

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – First Sunday After Christmas
Gospel Lesson for Adults

Scripture: John 1:1-18

Background: The Gospels appointed for these two Sundays after Christmas offer a fitting conclusion to Advent's mystery of "both/and" time. The first Sunday is from John's Gospel a mystery-laced view of the divinity of Jesus, "The Word became flesh and lived among us." The second Sunday is a very human story of the little boy Jesus. Just as Jesus was both human and divine, we also balance two worlds: the world in which we do our day to day tasks -- a world mostly unaware of its true potential -- and our life in Christ: "from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace." (John 1:16)

A Notation for this Week's Gospel: Here we have Salvation history in a nutshell. In the beginning was the "Word." Word as verb: moving, creating, redeeming. Word: creating since the beginning, now here as an infant. The prophets proclaimed this would happen, right through to the last of the prophets: John the Baptist. We have the law, thanks to Moses. Now we receive grace and truth through Jesus, the only Son. He is the Light; the Light that no darkness can extinguish dawns on. Now we are invited to decide who is this child for us?

Theme: The Word became Flesh

Before Class: It would be helpful for each person to have a copy of the Gospel and pencils to make notes on the passage. You can either bring enough Bibles for everyone or simply make copies of the scripture found below. You might want to bring sheets of paper and colored pencils or crayons.

Beginning: Start your discussion today by mentioning that the passage we have for today is beautiful for some and mysterious and difficult for others. Invite the group to have patience with each other no matter which preference they have. Invite them into the story that John is trying to convey. Help each other wonder about this way of speaking of God, Jesus, and the beginning.

Opening Prayer: Thank you God, for light that shines in the darkness and that the darkness is unable to overcome the light. Amen.

The Scripture: To highlight the different voices, suggest that you have different readers for each of the paragraphs found below.

Reflection Questions: Invite people to name what stood out for them.

- I wonder if there were things that seemed odd?
- Beautiful?
- Mysterious?
- Unique?
- Invite discussion comparing this passage to the one we heard on Christmas Eve/Christmas.

Option: Ask the group to read the entire passage to themselves, circling words they find that point to Jesus. Next, underline words that define John the Baptist or his mission. Share what they have found.

Option: Offer the group the choice of either working alone or working in pairs. If they decide to work alone, use the paper and pencils or crayons to sketch images, write words, or play with color to describe the feelings the passage conveys. If they choose to work in pairs, discuss the words and images, sketching or scribing concepts as they arise.

Getting Closure: Invite the members of the group to share words, sketches, concepts they came up with. Listen carefully for words you can include in the closing prayer.

Closing Prayer: Thank you God, for what we have found in these words, for (include phrases that came up in the sharing.) Be with us as we live into your Word. Amen.

John 1:1-18

The Word Became Flesh

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me."')

From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

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

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