

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

Scripture: Luke 2:41-52

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

A day back from the annual trip to Jerusalem for Passover, Joseph and Mary check with their extended family. Suddenly they realize that their young son, Jesus, is not with any of them. They race back to Jerusalem, frantically searching for the 12 year-old. Three days and unimaginable stress later they find him sitting in the Temple learning from the teachers. He is un-phased by their universal parental response of relief mixed with fury. "Didn't you know I would be in my Father's house?" asked Jesus. Yes, Mary had much to hold in her heart.

Theme: Boy in the Temple

Before Class: Decide from two choices offered here. The first option is a simple review of the events of Christmas with a Birthday party for Baby Jesus and one last chance to re-tell the story with the stuffed animals (refer to lessons for the Fourth Sunday of Advent). For the birthday party, you will need an angel-food cake from a grocery store, some powdered sugar (optional) to decorate the cake, a candle or two, and some fruit juice. The second option follows the lectionary for this Sunday, the infant Jesus now a 12 year old boy. Paper and crayons will be all the supplies you will need for this option.

Beginning: Invite the children to tell you the Christmas story. Ask them if any of them were at church on Christmas, and if so, what did they see that they remember? (If you were there with them, you can draw out of them things you think they would remember: what Christmas Carols did we sing, were there special flowers, etc.). Especially if you are going to tell the Lectionary story, ask the children if any of them went on a trip for Christmas – or if anyone special came to visit them.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for all the fun of Christmas and especially for the birth of Jesus. Amen.

Option 1 – A review and Birthday Party: If you have chosen this option, get out the box with all the stuffed animals and invite the children to tell you the story, using the stuffed animals. When the story has been told, bring out the cake and have the party. At the conclusion of your

time together, send the animals home with the children who brought them at the beginning of Advent.

Option 2 – Today's lectionary story: Begin by telling your own version of a lost child. Here is a prototype.

A little boy and his mother were shopping in the mall (or a local department store). The mother was paying for her purchase and picking up her package when she looked around and could not see her child. She started calling frantically for the child. Meanwhile, the child had wandered off and realized that he could not see his mother and was beginning to get really worried. Ask the children what they think the boy should do. Should he start running to try to find his mother, or should he stand very still right where he is, trusting that his mother will find him? Ask the children what they think they would do in a similar situation.

The Story: Tell the children that something similar happened to Jesus when he was a boy. In the story we have today, Jesus was 12 years old. Jesus, his mother, Mary, and his father, Joseph, went every year to the city of Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. Passover was the celebration of the time the Hebrew people got out of Egypt where they were slaves and went across a deep river, safely, to a new country. Every year the Hebrew people would have a special dinner and as many members of the family as could possibly get there would be at the party. This year, the whole family was there. After the celebration, Mary, Joseph, and all the aunts and uncles and cousins started back to their hometown. They had been traveling for most of a day when Mary asked Aunt Elizabeth if Jesus was with her. No, said Aunt Elizabeth, he is not. So she asked Uncle Jacob. Same answer. Joseph was checking out the other groups. Jesus was not with any of them! So, Mary and Joseph raced back to Jerusalem. For three frantic days they searched for Jesus. Finally, they found him in the Temple (remember that is what they called their church) listening to the teachers and asking them questions. Mary rushed up to him and said: "We have been worried sick." Jesus answered: "Didn't you know I would be here?" All the way back to their home town, Mary kept thinking about what her son had said and wondering about this young boy she loved so much.

Activity: Perhaps the children can act out this story, taking turns being the 12 year-old Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the teachers in the Temple, and as many other parts as you have children to perform.

Option: If time permits, ask the children to draw what happened in the story, so they can take the pictures home and tell the story to their parents.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share their favorite part of the story. Invite them to sing one final Christmas song if time permits.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for sending us your Son as a baby on Christmas. Amen.

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