

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year A – First Sunday after Epiphany**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**

**Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12**

*Because in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of your glory in the face of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*  
(*Book of Common Prayer*, page 378)

Accept the light we have received and shine it forth! It is not about shining the light in other's faces, blinding them, but holding the light in open hands.

**A Notation for This Week's Gospel**

Power. What power do we call upon to do the work we have been given to do? And where do we defer to a person with greater power? Jesus honors the sphere of John the Baptist's authority and then accepts the power now clearly his after baptism. He is the beloved.

**Theme: Anointed with the Holy Spirit and With Power**

**Before:** The song "This Little Light of Mine" is suggested for the Sundays in Epiphany. It has several tunes so use the one most familiar to you or you can teach different tunes throughout the season.

The craft for today is a candle. You will need paper tubes (like the tubes Christmas wrap comes rolled on, paper towel tubes, or toilet paper tubes.) If you don't have access to any of these, simply roll up a piece of construction paper. The tubes need to be cut into lengths and covered with construction paper, a bright yellow piece of construction glued at the top to make a flame. You will also need glue, transparent tape, or staples. The candles can be taped to circles or squares of construction paper, so they will stand up.

**Beginning:** As you greet the children, tell them that we are beginning a new season in our church, a season with a funny name: Epiphany. They can say the word along with you; Epiphany. If they wonder what the word means, tell them it means something special has happened and we want to tell people about it. What do they think is the something special that has happened? Who is the special person who was born on Christmas? (Yes, Jesus.) Jesus came to tell us that God loves each and every one of us. One way to tell people about something is to sing about it. Ask the children to sing along with you as each of you holds up your hands, index finger sticking up:

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. Let it shine. Let it shine.

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. (Sing it again, if the children are just learning it.)

**Praying:** Thank you, God, for sending Jesus to remind us of your light and love. Thank you for stories about Jesus. Amen.

**The Story:** Today we have a story about Jesus getting baptized. (If there has been a baptism at your church today and especially if the children will be there, be sure to make the connections.) Have any of you been to a baptism? What happens at a baptism? What happens if it is a baby? What happens if it is a grown up?

Jesus was baptized in a different way. John the Baptist was the person who was baptizing people. He did not have a pretty church, or a pretty place for the water. John the Baptist baptized people by taking them by the hand and walking into a river, dunking them in the river, and then pulling them up. So, Jesus went to John the Baptist and said: “I need to be baptized by you.” “Wow!” said John. “Who me? I need to be baptized by YOU because you are the one I have been waiting for.” “No,” Jesus, said, “it’s your job to baptize people, so I want you to baptize me.” So John and Jesus walked into the river. As soon as Jesus was baptized, everyone heard the voice of God coming from heaven and God said: “This is my Son; I love him; I am very pleased with him.”

**Activity:** Invite the children to act out this story. One child can be Jesus, another John the Baptist, and the rest of you can be the voice of God calling out. Suggest that John take Jesus’ hand and gently lead him into the water, holding his hand while Jesus goes down under the water, and when he comes up again, wiping the water off his face. When he comes up again, all the rest of you call out: “This is my son; I love him; I am pleased with him.” Re-do the play as often as needed so each child gets to play whichever part appeals.

**Activity:** Show the children how to make candles so each can take one home to remember that each of us has God’s light in us. Either cover cardboard tubes with construction paper, or simply roll up construction paper squares, fasten with transparent tape or staples and then fasten the tubes to a piece of construction paper so the candles will stand up. A bright yellow or orange construction paper “flame” can be taped to the candle. Ask each child to make two candles — one to take home and one to leave here for next week.

**Getting Closure:** Sing “This Little Light of Mine” while holding your candles high in the air.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, for Jesus and for loving all of us. Help us remember to shine your light in the world. Amen.

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