

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Seventh Sunday of Easter
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: John 17:6-19

Background: Easter - the unearned gift of grace. The reflective season of “going in” that Lent provided (no matter what disciplines we undertook, nor even how well we attended to them) explodes on Easter. Of course, we cannot “figure it out.” How comforting, then, to have these scriptures, showing first how the disciples struggled to grasp what had happened and then stories of Jesus before the crucifixion, which are written in the light of the Resurrection.

As Easter people we know, as Paul said, that nothing, not even death, shall separate us from the love of God. We are people who expect life out of death. And so, in Eastertide we celebrate the wonder and prepare ourselves to take the awesome message out into the world on Pentecost.

A Notation for this Week’s Gospel

Jesus reports to God. Jesus has done the work given him to do. A little band of believers is trained to do the work Jesus has given them to do. Jesus lifts these people up to God. As he does so, we, and our ministries are also lifted up. We are not immune to pain, suffering, or even defeat. But God offers protection from the evil one, in all we do. And, in all we do, Jesus asks, “that they may have my joy made complete in themselves.”

Theme: God’s Mission, Our Mission

Before: This is the last Sunday in the season of Easter, so you may choose to create some closure, unless the group will continue to meet.

Beginning: Tell the group that we have, today, another Ecclesiastical flashback situation: Last Thursday we celebrated Ascension – the time Jesus ascended to be with God, leaving his followers to continue the work he had begun. Yet the passage we have for today happens before the crucifixion, as have the last three sessions.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for the time this group is together to work with the Word and encourage each other as we attempt to do the work you have given us to do. Amen.

The Scripture: John 17:6-19 Jesus is reporting back to God. The final report is from this side. Our vantage point, 2,000 years later will influence what we see in the passage. This is a fairly long passage, so more than one reader would be helpful. Suggest that one person read verses 6-11, another 12-15, and a third person 16-19.

Reflection Questions:

- What stands out for you from this passage?
- Jesus makes a distinction between “the world” and “those whom you gave me.” What does this imply to us? (It can be seen that Jesus knew that everyone would not accept his message.)

- Who would we include in “those whom you gave (Jesus)”? Who would we include in “the world”?
- How does it strike you to read that Jesus is so concerned that “they may have my joy made complete in themselves”? What do you think this “joy” means to Jesus? (The freedom his message brings as well as the connection to Jesus that it conveys, among other things.)
- What do we think are the manifestations of the “evil one”? (Injustice, misery, hunger, wars, for example.)
- Jesus does not ask God to take his people out of the world, but he makes clear he does not think his people belong to the world. How do we live in our world – and not “belong” to it? What things does the culture proclaim we “need” that we do not agree that we need?
- What does it mean to be “sanctified in truth” (Consecrated, taken into God's realm, living holy lives.)
- “Who, me?” We may be thinking. How do we reconcile our own stumbling with Jesus’ commitment to us? (God’s love for us is unconditional and is not dependent upon our “getting it right.” God's love for us gives us the courage to keep on trying.)

Getting Closure: Especially if this is the last session for the spring, invite the group to consider what measures they might take to continue the fellowship begun here. (Continue to meet at this time during the summer? Find partners in the group to phone or e-mail? Meet once a month to read scripture and pray together?)

Closing Prayer:

For the Mission of the Church

Everliving God, whose will it is that all should come to you through your Son Jesus Christ: Inspire our witness to him, that all may know the power of his forgiveness and the hope of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

John 17:6-19

⁶“I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; ⁸for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.

¹¹And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. ¹⁴I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.

¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

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

© 2015 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.