

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – First Sunday of Christmas
Lesson Plan for Younger Children

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: You will need a flashlight with a new or otherwise reliable battery. If your class space is brightly lit, see if you can find a darker place to go to for a bit of your time together. In addition, check out the presentation of the story, below. This is one of the most beautiful passages in Scripture, but it may be way too abstract for the children, so this telling is suggested.

Beginning: If you have found another spot for this part of today's session, describe where you are going to go and how you are going to get there. (Example: it is up a flight of stairs and we will go in partners and tip toe without saying a word.)

Opening Prayer: When you have arrived at your new location, or settled in a darker corner of your space, have the children gather and become quiet, then begin your prayer.

Thank you, God, for creating this beautiful world and for sending Jesus to come to us as a little baby. Amen.

The Story: Long, long, long, long ago, there was nothing at all. There were no animals, no birds, no fish, no people. There was no world, no skies, no stars, no moon, no sun. Just lots and lots of nothing. And it was very, very dark. (At this point, if there are any lights on in the room, turn them off.)

Suddenly, and no one knows for sure how this happened, light came into all the darkness. (Turn the flashlight on.) The light was a lot brighter than this flashlight. This flashlight can be turned off, and the batteries might even run down. But the light that came from God will last forever.

Soon there was a bright sun, a moon, and stars, and all kinds of animals and birds and fish. And then there were people. Lots of people.

One day, a very special baby was born. (Turn the flashlight on a space in the middle of the children) Anyone remember who that baby is? Yes, Jesus. And Jesus would tell people that the light that shines on him shines on each of us. (Shine the flashlight, in turn, on each child - naming the child as you do: "The light shines on Colin, the light shines on Ashley," etc.) And so each of us is a light for Jesus.

Activity: Sing a verse or two of "This Little Light of Mine" taking turns with the flashlight until each child has been able to flash the light around the room while all of you sing. Here are a couple of the verses:

Verse 1

This little light of mine

I'm going to let it shine

This little light of mine,

I'm going to let it shine

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Verse 2

All around the neighborhood

I'm going to let it shine

All around the neighborhood

I'm going to let it shine

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Option: Give the children sheets of white paper and crayons and glitter. Ask them to illustrate the light shining on the baby Jesus and the light flowing out from Jesus and landing on each of us. Encourage their creativity and let them create whatever they think represents Jesus and light.

Getting Closure: Gather the children into a circle. Give each child a turn to shine the flashlight on what they have created and tell the rest about it. Keep going until each child has had a chance to shine the light on his/her art work.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for the light of Jesus shining in us for all the world to see. Amen.

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