

**Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Trinity Sunday
Gospel Lesson for Adults**

Scripture: John 16:12-15

We remain Easter people, now with the wind of the Holy Spirit in our sails. Our task for the months ahead in this season of Ordinary Time, which extends to the end of November, is to look at what Jesus so tenaciously taught his disciples and see what is in these teachings for us as we carry out the work we have been given to do. Jesus promised his disciples a helper, an Advocate, who would stand with them making the work possible. This same helper, the Holy Spirit, hovers over us still eager to quench the fire of fear and replace it with the powerful energy of love.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

In three succinct sentences, Jesus continues to prepare the disciples for the coming of the Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth. God who is and was has sent Jesus who is and was. Now the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, comes to be with the disciples and to be with us. We have God in three persons — a community. This community is so huge it has room for each of us to enter into this Kingdom of God.

Theme: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit: Abundant Love

Before Class: We are reading the scripture twice today and you may choose to read them from two different translations. You will need copies of the Bible or copies of the scripture, slips of paper, and pencils to help people gather words from today's passage to ponder and share.

Beginning: Miles of ink have been spilled and acres of trees felled for paper to expound on the meaning of "Trinity." We are not likely to have a breakthrough here, but we can look for our own insights into the gift of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit: God a community.

Opening Prayer: Blessed Trinity, today we give thanks for abundant love poured into our hearts by you and for your tenacity in loving us beyond our ability to understand. Amen.

The Scripture: John 16: 12-15 Invite two readers for this passage. Ask one to read the three verses and, after observing a minute or two of silence, the second reader to read the passage (either the same translation or a different translation.)

Questions:

Invite people to share a word or phrase that spoke to them, either because it rang true or because it puzzled them.

Explore together why the group thinks Jesus did not think his disciples were ready for what he could tell them. What might it have been that he refrained from saying? (The disciples were still not completely braced for the crucifixion, let alone ready to understand the resurrection.)

Who is the Spirit of truth? (The Holy Spirit.)

I wonder how we would describe the job of the Holy Spirit found in verses 13 and 14.

What evidence do we find in these three verses that "God is a Community?"

Optional Activity: Create the Trinity

Invite the group to split into groups of three or four. In these groups invite them to think of various ways we could explain the Trinity to someone else. Could you describe it as a divine dance that three people participate in and that is not complete without all three? Could you describe the trinity as a three leaf clover? A triangle? A three-legged stool?

Once they have come up with an illustration or description of the trinity, have them depict it either by drawing or creating it with art materials or simply writing the description down on paper.

As you gather back together, invite them to share what they came up with and why they think it represents the Trinity of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

Getting Closure: Invite the group to discuss: What might the Trinity have to say about this leadership? What does this model have to say to us as we participate in a Christian community?

Closing Prayer: The Collect for the First Sunday after Pentecost: Trinity Sunday

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

John 16:12-15

12 'I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

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