

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year A – Easter Sunday**  
**Lesson Plans for Older Children**  
*Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One*

**Scripture: Acts 10:34-43**

Today is Easter Sunday. The Easter season is when we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Easter is a very special time of year. There are fifty days in the season. The season has seven Sundays. After the season of Lent, the Easter season brings happiness as we celebrate Jesus Christ's resurrection. During this time children should be reminded that after Jesus Christ died on the cross he came back to be among the disciples for forty days.

For the Lessons of this Easter season, you will need United Thank Offering boxes to hand out to the children. These are free and you can get them through the following website:  
<http://episcopalmarketplace.org/Products/United-Thank-Offering>

**Peace and Justice**

These seven Easter Season lessons will explore peace and justice issues. Jesus is the role model for Christians. Throughout the lessons you will want to compare how the values of the persons being highlighted reflect the values Jesus has taught us. The person highlighted for each lesson will serve as a modern-day role model for others in your community. Be sure to share how his or her actions reflect the values we have learned from Jesus. The Easter season is a good time for children to look at what they have in their community, good and bad, and to look beyond their community to the past to learn about some challenges that the United States and other parts of the world have faced.

Today's role model is Martin Luther King, Jr.

You might consider finding a video before class in order to learn more about the person being highlighted each Sunday. The transcript of Martin Luther King Jr's, "I Have a Dream Speech" is available as part of the links so you might consider reading a short part of it to the children if you do not show the video of the speech. Many students have probably studied Martin Luther King, Jr. at school and they may want to share some of this knowledge as well.

**A Notation for this Weeks Scripture**

In this reading, Peter proclaims the Gospel to the Gentiles for the first time and comes to the understanding that Lord of All includes the Gentiles. This act by Peter shows that God is not partial to anyone and that God loves and forgives all. Peter and those listening to him experienced excitement, and felt wonder and gratitude when this event was happening. This scripture helps us to prepare for Pentecost, the day when the church began.

**Theme: Forgiveness**

God forgave the people that were responsible for the death of Jesus Christ. God forgives us daily. Even if we try our best, we make mistakes and sometimes forget to be nice to others or to be helpful. God forgives us and prays that we will do better.

**Before Class:**

You will need copies of the scripture or Bibles for the children. For the Easter candle activity, you will need a 5 inch tall candle, 2-3 inch circumference for each student, Cooking cloves, Yellow, gold, and white tissue paper, Glue.

You will need UTO Boxes and copies of the UTO information sheet. These are free and you can get them through the following website:

<http://episcopalmarketplace.org/Products/United-Thank-Offering>

The children should be encouraged to return them on the last Sunday of the Easter Season.

**Beginning:**

Easter Sunday is a special day in our church, as well as for many families that come to church very rarely. Remember to welcome all of the children and allow the children to introduce themselves because a number of them might be new to your classroom.

Invite them to gather into a circle and tell them:

During the Easter season, we are doing some special things. Each Sunday, we will hear a story from the Acts of the Apostles, which is the book of the bible that tells the story of the early Church. We will also hear a story about a role model that lived the way Jesus teaches us to live. We will also be looking at how we can serve Jesus' mission in the world as the Apostles and role models have done.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you for bringing your Son Jesus Christ to save the world and for teaching all of us about God. Help us to hear and learn today so we might carry your mission and your word into the world with us. Amen.

**The Story: Acts 10:34-43**

Invite one of the children to read the scripture for today, or you can read it yourself. As they all listen, invite them to write down or make note of themes or words that they notice are important.

**Questions:**

- After hearing this story, what themes or words did you notice?
- I wonder what Peter was trying to tell the early church?
- I wonder what they might be telling us today?

**Exploring a Role Model:**

Note: If you search on Google, you will find many videos of the "I Have a Dream" speech if you would like to show the children part of it. This is a link of the written transcript.

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkhaveadream.htm>

Today's story tells us of Peter preaching to the people. He said, "I truly understand that God shows no partiality... You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, about preaching peace." Today's role model is civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. who preached about peace and told people of a God who made us all equal.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a leader in the Civil Rights Movement that took place in the southern United States in the 1950s and 1960s. He worked hard for people who did not have a voice. He also helped people forgive those who were mean to them. He and his followers practiced non-violence because they believed that doing things peacefully would bring about better results.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was part of a large gathering known as the “March on Washington” on August 28, 1963. He became very famous for the speech he gave at this gathering. The speech was entitled “I Have a Dream” because he believed that his African American children and other children of different races could live together in the United States without discrimination.

Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke to a large crowd at the March on Washington like Peter spoke to a large crowd of Gentiles in our history. Jesus Christ likes it when people speak up for people who are not able to speak up for themselves. Both Martin and Peter were people of faith and they both had followers that loved Jesus Christ.

### **Questions:**

- Tell us a little about Martin’s dream.
- Do you think that your community is fair to others that are different?
- How can you show those that are different from you that you care for and appreciate them?
- How can we reflect Jesus’ love in the world?

### **Reflection:**

- Sometimes people do mean things or make bad choices that hurt other people.
- Think of two people in your life who need forgiving.
- How can you show them that you forgive them?
- Do you know someone who is very forgiving of others?
- Sometimes our parents, teachers, church friends, grandparents, and school friends are very forgiving.
- How can we show them that we appreciate that they are forgiving?

### **Art Activity: Easter Candle Craft**

Give each child a candle. Put the rest of the materials out on the table for them to use. Cooking cloves, tissue paper, and glue. They can glue the tissue on to the candle using glue and then push cloves into the candle as incense.

The candle symbolizes the 50 days of the Easter Season. The children should take the candle home to remind them that we are in the Easter Season.

### **Getting Closure:**

Gather the children in a circle and pass around the United Thank Offering (UTO) boxes with the information sheet (which you can find at the end of this lesson). Tell them about the UTO.

The United Thank Offering (UTO) is a ministry of the Episcopal Church for the mission of the whole church. Through United Thank Offering, men, women, and children nurture the habit of giving daily thanks to God. These prayers of thanksgiving start when we recognize and name our

many daily blessings. Those who participate in UTO discover that thankfulness leads to generosity. United Thank Offering is entrusted to promote thank offerings, to receive the offerings, and to distribute the UTO monies to support mission and ministry throughout the Episcopal Church and in invited Provinces of the Anglican Communion in the developing world.

As one small way of helping the world, we are inviting each of you to give to United Thank Offering (UTO) during the Easter Season. You can take home a small collection box and when they are grateful for something they should drop some money into the box. Remind them that they should continue to be grateful throughout the Easter Season and ask them to bring their boxes with change into church on the Seventh Sunday of Easter. Tell them the information sheet is there for their parents and them.

**Closing:**

Today on Resurrection Sunday it is important to remember the love that God has for all of us regardless of how much money we have, where we live, and where we go to school. Jesus Christ is Savior to ALL.

**Closing Prayer:**

Thank you for the many people that forgive others easily and for those that speak up for people who can't. Help us to appreciate leaders in our community. May peace come to them and to those they lead. Amen.

### **Acts 10:34-43**

Then Peter began to speak to them: ‘I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.’

*Easter Lesson Plans for Older Children written by Luisa Bonillas, Ph.D.*

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## The United Thank Offering

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### United Thank Offering Prayer

*Gracious God, source of all creation, all love, all true joy: accept we pray those outward signs of our profound and continuing thankfulness for all life. Keep each of us ever thankful for all the blessings of joy and challenge that come our way. Bless those who will benefit from these gifts through the outreach of the United Thank Offering. This we ask through Him who is the greatest gift and blessing of all, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

For more information on the UTO, go to:

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/united-thank-offering>

And

<http://www.utochange.org/>