

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Seventh Sunday of Easter
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: John 17:1-11

“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

That we all may be one: Okay, probably not gathered into one agreed-upon building or even one way of worship. We are all one as God’s love flows out over ALL of us. We are all one as each of us sees the face of Jesus in each person we encounter. Love is who God is, and therefore, what God does. Each of us is part of this one.

Theme: That We All May Be One

Before: So that the children can make paper chains, cut construction paper lengthwise into strips. Use a variety of colors. Cut additional lengths of construction paper in a color you will not give to the children. These will be used to fasten the chains together, separating each child’s chain from the others using the contrasting color. You will also need transparent tape. At the end of the session, the children can take home the portion of the chain they made for the worship space.

Beginning: Tell the children this is the last Sunday we will be using the worship space and ask them to help you set it up. Light the candle. Remember to blow it out after the story.

Praying: Thank you, God, for this time we have together today. Amen.

The Story: Tell the children Jesus knows it is time for him to go back to be with God. Here’s what Jesus says to God: “I have done the work you gave me to do. So, God, I know it is time for me to come back to you. I have told these people all about you. They know a lot more about you now. Here’s what I am asking you now. Help these people understand that it is like we are all holding hands all the people of the world in a big circle with God in the middle of them.”

Activity: Show the children the construction paper strips you have cut for them (all but the connector pieces, which you would hold back until you need them). Tell them to take a few pieces of whatever color they want and some crayons. Tell them they can decorate one of the strips to represent themselves and decorate other strips that represent their best friend, their parents, siblings, grandparents, whoever they choose. Tell them as they finish each strip, they

can connect it to the one they have just finished. Create a chain by taking the first completed strip and tape the ends together forming the first link to the chain. Then take the next completed strip, thread through the first link, and tape the ends. Now you have the second link in the chain. Continue so each child will end up with a chain of strips. (You can make some also.) When the children have finished their chains, tell them we will connect all the chains and make a circle to place on the floor. To help you keep track of whose chain is which, you could write the child's name on the separating strip.

Activity: Circle Game

This is a reverse Musical Chairs. The object is to get all the children, one by one, into the circle. Ask the children to make a circle outside the chain circle. All together, sing this song to the tune of *Mary Had a Little Lamb*:

Jesus made a great big circle, great big circle, great big circle.

Jesus made a great big circle and he wants YOU in it too!

One child stands in the middle of the circle and at the conclusion of the first verse, points to one other child to join in the circle. Keep going until everyone is inside the circle.

If the children are enjoying this game, play it again with another child in the middle of the circle beckoning the others to come in.

Getting Closure: Have your party with whatever treats you have provided. If the children want to take any of the decorations from the worship space cloth home with them, help them remove them from the cloth. Then, cut the loops connecting the pieces of the chain so each child can take home the chain they made to remind them of those people they love who are part of Jesus' circle.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for this time we have had together to hear stories about Jesus. Amen.

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Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Seventh Sunday of Easter
Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: John 17:1-11

“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.

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That we all may be one: Okay, probably not gathered into one agreed-upon building or even one way of worship. We are all one as God’s love flows out over ALL of us. We are all one as each of us sees the face of Jesus in each person we encounter. Love is who God is, and therefore, what God does. Each of us is part of this one.

Theme: That We All May Be One

Before Class: You will need white card stock cut to the size of a driver’s license, so it will fit in a wallet, and pens in an assortment of colors. You will also need copies of the Book of Common Prayer. The suggestion is that each child designs a wallet-sized card showing they have been commissioned as a disciple of Jesus. (If all have been baptized, it could be a baptismal certificate they design themselves.)

Beginning: Tell the children that this is the last Sunday in Easter and our attention will be turned toward Pentecost and the long season after Pentecost.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, that we are all one with you. Amen.

The Story: John 17:1-11 Tell the children that this is Jesus’ Farewell Address. He is going back to be with God. It has two parts to it: Jesus telling God that he has fulfilled the commission God gave him, and Jesus’ prayer for his disciples. Tell the children to be noticing where the second part begins. Read the scripture as the children follow along.

Questions:

- What do we think Jesus means by “the hour has come — glorify your Son?” (The time has come for Jesus to leave the world where he was known mostly as a man and go back to be with God — in partnership with God.)
- What is the eternal life Jesus mentions? (To know God and to know Jesus brings us eternal life.)

- What is Jesus asking God to do in verse 5? (Bring Jesus back to be at one with God.)
- Who is Jesus referring to in verse 6? (Those that Jesus taught, primarily his disciples.)
- How is Jesus describing his disciples in verses 7 and 8? (They are ready for commencement. They have learned what Jesus was teaching them.)
- Why do you think Jesus is not talking about everyone in the world, just those he had taught? (Perhaps because it will now be the job of these disciples and all who come after them to continue the work.)
- What might Jesus be saying in verse 10? (Jesus has not created a cult where people flock after the person, but has carried out his part of the partnership he has with God.)
- What is the protection Jesus asks God for those who will go on with the work? (That they will know that they are one with God; they will not have to do the work alone.)

Option: Why do we suppose the disciples were not sad to see Jesus go, were not afraid to be without their leader, and went back to Jerusalem which was still a dangerous place for them? Ask the children if any of them have had a really good coach for sports or music, or even someone who helped them figure out a hard subject in school. Can they describe what it felt like to realize that they could do this on their own? Can they remember what it was like to try to ride a bicycle by themselves?

What other things will they need a coach to help them with that they will later be able to do by themselves? (Drive a car. Learn a new language. Figure out for whom to vote in an election. Etc.)

As we come to church and Sunday School, what are we being trained to do? (Be disciples to carry on the work these disciples began.)

The disciples were commissioned by Jesus. How do we get commissioned? (Our baptism.)

Activity: Give the children copies of the Book of Common Prayer and ask them to turn to the top of page 305. Ask someone to read the top promise. (If time permits, read all five of the “will you” questions beginning at the bottom of page 304 and continuing on the top of page 305.)

Tell the children we have certificates from our baptisms that are probably in an album or in a safe place. Since we do not tend to carry them around with us, we are going to fashion our own ID cards to put in our wallets. Give the children the cards and the pens and invite them to design a card they can carry in their wallets.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to gather in a circle. With the Prayer Book opened to page 308, say together the prayer near the bottom of the page that begins: “We receive you into the household of God.” Then invite the children to pass the peace with each other.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for this time we have had together and for your being with us as we carry out our commissions. Amen.

John 17:1-11

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

‘I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

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

Scripture: John 17:1-11

“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.

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A Notation for This Week’s Gospel

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Theme: That We All May Be One

Before Class: You will need copies of the Bible or copies of the scripture and of the Book of Common Prayer.

Beginning: Tell the group that our story today is commencement for the disciples, so we will be looking at commencements in our lives as disciples.

Opening Prayer: Thank you, God, for the work you give us to do. Amen.

The Scripture: John 17: 1-11 Tell the group that this is Jesus’ Farewell Address. John places it in his gospel before the crucifixion, but the church addresses it on the Sunday after the Ascension. Verses 1-5 could be called Jesus’ own self-evaluation and verses 6-11 his request for empowerment of the disciples. It is suggested that the leader of the group read the entire passage with the group following in their Bibles.

Questions:

- Why is Jesus defining this hour as the time to be glorified? (Jesus is about to end his time on earth.)
- To whom does Jesus say, in verse 2, he has been given authority? (Over all people.)
- According to this passage, what is the definition of eternal life? (Verse 3)
- What is Jesus’ self-evaluation of his work on earth? (Verse 4)

- How does Jesus evaluate his preparation of the disciples in verses 7 and 8? (These people were called by God, belong to God, and they are doing what they were taught to do. They now understand that all Jesus has given them came first from God.)
- Why do you think that Jesus is asking only on their behalf in verse 9, not on behalf of the world? (Perhaps it will be the task of the disciples and those who come after them to continue to work.)
- What is Jesus clarifying in verse 10? (Jesus has carefully trained his followers to know that they belong to God. This is not a cult of the personality of Jesus.)
- What is Jesus prayer for “all” in verse 11? (That we be one, as Jesus and God are one.)

Option: Brainstorm what it would look like if we understood ourselves to be one? Do we think we would have to all speak the same language or even use the identical liturgy? What changes might we need to make in the allocation of our resources? What things are already working to help us be one?

Getting Closure: Ask the group to turn to page 421 in the Book of Common Prayer. Suggest the group look at the prayer and in each place where the words are italicized to substitute “us” and “our” for what is there.

Closing Prayer: Read together the prayer on page 421, substituting “us” and “our” for the italicized words.

John 17:1-11

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

‘I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

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