

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C– First Sunday after the Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Younger Children
RCL Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Isaiah 43:1-7

Background: In the Sundays after Epiphany, we will hear from a variety of prophets, each speaking to God’s relationship with the people. Although these prophets were speaking to a particular circumstance in a specific time and place, their words are helpful reminders to us today about our own relationship with God. Prophets seek to change the minds and behaviors of their audience.

A Notation for This Week: This passage from “Second Isaiah” was written during the Babylonian Exile, just as the possibility for return to their homeland was first appearing. The words are meant to be comforting and to provide reassurance that God is still with them and things will get better. Through Isaiah, God reminds the people of God’s constant presence and care, even when the people have strayed and disobeyed. Since this might be a day for Baptisms, one may also make the connection to our own living in covenant with God and God’s continued presence in our lives and those of the baptismal candidates.

Theme: I Have Called You by Name, You are Mine

Before Class: You will need art supplies for name plates (large sheets of paper, thick black markers colored pencils, markers, pastels or paints) and a copy of the lesson from the Common English Bible (<http://www.commonenglishbible.com>). Decide how you want to incorporate music into this lesson. Locate music (and musicians if desired) and learn the songs. Find out whether anyone will be baptized and their names. Consider preparing a note for parents to be sent home to facilitate the family conversation about names and baptisms. Locate a copy of “The Kissing Hand” if you plan to read it.

Beginning: Play or sing the song “Hush, Hush, Somebody’s calling my name” from Lift Every Voice And Sing (LEVAS). It might be a challenge to teach this song, so you might want to simply pull it up on YouTube to play for the class, or you could invite in a choir director or member to sing it and talk about it a little bit.

Opening Prayer: O Lord, you know each one of us and call us by name. Help us to share your love with others. Amen.

The Story: Isaiah 43:1-7

Consider reading this from the Common English Bible which can be found here:
<http://www.commonenglishbible.com>.

As you read the passage to the children, ask them to listen for one word or phrase that brings them comfort or makes them feel good. Encourage the children to share their word or phrase

with the rest of the group. Optional - read the passage again and invite people to raise their hand when they hear “their” word or phrase.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what surprised you in this reading?
- I wonder what emotions you felt when you heard this?
- I wonder how the people of God felt when they heard it?
- I wonder how God knows everyone’s name?
- I wonder if you know where your name came from?
- I wonder why names are so important?

Activities

Art: Name Plates

Give everyone a large sheet of paper. Have them use thick black pen or marker to write their name in the center of the paper. Then use various colored pencils, markers, pastels or paints to decorate the rest of the paper. While the children work, play the song “You Are Mine” by David Haas - available on YouTube.

If your church will be celebrating baptism today, have the children make name plates for those being presented for baptism.

Story: To reinforce verse 5, consider reading the story “The Kissing Hand,” by Audrey Penn. This is a lovely story of a mother offering comfort to her children when the child starts school. Talk together about the many ways God offers us comfort and we can comfort each other. (It is also available on YouTube.)

Challenge for the Week: Invite the children to ask their families the story of their names. How were those names chosen? Who else do they know with that name?

Closing Prayer: Teach the children how to use a verse from this passage as a breath prayer. (This idea is from Carolyn Brown’s *Worshipping with Children* blog.) Breathe in while saying, “I have called you by name.” Breathe out while saying, “You are mine.” Practice saying it together. Imagine saying it when you have done something really fine or are having a great day. Share a closing prayer in which you call each person by name. It can be as simple as: “Thank you God, for (insert the children’s names here) and for being with all of us every day. Amen.”

Sing: Be Not Afraid (Wonder, Love and Praise) - this song works well with the verses spoken by a good reader and the refrain sung by everyone or “Precious Lord, Take My Hand” in LEVAS.

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Published 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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