grass seed in a basket to produce a “living Easter basket.” Other ideas include fast growing seeds or bulbs, and caterpillars. The message we convey is that growth takes time and nurturing, and although we can’t always see it we can trust that it is taking place.

Lenten Roadmap: A visual tool to help the children mark time is recommended. Some possibilities include a large paper cross with forty spaces marked off, a “road map” with forty spaces leading to Easter, and made or purchased Lenten calendars.

Lenten Giving

A jar or other container to collect Lenten offerings is a visual reminder of sacrificial giving.

Before Class: Fill water basin. On a piece of construction paper make a sign that says, “Water: Source of Life.” Make sentence strips. You will need water basin, towels, pitcher of water, and paper cups.

Beginning: Announce that it is the Third Sunday in Lent, the season that helps us to be ready for Easter. Show the children where you are at on the Lenten calendar or time telling aid from the week before. Collect contributions for your mission project.

Invite the children to wash their hands in a basin of water. In Abraham's time it was a sign of hospitality to offer guests water to wash in when they arrived. Why do you think that was important? Today's lesson is all wet. Let's find out why.

Opening Prayer: Dear God, help us to put our trust in you who provides for all our needs. Amen.

The Story: Exodus 17: 1-7

This story is short and readable enough from the NSRV Bible, if you wish to do so. Or use the following:

The Hebrew people were wondering, "Is the Lord among us or not?" They were far from their old homes in Egypt where they were slaves. They didn't know anything about this new land where God and Moses were leading them. They were scared. They were impatient. They were not so sure of Moses, or God for that matter. Yesterday they were hungry. God provided for them with manna and quails. Today they are thirsty and they still don't trust that God will provide for them. Let's find out what happens.

Reflection Questions

- Has there ever been a time in your life when you were scared or worried or needed something very badly, and God provided for you?
- Invite the children to share their stories.

Activity: Water: Source of Life

Invite the children to help you make a list of all the things the children use water for. If time, children can choose one to illustrate. Be sure to include Baptism and worship services. Combine into a display called "Water source of Life." Ask the children which thing they would miss the most if they didn't have access to water.

Activity: Sequence of Events

Print these on sentence strips or individual sheets of paper:

- The people are thirsty.
- The people argue and complain to Moses.
- Moses asks God for help.
- God tells Moses to take some of the elders to find the rock at Horeb.
- Moses hits the rock with his stick.
- Water flows out of the rock.
- Moses names the place Massah and Meribah.

Mix up the sentences and have the children put them in the correct sequence of the story.

Activity: Whining and Requesting

Ask the children if they have ever whined or complained. Ask for examples.

Have the children practice turning a whine into a request. Examples: Whine – “I’m hungry; it’s too long until dinner.” Request – “May I have a small snack to hold me until dinner?”

Drama: God Provides

Children take turns coming up to a table with a water basin and a pitcher of water and paper cups. The child may say either “I am hot” or “I am thirsty.” Another child gets to be God. God responds, “Do not worry. I will provide for you.” God either pours some water over the hot child’s hands, or pours a drink for the thirsty child. Let them take turns being the Israelites or God.

Closing: Have the children stand and stretch their arms up to the ceiling and then bow to the teacher to say thank you, and then to one another, as a way of thanking one another for the time together. Remind them to bring in their Lenten offerings next week.

Closing Prayer: Dear God thank you for this time to learn about you .You provide for all our needs. You give us living water to drink.

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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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