

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.

Published 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.