

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Fourth Sunday in Lent
Lesson Plans for Older Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

In the early Church the Easter Vigil was the only time that baptisms were performed. The forty days leading up to Easter was used as a time of reflection, self-examination, and instruction for the catechumens, or new converts, in preparation for the new life they would receive at baptism. Lent has always been a teaching season. All the lectionary readings during Lent point towards baptism, either its promises and covenants, or its signs and symbols. Lent is often referred to as a short course in Baptism or a primer of our Christian faith.

Notation for This Week’s Scripture

Once David is anointed with oil by Samuel, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon him and he is empowered to speak for God as Israel’s king. The Hebrew word for one who is anointed as king or spokes person for God is “messiah.” The Greek word for the same title is “Christos.” This story connects to the baptismal themes of Lent by reflecting the baptismal rite of anointing the newly baptized person with oil. “You are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ’s own forever.” [*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 308.] The Christian is given the gift of enlightenment through the Holy Spirit.

Theme: God Looks at our Heart

Before Class: Ask the priest or a member of the Altar Guild for some Holy Oil. For this week you will also need: Holy Oil, a mirror, a picture of a horn of oil [you can use a children’s Bible for this].

Continuing the Journey of Lent

Lenten Waiting Table

A wonderful visual reminder to the children would be to create a “Waiting Table.” A purple cloth covering a table, a box or even a ledge would provide the display space. At the beginning of the season you could plant grass seed in a basket to produce a “living Easter basket.” Other ideas include fast growing seeds or bulbs, and caterpillars. The message we convey is that growth takes time and nurturing, and although we can’t always see it we can trust that it is taking place.

Lenten Roadmap: A visual tool to help the children mark time is recommended. Some possibilities include a large paper cross with forty spaces marked off, a “road map” with forty spaces leading to Easter, and made or purchased Lenten calendars.

Lenten Giving

A jar or other container to collect Lenten offerings is a visual reminder of sacrificial giving.

Beginning: Announce that it is the Fourth Sunday in Lent, the season that helps us to be ready for Easter. Show the children where you are at on the Lenten calendar or time telling aid from the week before.

Collect contributions for your mission project.

Show the children the Holy Oil and a mirror. Today we are going to find out what these two things have to do with the choosing of a king.

Opening Prayer: Dear God, help us to see one another through your loving eyes. Amen.

The Story: 1 Samuel 16: 1-13

This story is easy enough to read directly from the NRSV Bible. It can be read as written by one or two volunteers or it can be read Readers' Theater style with three voices, God, Samuel, and a narrator. (See attachment.) Or use the version below.

Some good words to know before we start:

- a horn of oil [show a picture from a children's Bible, usually a hollowed ram's horn]
- heifer [a mature cow]
- a sacrifice [something of value offered to the Lord such as new crops or an animal]
- sanctify [make holy, it could be by washing or praying or fasting] anoint [to bless with oil]

Tell the children, "Some of you may have been babies when you were baptized. This is one of the things that happened."

Demonstrate the baptism rite calling each child by name. For example, "Sally you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own forever," as you make the sign of the cross on her forehead.

Samuel was a judge among the Israel tribes. That meant he traveled from town to town serving as a priest, a prophet, and a leader. The people wanted a king like the countries surrounding them. First God tells Samuel to anoint Saul as king. Saul is disobedient and has let God down. God tells Samuel to anoint a new king that God will choose. Samuel goes to Bethlehem to meet Jesse's sons to find the new king.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what Samuel thought of God's choice?
- Have you ever noticed in our Bible stories that when God wants to get something done, He doesn't always choose the oldest, or biggest, or most important or experienced person? In fact, God often chooses the person you would least expect. Can you find the part of the story that shows us that?
- I wonder if you ever feel too young, or unimportant, or untrained to do God's work?

Remember being anointed with the Holy Oil? That not only marks you as Christ's own but tells you from now on God's Holy Spirit will give you courage and wisdom to help you do God's work in the world.

Activity: Mirror Pass

Have the children each take a turn looking at themselves in the mirror. Each child says, "I see _____, but God sees _____."
You might end this activity by sharing the chorus to the Michael Jackson song "Man in the Mirror"

I'm starting with the Man in
The Mirror,
(Man In the Mirror-OhYeah!)
I'm Asking Him to Change
His Ways
(Better Change!)
No Message Could Have
Been Any Clearer
(If You Wanna Make The World A Better Place)
(Take A Look At Yourself And Then Make The Change)
(You Gotta Get It Right, While You Got The Time)
('Cause When You Close Your Heart)
You Can't Close Your . . .Your Mind!
No Message Could Have
Been Any Clearer
If You Wanna Make the World
A Better Place

Activity: Johari Windows

Instruct the children to fold their paper in four quadrants. Label the first, "The Me Only I Know," the second "The Me Others See," the third "The Me God Knows," in the fourth "The Me I Hope to Become." The children write a few words or sentences or draw a few pictures in each box. Then share and discuss.

Art: Triptychs

Fold a paper in three. On the first section write: "When I Was Younger I Could Only..."

On the second section write: "Now I Can..."

On the third section write: "When I am Older I Will..."

The children can write or illustrate skills or abilities that are important to them. One for each panel.

Closing: Invite the children to share their work. Have the children stand and stretch their arms up to the ceiling and then bow to the teacher to say thank you, and then to one another, as a way of thanking one another for the time together. Remind them to bring in their Lenten offerings next week.

Closing Prayer: Dear God, thank you for this time to learn about you. You see into our hearts and You make us holy and special to serve you. Amen.

1 Samuel 16:1-13 Reader's Theater Style

The Lord: 'How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.'

Samuel: 'How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.'

The Lord: 'Take a heifer with you, and say, "I have come to sacrifice to the Lord." Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.'

Narrator: Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said,

Elders: 'Do you come peaceably?'

Samuel: 'Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.'

Narrator: And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought,

Samuel: 'Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the Lord.'

Narrator: But the Lord said to Samuel,

The Lord: 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.'

Narrator: Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel.

Samuel: 'Neither has the Lord chosen this one.'

Narrator: Then Jesse made Shammah pass by.

Samuel: 'Neither has the Lord chosen this one.'

Narrator: Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel,

Samuel: 'The Lord has not chosen any of these.' 'Are all your sons here?'

Jesse: 'There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.'

Samuel: 'Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.'

Narrator: He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome.

The Lord: ‘Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.’

Narrator: Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward.

Lent Lesson Plans for Older Children written by Trudy Ardizzone.

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