

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year A – Sixth Sunday of Easter**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**

**Scripture: John 14:15-21**

“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**

If we love him, we will keep the commandments. And what are they? Rules to catch us in our slip-ups? No, much more uncomplicated than that. How very interesting that all the commandments can be kept using one channel: love. As we step into that channel of love, we receive God’s love and so become capable of loving. And we notice that we are not alone.

**Theme: The Spirit of Truth Within Us**

**Before:** Cut hearts out of red construction paper, at least one per child. Bring at least one small mirror to class. The mirror in a make-up compact, a shaving mirror, or a hand mirror will work.

**Beginning:** Ask the children to help you set up the worship space. Light the candle. Remember to blow it out at the end of the story.

**Praying:** Thank you, God, that Jesus shows us what you want us to do. Amen.

**The Story:** “What are the rules?” Jesus’ friends asked. “What are we supposed to do?” Jesus’ friends wanted to do what Jesus wanted them to do. “We really love you, Jesus,” they said. “We want to do what you want us to do.” And this is what Jesus said to them: “If you really love me, you will love the people I love.”

**Activity: Faces** Tell the children to make a very sad face. Pass the mirror around so everyone can see their own sad face. Then when everyone has looked at each other’s sad faces, tell the children to make a happy face. Pass the mirror around again so everyone can see the happy face.

Ask the children to think about someone they really love. Ask for a volunteer to tell you someone they really love. Then ask for someone to pretend to be the person that child loves. Ask them to make the happy faces they feel when they are with that person they love. (Give them the mirror so each child can see their own face.) Let each child who wants to do so declare someone they love and ask for a volunteer to pretend to be that person.

Ask the children to think about other people they love: maybe a grandparent? A sibling? Someone at day care? Someone here at our church, etc.

**Option: Movement activity**

Tell the children we need one child to pretend that no one loves him or her. That child can make their body look very sad. Then two other children can come to that child, without saying anything, take that child's hands and do a happy dance in a circle. (Make as many circles as you have children, the teacher participating in the circle if needed to make a three-some.) Then, make one circle with all of you in the circle, raising and lowering arms, turning individually and then clasping hands, or whatever you and the children discover to do.

**Activity:** Give each child a construction paper heart and crayons that will show on the red paper. Tell them to draw a picture of themselves and someone they love. Tell them we will pin the pictures to our worship space cloth when we are finished.

**Getting Closure:** Form a circle with each child holding the heart they have decorated. Invite the children to share what they have drawn. Then help the children pin the hearts on the worship cloth.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, for the people you send who love us and for all the people we love. Amen.

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

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**A Notation for This Week’s Gospel**

If we love him, we will keep the commandments. And what are they? Rules to catch us in our slip-ups? No, much more uncomplicated than that. How very interesting that all the commandments can be kept using one channel: love. As we step into that channel of love, we receive God’s love and so become capable of loving. And we notice that we are not alone.

**Theme: The Spirit of Truth Within Us**

**Before Class:** Since the children will be invited to create a game using Jesus’ rules, bring an assortment of things they might need as props: a very soft ball, a piece of card stock that could be a board game, a pair of dice or a spinner, etc.

**Beginning:** Ask the children what board games they have played. Tell the children they are going to be asked to think up a game today using ideas they will get from hearing the story.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, for sending Jesus to show us the rules. Amen.

**The Story: John 14:14-21** The entire passage is the voice of Jesus. A way to break the passage into three sections would be to ask for a volunteer to read verses 15-17, another to read verses 18-19, and the third to read verses 20-21.

**Option:** Ask someone to read John 13:34 for the new commandment Jesus had just given his disciples. (John 13:34 I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.)

**Questions:**

- The disciples were still trying to figure out what they were supposed to be doing, and what the rules were. What does Jesus tell them? (Verse 15)
- What commandment is Jesus talking about? (Verse 13:34)

- They are still pretty worried about doing the right thing, so what does Jesus promise will help them? (Verse 16)
- What is an Advocate? (Someone who sticks with you and helps you. Lawyers are sometimes called advocates.)
- By what other names do we know this Advocate? (Spirit of Truth, Holy Spirit)
- How would we put into our own words what Jesus is saying in verse 21? (Here is a possible summary: If all of us would choose to love each other we would be doing what Jesus asked of us and we would find it easier to love even hard-to-love people and we could all get along. If we did that, we would really see God right in the middle of everything we do.)

**Activity:** Challenge the children to invent a game that would follow the commandment in verse 13:34. It might be a board game or a game played on a play ground. How would they construct a game where everyone wins? Offer them the props, if they seem to need them. When they have agreed on the way the game is to be played, invite them to tell you the name of the game and the rules of the game. Then observe the game as the children play it.

**Getting Closure:** Get some feedback on the playing of the game. How did it feel to be playing a game you were pretty sure you would win?

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, that you want each of us to know you love us. Amen.

## **John 14:15-21**

‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

‘I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.

On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.’

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

**Scripture: John 14:15-21**

“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.

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**Theme: The Spirit of Truth Within Us**

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

**Beginning:** Ask the group to be thinking about this concept as we read the scripture: “Simple is not necessarily easy.”

**Opening Prayer:** Dear God, help us to risk the love you call us to. Amen.

**The Scripture: John 14: 15-21** The entire passage is the voice of Jesus. One way to present it is to ask one person to read the entire passage, allow a moment or two of silence and then have another person read the entire passage.

**Questions:**

- What commandments is Jesus referring to in this passage? (John 13:34.)
- We could say that this commandment could be sub-titled: “Simple but not easy.” What things make this commandment hard to obey? (Our own expectations of other people, our own failings that we tend to project onto others, etc.)
- What help does Jesus promise? (Another Advocate.)
- By what other names do we know this Advocate? (Holy Spirit, Spirit of Truth, Counselor, Comforter, etc.)
- What will this Advocate help us to do? (Be capable of the love that will empower us to keep the commandments.)
- Notice the radical assurances Jesus offers in verses 18-21:

- I am coming to you.
- The world will no longer see me, but you will see me.
- Because I live, you also will live.
- I am in my Father — you are in me — and I am in you.
- Those who keep my commandments are showing their love for me.
- The love shown to me flows on to God.
- In this love I will return the love and show myself to these people.

**Getting Closure:** Invite the group to sit in silence for a moment or two, appreciating the promises Jesus makes. Remind the group that we, and for that matter, the church, have not finished unpacking these promises.

If you have time, you can invite them to share the promises for which they are thankful.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, for huge promises that stretch our minds and hearts. Amen.

## **John 14:15-21**

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‘I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.’

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