

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C– Third Sunday after the Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Younger Children
RCL Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:1-10

Background: In the Sundays after Epiphany, we will hear from a variety of prophets, each speaking to God’s relationship with the people. Although these prophets were speaking to a particular circumstance in a specific time and place, their words are helpful reminders to us today about our own relationship with God. Prophets seek to change the minds and behaviors of their audience.

A Notation for This Week: Ezra and Nehemiah are really one story told in many forms. We hear history, biography, lament, praise, instruction, poetry and celebration. In today’s passage, the people are back in Jerusalem and trying to figure out how to live faithfully as God’s people again. Ezra proclaims and interprets the Law for the people. It takes many hours but they stay and listen. Nehemiah encourages them to feast and give thanks.

Theme: The Joy of the Lord is Your Strength

Before Class: You will need copies of the reading from the Common English Bible. Choose and learn the music. Gather party supplies and finger painting/movement supplies.

Beginning: Welcome the children and invite them to share something good in their life they want to celebrate.

Opening Prayer: Loving God, we thank you for all the blessings of this life. Help us to listen to your Word, praise your name, and to celebrate your love. Amen.

Sing: I’ve Got Peace Like a River” (LEVAS)

The Story: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

Read the lesson from the Common English Bible (CEB) You can look up the passage here:

<http://www.commonenglishbible.com>.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder why the people were so eager to hear the scripture read out loud?
- I wonder how they felt as Ezra read it?
- I wonder why they wept?
- I wonder why Nehemiah told them to eat rich foods and celebrate?
- I wonder what your favorite Bible story is?
- I wonder how we celebrate at church? at home? in our community?

Activities

Art: Finger painting - allow the children to enjoy some time finger pointing (pudding works well!) - play some lively joyful music as they paint. (Ode to Joy from Beethoven's 9th Symphony or Spring from Vivaldi's Four Seasons work nicely.

Movement: Some children may want a chance to dance to the music using scarves or puppets.

Group: Spend some time helping the class prepare for a class celebration. Perhaps decorations could be made and hung. Maybe a special snack can be prepared? Music can be chosen and rhythm instruments located or made.

Gather: for the celebration and be sure to offer praise for their contributions. Share a favorite bible story. Ask them to name blessings and give thanks to God for so much abundance and joy.

Challenge for the Week: Invite the children to ask their family members to share their favorite bible stories over the course of the week.

Closing Prayer: Loving God, we thank you for the gift of your word in the Bible and for the many reasons to celebrate. Help us to remember sing your praises every day. Amen.

Sing:

Siyahamba (Wonder, Love and Praise)
Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit (LEVAS)

Written by Kate Gillooly

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

© 2016 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.