

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.

Printed by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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