

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

Scripture: John 14:1-14

“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

A house with many dwelling places, promises Jesus. Could it be that the way, the truth, and the light is in the richness of many dwelling places and not in conformity? How do we find the way to this place? Jesus tells us. He is the way.

Theme: The Way, the Truth, and the Light

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

Beginning: Tell the group that today’s passage comes as Jesus is getting his disciples prepared for the events to come: the crucifixion and the resurrection. The disciples are not completely getting it. Jesus is describing events they have not yet experienced.

Option: Invite the group to sit silently for a minute or two and remember a brand new experience, something that is a part of their lives now. Perhaps it was the birth of a child, the beginning of their marriage, piloting an airplane, etc.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for awesome miracles we have already experienced as we trust you for what has not yet happened in our lives. Amen.

The Scripture: John 14: 1-10 The voices in this passage and the verses are: Jesus, the narrator, Thomas, and Philip.

Questions:

- Why might Jesus have been telling his disciples to believe in God and Jesus? In what ways might this be different from believing specific doctrines? (Jesus appears to have taught that belief in was the central need.)
- What might a house with many dwelling places mean to us? (If it is not just about heaven, what might it be inviting us to discover in the richness of our diversities?)

- What do we think Jesus is referring to in verses 3 and 4? (His going on through the crucifixion to resurrection creates the path for us, also.)
- From our vantage point, what might we say to Thomas who was probably still a bit confused by Jesus' answer in verse 5? (Knowing Jesus gives us a better glimpse of God.)
- What might we say to help Philip with the answer Jesus gives him in verses 9-10? (Perhaps we could know this to be true, even if we cannot accurately articulate it.)
- What works had Thomas and Philip already seen? (The healings, the teachings, etc.)
- What works will Thomas and Philip and the other disciples do after the resurrection? (The 11 and the others who were in this with them told the story, did the healings, and gave their lives. And now the story has come to us to pass along.)
- What are some works being done by our church in our community? (Ask the group to notice things we do for each other in our church community and the outreach activities we sponsor.)
- As we look at verses 13 and 14, what do we do with the times we have prayed deeply for something and it has not been granted? Do we think there was something wrong with our prayer, or why else might it not have been granted? (What if the picture is simply bigger than we are capable of understanding; perhaps a bit like the things we remembered earlier that we could not have imagined before we experienced them.)

Getting Closure: Invite the group to sit in silence, with eyes closed, and picture Jesus right here in the room with us. In the silence, offer Jesus your hopes, your prayers, your intercessions. At the same time, make a conscious act of will to trust that Jesus will be with you, through what you request, to wherever it leads.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the light. Amen.

John 14:1-14

Jesus: ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.’

Narrator: Thomas said to him,

Thomas: ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’

Jesus: ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.’

Narrator: Philip said to him,

Philip: ‘Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.’

Jesus: ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father”? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

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