

Episcopal Migration Ministries
Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany
Gospel Lesson for Older Children

Scripture: Luke 4:21-30

Background: This is the fourth in a four-part series focusing on refugee resettlement through Episcopal Migration Ministries. Today’s lesson focuses on what it means to be a prophet.

Theme: The Path of the Prophet

Before Class: Over the course of the Episcopal Migration Ministries lesson plans, the children have created a “me” quilt, depicting the gifts for ministry each child saw in himself/herself, and a quilt depicting the things refugees might need when they first arrive in our country. Today, the children will match their gifts with the needs new Americans might have, and discuss what it means to be a prophet. Make sure that the children’s artwork is displayed and easily accessible so that they can use it in a matching game.

Beginning: In today’s Gospel, Jesus talks about how a prophet is not accepted in his or her hometown. We’ll learn about what it means to be a prophet, and why what a prophet says is not always popular. We’ll talk about how we can each be prophets in our families, in our schools, and in our communities.

Opening Prayer: Dear God, Be with us. Help us understand what it means to be a prophet of your word. Teach us how we can all be prophets of your love. Amen.

The Scripture: Luke 4:21-30 This passage is a rather difficult one to hear and understand, especially for children. You may consider providing each child a Bible to read along with you, or a printed sheet with the scripture. Read the passage aloud, once, and then help the children understand who the people are that Jesus mentions.

“Sometimes, people are willing and generous to help those who are just like them, but they’re not as willing to help others who are different. Have you seen this happen before?” (Allow the children time to answer and discuss, and then continue on.)

“Jesus talks about this very thing in this passage. Jesus was Jewish and preaching to his Jewish brothers and sisters in the synagogue. He was giving examples of the Jewish prophets reaching out to help and share God’s mercy with Gentiles, or those who were not Jewish.

Elijah, a prophet of God who we find in the Old Testament, was sent by God to a Gentile widow, who provided him food and drink. Later, Elijah prayed for the woman’s son, who had died, and he was brought back to life.

Elisha, another prophet in the Old Testament, healed a Gentile man named Naaman, a Syrian, from leprosy. He shared God’s healing and love with Naaman.

Let's read the passage again and see if more of it becomes clear and easy to understand.

Read the passage again with the children. If they have more questions about what Jesus is saying, offer some more explanations before proceeding to the questions, below.

Reflection Questions:

- What was Jesus trying to teach in this story? What is important about his teaching?
- How did the people react to his teaching?
- What is Jesus trying to tell us, today?

Activity: Bring the children near their artwork. Ask them to find their “me” quilt, and to share out loud what gifts the child has for ministry that are depicted in the “me” quilt. Go around in a circle until each child has had a chance to share.

Next, ask the children to find their artwork that displays what refugees might need when they first arrive in the USA. Ask each child to describe their artwork out loud.

Then, facilitate the matching game, asking leading questions to help the children match their gifts for ministry to the potential needs refugees might have. You may wish to use materials such as colorful yarn or ribbon, with thumbtacks or tape, to physically connect the gift to the need, showing the match.

After the matching is finished, you may wish to share with the children this wonderful story that comes out of Lexington, Kentucky. A young first grader there learned about the plight of refugees, and rallied her entire school to help: <http://bit.ly/SharingLight>. If you have middle or high school students, you may opt instead to use this story of high school students in Charleston, South Carolina: <http://bit.ly/CharlestonHighSchool>.

You may wish to share the children some of the current events that have surrounded refugees in recent months, and how some in America do not want to welcome refugees. Reflecting on the story of the school in Lexington, ask the children,

How was Anneliese (the girl in the Lexington story) a prophet?

How can each of us be prophets?

What is our call, as followers of Jesus, when we hear people saying unkind or untrue things about others?

How can we welcome refugees to our community, like Anneliese did?

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for giving us many gifts to share your love with the world. Give us strength and courage to be prophets, in our schools and communities. Amen.

Episcopal Migration Ministries

Episcopal Migration Ministries welcomes thousands of refugees each year from conflict zones across the globe. Working in partnership with offices and groups within the church as well as with governments, nongovernment organizations, and a network of 30 affiliate offices in 26 dioceses, EMM provides vital services for thousands of refugee families upon their arrival in the United States. More information at www.episcopalchurch.org/emm.

The Episcopal Public Policy Network

The Episcopal Public Policy Network (EPPN) is a grassroots network of Episcopalians across the country dedicated to carrying out the Baptismal Covenant call to "strive for justice and peace" through the active ministry of public policy advocacy. EPPN is part of The Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations located in Washington, D.C. The actions, programs, and ministry of the Office of Government Relations are based entirely on policies approved by the church meeting in General Convention or by the Executive Council. More at <http://advocacy.episcopalchurch.org>.

If you have questions, contact Allison Duvall, EMM's manager for Church Relations and Engagement, at (212) 716-6027 or aduvall@episcopalchurch.org. She will be happy to assist you in enriching your lesson plan with information about Episcopal Migration Ministries and refugee resettlement.

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.