

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Trinity Sunday
Lesson Plans for Younger Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Genesis 1:1-2:4a

When the Emperor Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire in 313 C.E. he wanted the religion to have unity and consistency in beliefs and practices. There were many varying sects at the time. Constantine assembled all the great theologians and church leaders of the time at the Council of Nicaea. For the next four hundred years there was great conflict and debate over doctrines such as the Trinity and other councils were also convened when there were conflicts. The Apostle's and Nicene Creeds emerged from these councils. Trinity Sunday was incorporated into the church year in 1334. It is always the Sunday after Pentecost Sunday. The doctrine states that God is revealed to us in three distinct persons existing in a mutual relationship of love. The Trinity represents the total revelation of God: God the Father as Creator, God the Son as Redeemer, and God the Holy Spirit as Sanctifier and Comforter. This belief is supported in the Bible, creeds and doctrines of the Church.

A Notation for this Week's Scripture

The natural world is the best place for young children to observe and reflect on the awe, wonder and majesty of God. The first story from Genesis is chosen for the Trinity Sunday lectionary because it represents God the Father as Creator. Some translations refer to the Spirit of God moving over the face of the water. This reflects the creative energy and power of the Holy Spirit. Although this is the first story in the Bible it was written later by Priestly editors to show God at the center of an orderly and sequential creation in which mankind has been given stewardship responsibilities that put him in partnership with the Creator God.

Theme: Discovering God

Before Class:

Find the Genesis Story to read in a Children's Bible. Assemble the art supplies. You will need apples, knife, and napkins; pictures from old magazines or books, ball or balloon.

Beginning:

Children may be more willing to accept a simple explanation of the Trinity than adult theologians. Introduce the theme of Trinity Sunday and the creation story in this way: Some people think God is a very big idea to understand. God loves us. Because of that love, God shows God's self to us in different ways. Look at this apple. It is one of God's creations. It can help us understand that there is still only one God. Have the children name the three parts of the apple, the skin, the flesh and the core. All the parts are uniquely different, but they are all one apple.

When we hear the stories about Jesus we learn about God's love and kindness to everyone. Last week we learned how we can feel God's power and comfort in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. In today's story we hear about God as the creator of the world. Let's listen to the story as

if we were detectives. Listen for clues that might tell us what God is like. Also listen for information about our relationship to God.

Opening Prayer: Dear God, help us to know your love through Jesus, to feel your power in the Holy Spirit, and to praise your majesty in creation. Amen.

The Story: Genesis 1:1-2:4a

The creation story is easy to find in any Children's Bible or storybook on hand. Have the children say with you, "And God saw that it was good" at the end of each day.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder if you have a favorite day of creation?
- I wonder if there is a day that could be left out and we would have the same story?
- Does this story tell us which parts of creation are most important to God? To us? (all of it is essential)
- Is there something in creation that makes you think about or feel close to God?
- Who does God say should help take care of the world?

Creation Mural

Have children each pick a different day of creation to illustrate. If you have time you can have pictures pulled from magazines and books so they can use a collage technique. Depending on the content write a scripture sentence noting the day under each. Hang them up in sequence. These can also be photo copied into a book to be given out the following week.

Dramatic Play Option

Assign children different days. Ask them to make up movements for the different parts of creation. Be specific in the role, ex. John you be the sun, Susie you are the waters, Kim you are the crawling animals, Tom you are the growing plants, etc. Tell the story again, cuing the children for their parts.

Sing Toss

Use a ball or balloon to represent the earth. Teach the song "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands". When the ball is tossed to a child he adds another verse, like. "He's got the fish in the sea or the trees in the fields". Encourage them to think back to the story. They can toss the ball or balloon to one another or back to the teacher depending on the level of rambunctiousness.

Closing:

Have the children help put all supplies away. Return to the circle.

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Explain that in the season of Pentecost we focus on the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Teach them this call and response, inviting them to take turns being the leader.

Leader: The Spirit lives in you.

Response: And also in you.

Closing Prayer: Dear God, we give you thanks for all the ways of knowing you. Put your Holy Spirit in our hearts so that we may love each other like Jesus did and help us to take care of your wonderful creation. Amen

Lesson written by Trudy Ardizzone, 2011

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