

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

Scripture: John 13:31-35

"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

Soon Jesus will not be appearing so concretely to the disciples. So, does he give them a complex strategic plan? No. He gives them a new commandment, and this will cover all they need to do. The world will recognize them as followers of Jesus because of the way they love each other.

Theme: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

Before: Mother's Day is coming soon, so you may want to include that in what you do. If there is a child in your group that does not have — for whatever reason — a live-in mother, do not use this activity. If you took photos last week they can form the center of a Mother's Day card for each child. Be prepared to take another photo to bring in next week (or mail to the child), if you have a child with you this week who was not there last week. Note: the kind of love Jesus is talking about here is vastly larger than what you will do with these children, but they will be able to identify with this level of love.

Beginning: Begin by asking the children, "Who loves you?" (their parents, their teacher or day care provider, grandparent, priest, etc.) Ask them if they think Jesus loves them. Then tell them we have a story about love that Jesus gave us.

Praying: (If you have a candle, light it. Gather the children by the altar.) "Thank you, Jesus, that you love us and send us people to love, who also love us. Amen."

The Story: Jesus knew that he would not be walking around much longer. He had been teaching his friends how to do the work of Jesus. So he said to them, "Here is a new rule. The rule is: love each other. Love each other as I have loved you." That's all. You don't need special clothes, no secret password. Remember that I love you, and love each other in that same way.

Activity: Wonder

I wonder we can show our love for each other. (They will probably tell you hugs, playing with a younger sibling, taking care of the dog, etc.)

I wonder how we can show love to a parent who is tired — like giving them a back rub or bringing them something like a drink of cold water.

I wonder how do we love people we don't like? (Give them another chance when we are playing at school, maybe just put up with them?)

Activity: Love Notes

Invite the children to either make Mother's Day cards to go home or make cards to give to someone they love. Help the children glue the photos you took on card stock and decorate the cards. If the cards go home, the group photo you took can go on the altar.

Getting Closure: Help the children plan things they can do when they get home to show love to members of their family. (Do the job assigned you without having to be asked. Offer to help, setting the table, for example. Make little notes to stick under a pillow or in a briefcase that say, "I love you," etc.)

Closing Prayer: Loving Jesus, Thank you for teaching us to love. Help us to remember to love others as much as you love us. Amen.

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

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