

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C– Fifth Sunday in Lent**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**  
**RCL Old Testament Readings – Track One**

**Scripture: Isaiah 43:16-21**

**Background:** Lent is a reflective season – an opportunity to go deep within ourselves and focus on our relationship with God and with others. The forty days of Lent remind us of the forty days that Jesus spent in the desert following his baptism, pondering who he was and what he was to do. They also remind us of the forty years that the people of God wandered in the desert following the Exodus from Egypt, learning how to be the community of the people of God. The Hebrew Scripture lessons in year C focus on the covenants or promises that God made with the people of God. Like Jesus, we choose to enter this time of “desert,” in order to remember the promises of God, hear the stories of ways in which they were fulfilled (hint: They didn’t always look the way the people expected!), and the ways in which we are called to participate in those promises in our own time – to discover who we are in God and what we are to do.

**A Notation for This Week’s Lesson:** We have moved from the story-telling kind of narratives in our Hebrew Scripture lesson, to the more poetic voice of Isaiah. (You might want to remind the children that the Bible is made up of all kinds of writing, such as stories, letters, laws, and songs.) We don’t listen to this kind of writing the same way that we listen to a narrative story. Today’s reading is a kind of poetry through which we still hear the voice of God. This passage from Isaiah references the stories we have heard in the past few weeks, but calls us to move past simple remembrance into participation into God’s new and ongoing action in the world.

**Theme: God is Doing a New Thing!**

**Before Class:** Determine which activity options you will be using and gather the materials needed. You will need the bowl of sand from last week, and a “road” to place in the sand. (You could cut a simple road out of black construction paper with white or yellow lines down the middle, or even cut apart a piece of a road map to use as a “road.”)

**Beginning:** Gather the children in your usual manner, perhaps with an opening song or greeting. Ask what they notice in your worship space. See what they remember about the season of Lent. If necessary, remind them that Lent is the time of the church year when we get ready to celebrate the mystery of Easter. It is time for us to focus on things that bring us close to God, and to remember that we are part of God’s family. Have them mark the sign of the cross on their forehead to remember that they are “marked as Christ’s own forever.”

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you, God, for the gift of Lent, the time we pay special attention to the ways we can come closer to you. Help us to hear your promises, and to remember that we are part of your great family. Amen.

**The Story:** During the season of Lent, we have been hearing stories about times that God made promises to the people of God, even some times that the promises that seem impossible. Today’s

story is a little bit different – it sounds more like a poem or a song than a story! The speaker in today’s story is God, and God is speaking to the people. In the first part of this poem, God is reminding his people about the stories where he led the people through the water. I wonder what you remember about a story where God’s people traveled through the water?

I am putting this road in our bowl of desert to help us remember this story. Listen and see if you can figure out why we are using this road to help us tell this story.

Isaiah 43:16-21 (International Children’s Version)

This is what the Lord says.

He is the one who made a road through the sea.  
Even through rough waters he made a path for his people.  
He is the one who defeated the chariots and horses.  
He defeated the mighty armies.  
They fell together, and they will never rise again.  
They were destroyed as a flame is put out.

The Lord says,

Forget about what happened before.  
Do not think about the past.  
Look at the new thing I am going to do.  
It is already happening. Don’t you see it?  
I will make a road in the desert.  
I will make rivers in the dry land.

Even the wild animals will be thankful to me.  
The wild dogs and owls will honor me.  
They will honor me when I put water in the desert.  
They will honor me when I make rivers in the dry land.  
I will do this to give water to my people, the ones I chose.  
These are the people I made.  
And they will sing songs to praise me.

**Reflection Questions:** (Use the ones that interest you and your community of children)

- I wonder how the people felt when they remembered the stories where God led the people through the waters?
- I wonder what the new thing God is going to do could be?
- I wonder why we might want a road in the desert?
- I wonder how the animals will show thanks to God?
- I wonder what songs we like to sing to praise God?
- I wonder if your family sings songs or tells stories when you travel? What “road trip” songs do you enjoy?

### Activity Options:

1. **Mobile or Story bag:** Each story in the coming weeks lends itself to a symbol, which can be created to hang on a mobile or to fill a story bag that the children can take home at the end of Lent to remember the promises of God. (The symbols will be a star, a red leaf, stones, a portion of a map or a road, and a cross.) *The symbol for this week is a road.*
  - a. **For the Mobile:** You will need the embroidery hoop hanger that you created the first week of Lent. You will need to be prepared for children who were not here that week, either by helping them create the hanger (directions in week 1), or by having a few hangers prepared for them. For this week's road, you could work with the children to create a road out of construction paper, or you could cut out portions of a road map. Punch a hole in one end of the road, and tie a length of yarn through the hole. Attach the other end of the yarn to the embroidery hoop so that it hangs down.
  - b. **For the Story bag:** You will need a small cloth bag for each child. (These would be easy to make, or can be found inexpensively at craft stores. Burlap or muslin would be good choices to reflect the colors of the desert. ) Prepare the road as above for the mobile, eliminating the yarn. Add the road to the story bag.
2. **Singing!** This reading ends with the words "these are the people I made. And they will sing songs to me." Have a time of singing your favorite songs to praise God.

**Getting Closure:** Gather in your story area as you prepare to end class. This can be a good time to share concerns and prayers. No matter which activity option you chose, you might want to sing your prayers. You can sing a song you all know, or put simple "thank you God" words to a familiar tune, such as "Farmer in the Dell." To close, you might choose to again remind each child that they are a child of God through the tracing of an invisible cross on their foreheads.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, for your many promises, and for time for us to remember them through our faith stories. Thank you for your promise to do a new thing. Help us to have eyes to look for where you are at work in our daily lives. Amen.

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

*© 2016 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.*