

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Fourth Sunday of Easter
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: John 10:1-10

“I have seen the Lord!” exclaimed Mary Magdalene. At first she does not recognize who is standing beside her. When she realizes it is the risen Jesus she wants to grasp him. He holds her off and tells her to go and share what has happened: He has walked through death and has created a path for us to follow, now and on through our own death.

In these 50 days of Easter, celebrating what Jesus has done for us, we are invited to recognize Jesus standing beside us, as he did with Mary. What is he calling us to do? Perhaps we can train our eyes to look in the direction that this Jesus, standing beside us is looking. What might he be looking at? Do we dare follow where he is leading? Can we notice and honor the various ways Jesus “appears” to people?

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

For the next three Sundays, to help us prepare for Pentecost, we have flashback pre-resurrection passages of Scripture. Today Jesus tells us the story of the Good Shepherd. In the story, instead of looking at ourselves as the sheep where we may be tempted to whine, what if we look at the qualities of an authentic leader? What implications can we find for ourselves?

Theme: Who Will we Follow?

Before Class: You will need Bibles or copies of the scripture for the group.

Beginning: Invite the group to listen for qualities of leadership as they hear the scripture.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, that you want us to not only have life, but abundant life. Amen.

The Scripture. John 10: 1-10 Invite a volunteer to read verses 1-6 and another to read 7-10.

Questions:

- Why do we think the people did not get it in verses 1-5? (Perhaps they were thinking, “Hey, we are not sheep; we are capable humans.”)
- What do we think Jesus was trying to get them to see?
- I wonder how we would describe the qualities of a trustworthy leader using Jesus’ analogies?
- What could “climbing in by another way” describe? (Subverting honest ways, cheating, lying, etc. in search of abundant life.)
- How does verse 2 mark an authentic leader? (This leader knows the way that is best for those who follow and leads them there.)
- Verse 3? (The authentic leader is one who can be trusted.)
- Verse 4? (This leader blazes the trail, checks it out before asking others to follow.)
- Verse 5? (Followers know who is the phony and will not follow.)

- What is Jesus telling us about his leadership in verses 7-8? (He has checked out the way and is pointing to it for us to follow.)

Getting Closure: Invite the group to consider how our world would be different if the model of leadership Jesus describes were the norm.

Closing Prayer: “Thank you, God, for the ways Jesus shows us to live. Amen.”

John 10:1-10

‘Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.’ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

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