

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Fourth Sunday of Easter
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: John 10:22-30

"Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." An astounding discovery! The Easter news was spread to all who would listen. The disciples told people, who in turn, told people, and to this day, we hear the message — a message of weeping and then of joy that comes with the morning of a new day. We too like the disciples weep **AND** then delight in the joy bursting forth in us. We too are called to bring this message with our lives, and, if necessary, with words, to those who have not yet heard it.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

The voice of Jesus can be hard to hear in the halls of institutions and in the noise of our hectic lives. When we listen attentively we may hear his voice. Then we discover to our awe and delight that he knows each of us by name. He has chosen us and will not give us up. Jesus waits to see if we will choose to follow him.

Theme: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

Before: Assemble your art supplies each child to make a plaque with his or her name and decorated as each child wishes. Oak tag or cardboard would be a good material for the plaque and can be found at the craft store. Make sure you have washable paints or markers for decorating. Note: If you know you will have a lot of children who do not write, you may want to pre-paint their names on the plaques or have a helper there to assist the children.

Option: If you have access to a digital camera (so you can easily make copies) or a standard camera with film (so you can process it before next week), bring it and take a picture of each child holding his/her plaque. Also take a group picture. Then, if you want to, these photos can go on cards the children make to give to their mothers on Mother's Day. Or, you could display the photos on your altar. Or get double prints and do both! If there is a child who does not have a mother for whatever reason, you may decide not to do this activity. Or you could simply take a picture of the group and place it on your altar.

Beginning: Ask the children this question: If you were in a big room, with lots and lots of people, and your mother — or your father — loudly called out your name, would you recognize the voice and know they were calling you? (allow time for responses) Well, did you know that in a field full of sheep, all of them making a lot of noise, the baby sheep knows which of the noisy sheep is his mother? The baby sheep can tell which of the sheep is her mother. The people Jesus was talking to all knew about sheep.

Praying: Gather the children by the altar. If you have a candle, light it. Thank you, Jesus, that you know each one of us and you know each of our names. Amen.

The Story: Questions, questions, questions. People were always asking Jesus so many questions. This time, they are asking Jesus to tell them plainly if he has come to save them. Jesus told them, “My sheep know my voice. When my sheep hear my voice, they come quickly. When I call my sheep, they follow me wherever I go. I love these sheep and no one can ever take them away from me. They are my sheep.”

Activity: Play *Follow the Leader*. Begin with the teacher being the leader until the children get the hang of the game. Then be sure each child who wants to gets to be the leader.

The leader says, "Follow me, follow me. And do what I am doing." Then do something easy to imitate: put both hands on your head while walking in a circle. Or, take three steps and then turn in a complete circle and take three more steps. Hop on one foot. Whatever. Then ask who would like to be the leader. Take turns until each child who wants to be the leader gets the chance.

Activity: Offer the art supplies you have brought and show the children how to write their name in big letters in the middle of the plaque. For those children who do not write yet, you may have to help them. Invite them to decorate their name plaque however they want. The children can also decorate a second plaque, which will stay on the altar.

When they have finished, if you have brought a camera, photograph each child holding the plaque they have created. If you have some doubts about your photographic skills and are not sure you will have results next week, do not tell the children what you have planned to do with the photos.

Getting Closure: Put the decorated plaques on the altar. Let each child who wants to tell all of you about the plaque he or she made. Help the children notice that each one is a bit different, just like people are.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, that you know each of our names and that you will never give us up. Amen. (Be sure the candle is extinguished.)

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

© 2012 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.