

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Feast of the Transfiguration, August 6
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: Luke 9:28-36

Background: During this “Ordinary Time” our lives may well include exceptionally un-ordinary events, such as births and deaths. As we take this journey, nourished by the scriptures appointed for the season and empowered by our baptisms, we are invited to be on the lookout for all the blessings found in the ordinary – to see God at work here and now. And we are compelled to share our blessings with others.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

Jesus takes Peter, John, and James up a mountain to pray. The trek energized Jesus and exhausted the disciples. Through eyes heavy with fatigue, the disciples strained to understand what they were seeing. As Jesus prayed, "the appearance of his face changed and his clothes became dazzling white." Then they saw Moses and Elijah conferring with Jesus on what is ahead in Jerusalem. Peter felt compelled to "do" something. What was required was that he "be."

Theme: God Is A Surprise!

Before Class: Gather some dark-colored construction paper (blue, green, red, or black), crayons, some white chalk, a roll of cotton or a bag of cotton balls, and a small container of white glue. Glitter pens would be fun if you have them. Find out how your church will be celebrating the Feast of the Transfiguration. Decide with your clergy person whether the children will be in the service for all or part of the service, so you can determine how much time you will have with the children. If there are to be refreshments after the service, you may choose to skip refreshments with the children during the time you have with them. If you have a significant time with the children, consider telling the story by "pretending" to climb a mountain -- either going outside or climbing stairs inside your church. This session will be best if you can go outside. If you cannot, create as much "space" as you can within the area in which you will be teaching by moving tables to one side, and stacking chairs.

Beginning: Tell the children that today we celebrate the Feast of the Transfiguration. Jesus was teaching his friends what they were going to need to know and showing them just how very special Jesus is.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for sending us Jesus to show us how to follow him. Amen.

The Story: Jesus knows he needs to teach his friends lots of stuff so they will be able to do their work. Today he wants them to see that Jesus had been with God long before he came to earth. Jesus knows all the people we read about in the Bible. So, Jesus decided that his friends were ready to go climb a mountain with him. It was a long climb, a very long climb. (If you have decided to "climb" with the children, invite them to "climb" along with you.) It was a high mountain and his friends were getting very tired, but Jesus didn't seem to be getting tired at all.

When they got to the top of the mountain Jesus' friends flopped down on the ground and were so tired they almost fell asleep. (If you are acting out this story, all of you flop down and catch your breath.) Jesus' friends held their heads up and looked at Jesus. As Jesus prayed his face started to look very different. It was almost as if his face was shining. And his clothes were shining, too. Then Jesus was talking to Moses and Elijah, people we read about in the Bible.

"Wow!" said Peter. "We need to build a special building – three buildings, one for each of these people." Just then, a huge cloud covered all of them and all of the mountain. They could not see anything. But they heard something. They heard a huge beautiful voice say: "This is my Son. He is special. Listen to him." They looked again, and Jesus was standing there all by himself. No one said anything. They did not tell anyone what they had seen. They were still trying to figure out what they had seen.

Activity: Jesus taught his friends by showing them what they needed to do. Jesus would do something, and his friends would try to do it the same way Jesus did. Here's a way we can practice doing what Jesus tells us to do. We can take turns being Jesus.

Ask everyone to stand up and find a partner (if you have an uneven number of children, you can have one group of three or you can partner with one of them.) Tell one of each pair to be Jesus, and the other will be a friend of Jesus. Ask the children who are being Jesus to hold their arms up high, praying to God. Now ask the friends of Jesus to do what Jesus did. Then switch roles so the other child gets to be Jesus. Ask the child being Jesus to take the friend by the arm gently and lead the friend to a spot you designate. Then ask them to switch rolls again. What else could Jesus do to teach his friend? Accept suggestions. If no suggestions come, suggest that the friend be sad and Jesus comfort the friend. Or bring an imaginary cup of cool water. Keep going until each child has been Jesus more than once and a friend more than once.

Activity: If you have time, offer the children construction paper, crayons, and chalk. Invite the children to create a picture of Jesus and his friends up on the mountain. Show them that if they draw Jesus with the white chalk, his clothes will be dazzling white. When they are ready for the cloud, give them pieces of cotton and show them how to stretch the cotton until it is thin and looks like a cloud. Let them take turns putting a few dots of glue on the picture to secure the cloud.

Getting Closure: Be sure the children have had the opportunity to offer what they are thinking about this story. If you are providing a snack, this would be a good time for it.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for your patience teaching your friends and helping us know what you want us to do. Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Feast of the Transfiguration, August 6
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Luke 9:28-36

Background: During this “Ordinary Time” our lives may well include exceptionally un-ordinary events, such as births and deaths. As we take this journey, nourished by the scriptures appointed for the season and empowered by our baptisms, we are invited to be on the lookout for all the blessings found in the ordinary – to see God at work here and now. And we are compelled to share our blessings with others.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

Jesus takes Peter, John, and James up a mountain to pray. The trek energized Jesus and exhausted the disciples. Through eyes heavy with fatigue, the disciples strained to understand what they were seeing. As Jesus prayed, "the appearance of his face changed and his clothes became dazzling white." Then they saw Moses and Elijah conferring with Jesus on what is ahead in Jerusalem. Peter felt compelled to "do" something. What was required was that he "be."

Theme: God Is A Surprise!

Before Class: You will need copies of the script found at the end of the lesson. Find out how your church will be celebrating the Feast of the Transfiguration. Decide with your clergy person whether the children will be in the service for all or part of the service so you can determine how much time you will have with the children. If there are to be refreshments after the service, you may choose to skip refreshments with the children during the time you have with them.

Beginning: Ask the children what preparations they would make if a very famous person was coming to our town. Let the children decide who it is -- a sports figure, a rock star, a movie star or a political figure. They might suggest that TV crews would ready with cameras, people would show up with camcorders, lots of cameras, maybe even someone with a tape recorder. Tell the children to remember how we do things now as they read the story we have for today.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for sending Jesus to help us figure out what you want us to do. Amen.

The Story (Luke 9:28-36) Invite volunteers to read the parts outlined below. When you get to the end of Peter's statement in verse 33, ask the class to stop reading for a minute (as marked in the script)

Reflection Questions:

- Where is this happening? (On top of a mountain.)
- How did they get there? (They climbed up the mountain.)
- What are the disciples doing? (Trying to stay awake, they are so tired)
- What is Jesus doing? (He is praying to God.)
- Who else do they see with Jesus? (Moses and the prophet Elijah.)

- Who is Moses? (The first leader of the Hebrew people. He guided them out of slavery in Egypt to the Holy Land.)
- Who is Elijah? (One of the main prophets and one who the Hebrews expected to return. The children may not know that Jewish people, to this day, still leave one chair vacant when they celebrate Passover – in case Elijah chooses to come join them.)
- Why didn't Peter just whip out his camcorder and record all that was happening? (Of course, none of the things we discussed earlier had been invented. Building a "dwelling" was what occurred to Peter.)
- What could be "terrifying" about a cloud on the top of a mountain? (It might be the sign of a fierce storm and they had no cover.)
- What did the "voice" say? ("This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!")
- What else happened after "the voice" spoke? (Moses and Elijah were no longer to be seen.)
- Who would you say was "the voice?"
- Why do you think the three disciples told no one about all this? (Accept their answers. Probably they were still trying to figure out what they had seen. Possibly they were beginning to understand that Jesus would have to be killed. Maybe they just didn't think anyone would believe them if they did try to describe what they had seen.)

Option: Ask the children to comment on Jesus' coaching technique. What does Jesus do to "teach?" (He meets them right where they are and leads them as far as they can go.)

Ask the children to think of a time when they were just learning to do something and couldn't do it very well yet. Ask if anyone can remember being afraid of the water because they could not swim. How about someone tossing them a baseball before they could catch it? Ask if anyone can remember wanting to be able to read, and struggling with each little word. Tell them that this is what it feels like to be in training for something.

Wondering: Invite the children to wonder about what questions they might ask Jesus, Moses, and Elijah if they had the chance.

Getting Closure: If you have brought a snack, this would be a good time to offer it. Tell the children that this Feast is so important in our church that we celebrate it every August 6 and then again on the last Sunday in Epiphany in November (just before Lent begins). Invite the children to respond to your wondering question "I wonder why we celebrate this feast?" See what theories they might have as to why this is so. (One option is that it shows us that God is a patient teacher, Jesus a faithful son of God, and the disciples were willing to keep on learning.)

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for being patient with us as we keep on learning about you. Amen.

Luke 9: 28-36

Narrator: ²⁸Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³⁰Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. ³¹They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³²Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus,

Peter: “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”

Narrator: —not knowing what he said. ³⁴While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. ³⁵Then from the cloud came a voice that said,

Cloud: “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!”

Narrator: ³⁶When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Season after Pentecost, Feast of the Transfiguration, August 6
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: Luke 9:28-36

Background: During this “Ordinary Time” our lives may well include exceptionally un-ordinary events, such as births and deaths. As we take this journey, nourished by the scriptures appointed for the season and empowered by our baptisms, we are invited to be on the lookout for all the blessings found in the ordinary – to see God at work here and now. And we are compelled to share our blessings with others.

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

Jesus takes Peter, John, and James up a mountain to pray. The trek energized Jesus and exhausted the disciples. Through eyes heavy with fatigue, the disciples strained to understand what they were seeing. As Jesus prayed, "the appearance of his face changed and his clothes became dazzling white." Then they saw Moses and Elijah conferring with Jesus on what is ahead in Jerusalem. Peter felt compelled to "do" something. What was required was that he "be."

Theme: God Is A Surprise!

Before Class: You will need copies of the scripture/script found at the end of the lesson.

Beginning: Today we are celebrating the Feast of the Transfiguration, a commemoration of when Jesus was transfigured on the mountain.

Ask the group to comment on this statement: “We are not called human doings but instead human beings." To what extent do we actually live as "human beings" instead of "human doings”?

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for your patience with us as we seek to understand what you call us to do and to be. Amen.

The Scripture (Luke 9: 28-36): Invite one person to read the part of the voice from the cloud (verse 34b), one to read the part of Peter (verse 33b), and one to read the part of the narrator (all the rest). For a script, see below.

Reflection Questions:

- What stands out for you in this passage?
- Where is this happening? (On the top of a mountain)
- What is the difference in demeanor between the disciples and Jesus? (The disciples are exhausted from the climb and can barely keep their eyes open. Jesus is invigorated from the exercise and is deep in prayer with God.)
- What is the significance, to the disciples, of the presence of Moses and Elijah? (They are the two most significant leaders from Hebrew scripture. To this day, Jewish people leave a chair

vacant at Passover, in case Elijah should choose to join them. The presence of these two must have further reinforced their grasp of just who this Jesus is.)

- What do the disciples overhear of the conversation? (In verse 31 they hear what is to happen to Jesus in Jerusalem.)
- What was Peter's impetuous response to what he was seeing? (To build three dwellings to hang onto the moment)
- What similar responses do we, in our culture, tend to make? (Statues, buildings, markers, even the flowers and teddy bears that tend to show up after any disaster.)
- What distracts Peter from his idea? (Possibly a look on Jesus' face signaling that this was not a good idea; the cloud; the voice)
- Why do you think the three told no one of what they had seen? (Accept all answers. Perhaps they were just too scared, perhaps they were trying to absorb the fact that Jesus was to be killed, perhaps they realized no one would believe them.)

Getting Closure: Ask the group to respond to this statement: "Following the exciting discoveries made in science in the 20th Century, our task is to rediscover mystery." How would you or how do you rediscover mystery?

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for always being more wonderful than we can imagine. Amen.

Luke 9: 28-36

Narrator: ²⁸Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³⁰Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. ³¹They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³²Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus,

Peter: “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”

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Cloud: “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!”

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