

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Sixth Sunday in Easter
Lesson Plans for Younger Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Acts 17:22-31

In the early church Easter was the day for Baptisms. The festival season of Easter marks the fifty days between Easter and Pentecost. It is a time for reflecting on the meaning of our Baptism and the other sacraments. The church calls this process of studying the mysteries of the church mystagogia. We explore what it means to be the Body of Christ and members of His church and how we are to live this out in the world today. During the Easter season the Old Testament readings are replaced with selections from the *Book of Acts*. We hear about the sacrifice and resurrection of our Lord so that we too may know how to proclaim the good news of Jesus with similar joy and conviction.

A Notation about this week's Scripture

St. Paul was a genius at evangelizing. He knew how to speak to the particular needs, concerns and customs of each area he preached in. Prior to his own conversion he had been a Temple scholar. In the scenes before this set of readings Paul had been preaching in small towns with great success and making many converts. Now he comes to Athens which was a great cosmopolitan city of its day. This is a university center. St. Paul goes to the Aeropagus, a market place on Mars Hill. This is the place where the scholars and philosophers gather. Paul gets their attention by commenting on the many statues of gods around him. He builds a bridge by commenting on how religious they are. He substitutes their notion of an unknown god with testimony of the one true God. He almost has them until he begins to talk about Jesus. This doesn't fit into their philosophies, a god who suffered the indignities of the flesh. They lose interest. Undaunted, Paul moves on to continue his mission in another town.

Theme: We are God's Offspring

Before Class:

You will need: old magazines, a large sheet of paper or poster board, a mirror, and paper fasteners.

Check out suitable area for nature walk for Option One. For Option Two make sure there is one magazine for each child, glue sticks or paste and an area to put out a large sheet of paper. For Option Three check the room for any safety hazards. For portrait activity have enough crayons, markers, and paper.

Beginning

Review the Easter greeting.

Teacher: *Alleluia! The Lord is risen.*

Children: *The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!*

Opening Prayer: Dear Lord, we are your children. Help us to find you in all we see and do. Amen.

The Story

Paul was one of God's best workers. He traveled all over the Bible lands spreading the Good News that Jesus lived and died for us. Some people were happy about the news and they became converts. That means they changed their old ways to become followers of Jesus. Some people got very angry at Paul for telling them their old ways were wrong and they tried to hurt or kill him. But nothing stopped Paul from sharing the Good News. He just kept walking and walking from town to town, talking about Jesus.

One day Paul came to a big city in Greece called Athens. He went to the market place where the people were gathered. Paul saw many statues of different gods. He saw an altar with a sign that said to an unknown God. Paul spoke to the people with these words.

People of Athens, I see you have many gods and goddesses. You even have an altar to an unknown god. This God doesn't have to be unknown anymore. Our God made the earth and everything in it. Don't worship stone cold statues any more. Our God gives us life. He made us to search for him and to find him. Our God is very near to us and cares about each of us. He created the nations of the world and we too are his children. God sent his son Jesus to live and die for us. God raised Him from the dead to give us hope and so we wouldn't be afraid of death.

Some people made fun of Paul for saying a man was raised from the dead. Other people wanted to know more and became followers. Paul kept on talking and he kept on walking. We know a lot about what Paul thought through the many letters he wrote to the new churches.

Traveling Reflections

- What is the furthest you ever walked?
- What is the most faraway place you have ever been?
- Did the people speak another language?
- I wonder, was God in this new place?
- If you were going to travel around talking about Jesus and you could only carry a backpack, what would you bring?

Where is God?

Option One: Take the children on a nature walk around the church. Have them identify God's handiwork all around them.

Option Two: Give out old magazines. Have the children cut or tear out pictures of where God is. Make a group collage that says, "God is Everywhere. God is Near"

Option Three: Hide and Seek. One child is God and hides while the children close their eyes or look the other way. The children say this chant while they look: "*We are searching for God. Is he here? We are searching for God. He must be near.*" When the children find God, He says, "*I am glad you found me.*" You can repeat this with other children being God. You can also reverse

this and have the children hide with God searching and saying, “*I am searching for my children. Are they here? I am searching for my children they must be near.*”

Alternative Activity: The Family Album

Since we are all God’s children let’s make a family album. Show each child their face in a mirror. Ask if they see a child of God. Have the children draw self-portraits. Fasten them together in a book called God’s Family Album.

Closing

Have the children return any supplies they used and clean up their work space. Return to the story circle. Say this closing poem:

Our time together is almost done
I hope you had a bit of fun.
May God’s blessings go with you.
Show His love in all you do.
So now on this special day
Let us bow our heads and pray

Closing Prayer: Dear Risen Lord, Thank you for creating this beautiful world and making us your children. Help us to see you everywhere and in everyone we meet. Amen

Easter Lesson Plans for Young Children written by Trudy Ardizzone, 2011

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