

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

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 children as well as paper and pencils.

Beginning: Tell the children that the passage we have today is kind of a pep talk Jesus is giving his disciples. The disciples are scared, with good reason, about the crucifixion and the resurrection that Jesus keeps telling them is coming, and they are not really ready to believe it is actually going to happen. Tell them that you want them to get a little picture of how hard it is to know something wonderful and be able to explain it to people who have not yet experienced it. Tell them to think up something cool or exciting and try to explain it to someone who has not had the experience. For example, try to describe what it felt like to hit a home run, try to explain to a baby who is just learning to crawl; try to explain what fun it is to ride a bicycle, or try to explain chocolate ice cream to someone who has never tasted any ice cream. As each person describes what they have thought up, the rest of you ask questions you think you might ask if you had never had that experience.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for Jesus who came to tell us about your love for each of us. Amen.

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

Questions:

- Why do we think Jesus had to tell the disciples not to be afraid? (He knows they are getting worried about all the things he is telling them will happen in the crucifixion and then the resurrection.)
- What do we think Jesus means in verses 2-3? (What could this be telling us about heaven? What could it be telling us about different places we find ourselves in here and now?)
- What is Thomas trying to figure out in verse 5? (He wants to go to this place Jesus is describing, but he does not know how to get there.)
- Do you think Jesus' answer in verse 8 helped Thomas? (If not, can you help Thomas by explaining what you think Jesus was saying?)
- What is Philip asking Jesus to do in verse 8? (Just SHOW us, God, please!)
- Do you think Jesus' answer in verses 10-11 helped Philip? (If not, can you help Philip by explaining in your own words what you think Jesus is saying?)
- What are some of the greater works the disciples actually did after the resurrection? (They told people who told people, who told people — right up to us here now — the things Jesus taught them.)
- What other greater works are happening now as people do what they hear Jesus calling them to do? (Help the children notice outreach activities of your own church including both the services that take place in your church and the outreach to the community such as food pantries, clinics, after-school programs, whatever you are aware of.)
- What do we think Jesus means in verses 13-14? (Do we think he means that if we pray for a sports car, one will show up in our driveway? Why? Why not?)
- What about times we pray for something that seems very good, like for someone we love to get well, and it does not happen? Does that mean that we were not praying in the right way? (Does it help to remember how hard it was to explain the bicycle to the crawling child?)

Option: Ask the children to think about a time they had to do something very scary that they obviously made it through. Perhaps it was the first day of school, maybe trying out for a sports team. Give each child who wants to share an experience time to share it.

Activity: Improving our community

If you have sufficient children, ask them to self-select into at least two groups. Give each group a piece of paper and pencils. The task is to come up with something we believe Jesus would applaud that would improve our community. (Example: collect outgrown coats to make available to children who do not have a good coat. Arrange with the school to stay after school one afternoon a week to help younger children who are struggling to learn to read, etc.) Tell them they only have 10 minutes, so they do not have to come up with all the ways to do this new thing, just come up with the idea and be prepared to tell the others.

Getting Closure: Discuss the ideas the children came up with. Could we do any of these ideas, and, if so, what would we need to have happen so we could?

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for the good ideas we get when we follow Jesus. 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.

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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