

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Sixth Sunday of Easter
Lesson Plans for Older 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 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.’

Printed by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

© 2014 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.