

**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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