

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Mark 1:29-39

Background

Epiphany means several things: a gift is received; the gift must be shared. Jesus appears to be suggesting a rhythm, a balance to our lives. We go inward to be with God, to receive; we go out in the world to share what we have been given – still with God. We are called to balance the pouring out of our love with the resting in God. We are called to heal by just showing up, by laying on hands, by sharing what we have. This good news that was for the few people who heard it up close and personal is ours because they reached out and shared it. It will belong to those who have not yet heard, if we accept our call to share the story by how we live out our lives and as St. Francis said, “with words, if necessary.”

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

A rhythm is surfacing. Out to teach or to heal – then in to pray and listen. Jesus goes to Simon's house after the first teaching in the synagogue to find Simon's mother-in-law ill. He takes her by the hand and helps her up. Right back into the kitchen she goes to cook supper. By evening, the whole town was crowding around – many in need of healing, and most were healed. Jesus gets a little rest and then long before dawn goes inward – to a lonely place to pray. We see the balance in which he lives.

Theme: Prayer and Action

Before Class: Make copies of The Lord's Prayer (attached – note the first page is the traditional Lord’s Prayer and the last is the contemporary Lord’s Prayer) or type or write it yourself so each child will have a copy. Print the words large enough so young readers can manage it, and make sure you leave wide margins so the children can illustrate the prayer. You will also need markers or crayons.

Beginning: As the children arrive, ask them if they have a favorite prayer. Do they use prayer before meals? What is one they might know?

Opening Prayer: Thank you God, for showing us how to serve and how to pray. Be with us as we go into the world and help us to feel your presence in our daily lives as we pray and play with you. Amen.

The Story: Today we hear a story about Simon's mother-in-law who was sick. Do you know what a mother-in-law is? (The mother of Simon's wife.) (If you know these children well enough to point out who the mother-in-law of one of the children is, help them make that connection: “Your grandmother, Jane, who is your mother's mother, is your dad's mother-in-law.”)

Well, she was really sick, and everyone was worried about her. Jesus and Simon went to Simon's house for lunch after they had been in the temple. When Jesus saw that this dear woman was

sick, he simply took her by the hand and helped her get up. After Jesus touched her and helped her out of bed, she felt so good, and was so grateful that she went right to the kitchen to prepare Simon's favorite meal. Later that day, people had heard that Jesus was in Simon's house and that he had been healing people. So people came to Simon's house. They brought sick people, people with all kinds of sicknesses and hurts. When they got to Simon's house, Jesus put His hands on them and they got well.

At the end of the day Jesus was really tired and stayed at Simon's house to rest. He got up very early the next day so he could go off to a quiet place to pray and talk with his father, God. So he could listen to his father, God, and listen to God wanted him to do.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what it was like to be Simon's mother-in-law who was sick and then healed?
- I wonder what people thought of this healing?
- I wonder why Jesus got up early the next morning to pray?
- I wonder what Jesus prayed about.

Activity: Ask the children what prayers they might know. Do they say prayers at home or in other places? What about simple prayers like, "Jesus, help me?" or "God, be with me?"

In our story today, we see the Jesus went off to pray as a way of feeding his soul, as a way of connecting with God, as a way of pausing to talk with the creator. When people asked Jesus how they should pray to God, he gave them the Lord's Prayer. Some of the children may know it. Give each child a copy of "The Lord's Prayer" and some markers or crayons, and invite them to illustrate it. What could we draw to illustrate each part of the prayer? Our daily bread is pretty easy. What else might we add? Work with them, asking questions to draw out their own ideas.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share their Lord's Prayer illustrations.

Closing Prayer: Say "The Lord's Prayer" - inviting the children to say it along with you. Be sure to go slowly enough so they can!

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Our Father, who are in heaven

hallowed be thy Name,

thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses

as we forgive those

who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power,

and the glory

for ever and ever. Amen

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your Name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those

who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and for ever. Amen.

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Mark 1:29-39

Background

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A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

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Theme: Prayer and Action

Before Class: You will need paper, crayons and/or markers. Each child will need a Bible and to a Book of Common Prayer.

Beginning: Remind the children that we heard about Jesus being in the synagogue with his disciples. We now hear about Jesus leaving the temple and his ministry. Invite them to listen, as we hear the story for two ways Jesus teaches: one, by doing things; and two, by taking time to pray.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for these stories we have of Jesus. Thank you for these stories that help us figure out what you want us to do and how you want us to live. Amen.

The Story: Invite the children to open their Bibles to Mark 1:29-39. Have them follow along as you read the passage aloud (or if you have a really good reader in the class, ask them to read it before the session starts.)

Reflection Questions:

- What are some of the things we hear Jesus doing in this passage?
- Can you find the part in the story where Jesus was "doing stuff?"
- How did he find time to pray to God and listen to God?

- What would happen to us if we spent all our energy racing around "doing stuff?" (We would get worn out.)
- What would happen to us if we just sat and prayed all the time? (Not much would get done.)
- Are both (doing and praying) important to Jesus' ministry? Are both important in our lives?

Activity: In our story today, we see the Jesus went off to pray as a way of feeding his soul, as a way of connecting with God, as a way of pausing to talk with the creator.

Give each child a Book of Common Prayer (BCP) or they can share one with a partner. Give each child a few pieces of paper, markers, and crayons. Invite them to look through the Book of Common Prayer and find a prayer or a few prayers that they like. You may want to have a few key page numbers and places from the BCP written up on a large sheet of paper or on the board so they can find the common places. (see end of the lesson for ideas).

Once they have found a prayer(s) that they like, have them copy it down on the pieces of paper you gave them, and then invite them to illustrate their prayer. If they have time they can do a few prayers or make a booklet of prayers.

Getting Closure: Jesus had to gift of healing and he offered it to those he encountered. It sure kept him busy. And he always remembered where those gifts came from: God. And he always remembered to say thank you to God. Let's take a minute to think about things we are able to do for other people. If you want to name them out loud, please do. And no matter where we are, we can always just take a minute and say "Thank you, God". (Be ready to share something yourself)

Closing Prayer: Read together one of the prayers you found that your class finds appropriate. Or simply say, "Thank you God for Jesus healing Simon's mother-in-law. Please be with (list names) who are also ill." Amen.

Pages and Places in the Book of Common Prayer

The Lord's Prayer	Page 364
Post Communion Prayers	Pages 365-366
Prayers for the Sick	Pages 458 - 461
Prayers and Thanksgivings	Pages 810-841
Morning Prayer, Rite 2	Page 75
Noonday Prayer	Page 103
Evening Prayer, Rite 2	Page 115
Compline	Page 127
Daily Devotions	Page 137
Collects, Traditional	Page 159
Collects, Contemporary	Page 211
Baptism	Page 299

Mark 1:29-39

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Mark 1:29-39

Background

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Theme: Prayer and Action

Before: You will need Bibles or copies of the scripture for each person.

Beginning: Help the group to notice that following the "flashback" we had last week, we are now back with Jesus as a young man and Simon as an ex-fisherman of fish. Invite the class to notice the rhythm that Jesus is following: He balances action with contemplation.

Opening Prayer: Dear God, help us to get our lives in balance: doing the work we have been given to do and finding the spaces in which to simply be with you. Amen.

The Scripture: Invite the class to follow along with you in their Bibles, if they wish, or simply close their eyes and listen to you reading the passage: Mark 1:29-39.

Reflection Questions:

- What are the elements you heard in this passage?
- What did you notice about Jesus teaching in the synagogue? (He was teaching with authority.)
- What did you notice about the healing? Who is healed? (Those who come to him or are presented to him, not a mass healing.)
- What did you notice about the rhythm of Jesus’ time? (He intentional pulled back to pray, then went back out to teach.)

- What could we assume about the relationship between Jesus and God from what we have already heard God say to Jesus? (You are my beloved.)
- Do we think God was telling Jesus to shape up and get his act together? Was he hearing a conditional love: “Do this and I will love you?”
- Could it be that the message Jesus was receiving is also for us? Could we be receiving unconditional love, also?
- And Jesus prayer to God, do we sense that Jesus was delivering a "To Do" list to God? What might be the implications for our praying with God?

Optional Activity: If time permits, you might like to look for some types of prayers in The Book of Common Prayer. Since its focus is "common prayer," there is less in the contemplative mode.

Some healing prayers are found on pp. 458 - 461. Additional prayers begin on p. 810. Perhaps the best contemplative prayer is found in Psalm 46 verse 11a:

Be still, and know that I am God.

Be still, and know that I am.

Be still, and know.

Be still.

Getting Closure: Invite people to say how they might experience the balance of prayer and action in their lives. Where have they noticed prayer and action?

Closing Prayer: Pray one of the prayers you found that seems appropriate, or close with the "Be still" prayer.

Mark 1:29-39

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