

**Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Trinity Sunday
Gospel Lesson for Adults**

Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20

When the Emperor Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire in 313 C.E. he wanted the religion to have unity and consistency in beliefs and practices. There were many varying sects at the time. Constantine assembled all the great theologians and church leaders of the time at the Council of Nicaea. For the next four hundred years there was great conflict and debate over doctrines such as the Trinity and other councils were also convened when there were conflicts. The Apostle's and Nicene Creeds emerged from these councils. Trinity Sunday was incorporated into the church year in 1334. It is always the Sunday after Pentecost Sunday. The doctrine states that God is revealed to us in three distinct persons existing in a mutual relationship of love. The Trinity represents the total revelation of God: God the Father as Creator, God the Son as Redeemer, and God the Holy Spirit as Sanctifier and Comforter. This belief is supported in the Bible, creeds, and doctrines of the Church.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel and Reading

This passage is known as The Great Commission. It is Jesus giving the disciples authority and telling them instructions so they understand what their mission is in the world. The formula, "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit," is the Trinitarian wording that we all hear in baptisms and in our creeds.

Theme: God's Call to Us to Mission

Before Class: We will be exploring the Five Marks of Mission today. You will need to either print them out on a white board/easel or print off copies for each person to look at in the discussion time. You will also need Bibles or copies of the scripture for each person.

Beginning: As people arrive, invite them to write a word or two that comes to mind when they think of Pentecost. After everyone has arrived, have the group read what is on the board before you begin, inviting them to keep these words in mind as you look at the scriptures for Pentecost together.

Opening Prayer: Loving God, be with us as we explore what your call to us means in our lives. Help us to hear your call and discover how we can live into the mission you have given us. Amen.

The Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20

Invite a person read the lesson.

Questions:

- The text says, "When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted." I wonder what we would do if we were in the disciples shoes – worship him, doubt, or a little of both?

- Jesus gives them and us authority over heaven and earth to spread the Good News. What did that look like for the disciples?
- What does that look like for us today?
- How are these two things different and why?
- The first two Marks of Mission calls us to really live into the Gospel lesson from today. How do you see yourself and our community doing this?

Activity Option:

Invite the group to explore the Five Marks of Mission that we are committed to as the Anglican Communion and as the Episcopal Church. I wonder what each of these looks like or could look like in your current community and congregation. You can write these up on the white board or give copies to each person to reflect upon. (<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/five-marks-mission>)

Five Marks of Mission: The Mission of the Church Is the Mission of Christ

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Getting Closure: After you have explored the Marks of Mission, ask the group: The first two Marks of Mission calls us to really live into the Gospel lesson from today. How do you see yourself and our community doing this?

Closing Prayer: Gracious God, you have called us to create disciples, followers of Jesus, and to spread your word. Bless us and guide us as we go out into the world to respond and to live into your call to each of us. In the name of the Holy Trinity we pray. Amen.

Matthew 28:16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

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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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