

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

Scripture: Mark 1:40-45

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

The rhythm extends to include proclaiming the new while honoring the tradition. Good News does not eliminate the nurturing liturgies already in place. A leper comes to Jesus, humbly and almost apologetically. The leper is confident Jesus has the ability to heal him, and he is pretty sure he is not worthy of this healing. Jesus proceeds to dispatch the illness that has made this man not only ill, but outcast. Jesus does not measuring worthiness, but he does honor the tradition. "Go," he tells the man. Go to the priest, make the offering, and also, keep all this to yourself.” But of course, the man is unable to keep this good news to himself, and Jesus would henceforth be mobbed whenever he came to town.

Theme: I Do Choose

Before Class: You will need paper and crayons or markers for each child. If your children are not writers yet, you may want to make enough copies of the “please” and “thank you” pages below so that each child gets one of each.

Beginning: Today's story is about Jesus healing a leper. The word "leper" will get you way off track with children who know nothing of leprosy and much about an elegant wild animal. We suggest you use only the word leprosy - and describe it.

Praying: Thank you, God, for this time we have together today. Please help us learn about your love and remember to be thankful for what you give us. Amen.

The Story: Mark 1:40-45 Today we have a story about Jesus teaching us to say, "Please," and then not to forget to say, "Thank you." In this story, a man who has a yucky disease comes to Jesus. The man has leprosy, a disease that makes your skin get all gross and nobody wants to be anywhere near you.

The man is pretty sure Jesus can heal him, but he is not sure Jesus will want to heal him. He gathers up his courage anyway and says, "I'm sure you can heal me, and I sure want you to. Would you please heal me?"

Jesus heals the man. The man is so happy he's about to race off and tell all his friends. "Hold it," Jesus says. "You need to do something first. Go to the priest. Tell the priest you are glad and that since you are glad you want to give something back. And one more thing: don't tell anyone about this!"

Well, he said please. And he said thanks. But he forgot all about the secret and went and told everyone he knew.

Please and Thank You: Give each child a piece of paper. If they can write, show them the two words to put at the top of the paper: "Please" on the left side and "Thank You" on the right side. Then ask them to draw pictures of things they would like to ask God to do for them. (Is someone they know sick, for example?) Then draw pictures of things they want to thank God for. (Their house, pets, parents, or whatever they come up with.)

Act it Out: If time permits, you may want to let the children act out the story, taking turns being Jesus and the man with leprosy.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share their please and thank you pages with each other.

Closing Prayer: Ask the children to help you notice things we want to say please about and things we want to say thank you about and then pray with them about these things.

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Please

Thank You