

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Sixth Sunday of Easter
Lesson Plans for Adults

Scripture: John 14:15-21

“I have seen the Lord!” exclaimed Mary Magdalene. At first she does not recognize who is standing beside her. When she realizes it is the risen Jesus she wants to grasp him. He holds her off and tells her to go and share what has happened: He has walked through death and has created a path for us to follow, now and on through our own death.

In these 50 days of Easter, celebrating what Jesus has done for us, we are invited to recognize Jesus standing beside us, as he did with Mary. What is he calling us to do? Perhaps we can train our eyes to look in the direction that this Jesus, standing beside us is looking. What might he be looking at? Do we dare follow where he is leading? Can we notice and honor the various ways Jesus “appears” to people?

A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

If we love him, we will keep the commandments. And what are they? Rules to catch us in our slip-ups? No, much more uncomplicated than that. How very interesting that all the commandments can be kept using one channel: love. As we step into that channel of love, we receive God’s love and so become capable of loving. And we notice that we are not alone.

Theme: The Spirit of Truth Within Us

Before Class: You will need Bibles or copies of scripture for your group.

Beginning: Ask the group to be thinking about this concept as we read the scripture: “Simple is not necessarily easy.”

Opening Prayer: Dear God, help us to risk the love you call us to. Amen.

The Scripture: John 14: 15-21 The entire passage is the voice of Jesus. One way to present it is to ask one person to read the entire passage, allow a moment or two of silence and then have another person read the entire passage.

Questions:

- What commandments is Jesus referring to in this passage? (John 13:34.)
- We could say that this commandment could be sub-titled: “Simple but not easy.” What things make this commandment hard to obey? (Our own expectations of other people, our own failings that we tend to project onto others, etc.)
- What help does Jesus promise? (Another Advocate.)
- By what other names do we know this Advocate? (Holy Spirit, Spirit of Truth, Counselor, Comforter, etc.)
- What will this Advocate help us to do? (Be capable of the love that will empower us to keep the commandments.)
- Notice the radical assurances Jesus offers in verses 18-21:

- I am coming to you.
- The world will no longer see me, but you will see me.
- Because I live, you also will live.
- I am in my Father — you are in me — and I am in you.
- Those who keep my commandments are showing their love for me.
- The love shown to me flows on to God.
- In this love I will return the love and show myself to these people.

Getting Closure: Invite the group to sit in silence for a moment or two, appreciating the promises Jesus makes. Remind the group that we, and for that matter, the church, have not finished unpacking these promises.

If you have time, you can invite them to share the promises for which they are thankful.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for huge promises that stretch our minds and hearts. Amen.

John 14:15-21

‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

‘I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.’

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