

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – Second Sunday of Easter
Lesson Plans for Older Children
Revised Common Lectionary: Acts Lesson Plans – Track One

Scripture: Acts 4:32-35

Background

Alleluia, Alleluia! Christ is Risen! Last week we celebrated the Resurrection of our Lord after emerging from the Lenten season of waiting and watching. We've walked with Jesus through the wilderness into Jerusalem and to the grave. But Easter isn't over with just that one (glorious) festival celebration. No! Easter is a season of 50 days in which we name and claim our identity in Christ as an Easter People. Easter is a season of baptism and rebirth. Many of the scripture passages we will hear are about baptism or about Jesus' sacrifice for us. Many churches use this as a season for baptisms and receptions into the church. It is the season when we re-explore our identity as Christians as it is the key to our faith tradition: that Jesus, the Son of God, died for our sins and rose to new life again from the grave. In doing so, Jesus has opened the pathway to everlasting life for all of us. Thanks be to God!

A Notation for This Week's Scripture

During Eastertide, the Old Testament readings are replaced in the lectionary with passages from the book of Acts. Today's passage is a short recollection of the unity of the new church. The church in this post-resurrection time period faces persecution and their unity as a body of faith will ensure their survival. This passage tells us a lot about the mission and ministry of the early church. We learn that the mission of the church was living into Christ's call to '...love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.' (Luke 10:27) In doing these things, we hear that no member of the early church was in need despite not claiming private ownership of land or goods – this sounds in keeping with Jesus' frequent call to leave our possessions and follow him. This passage invites us to trust in God and to follow the Truth as we learned in and from Christ Jesus.

Theme: One Heart and Soul

Before Class: You will need:

- Make a large heart out of a piece of poster board or butcher block paper. Hang the large heart on the board at the front of your classroom before the children arrive.
- A black sharpie/permanent marker (for yourself)
- Markers
- Crayons
- Tape

Beginning:

Celebrant/Teacher:

Alleluia, Christ is Risen!

People/Children:

The Lord is Risen indeed, Alleluia!

So what now? Jesus has been raised; the disciples are overjoyed. What now? The work of the disciples, Jesus's followers, didn't end when Jesus came back to life; in a lot of ways it was just

beginning. The Good News that Jesus was alive again was news that needed to be spread far and wide. The only way to grow the community of believers is to share the good news of God in Christ. We do this by telling people about Jesus and by our actions in the world (sharing kindness, love, generosity, etc.) Where have you seen examples of the love of God shared in the world this week? (*Give them time to respond.*) Let's give thanks for that love and pray together.

Opening Prayer: Dear Lord, we thank you for all the ways you are raised to new life each and every day. Help us to love one another and spread love through the world. Amen.

The Story:

Today's story comes from the Book of Acts, also known as the Acts of the Apostles. In this book we hear stories from the early church as it was forming in the time after the resurrection of Jesus. In today's story we hear about the importance of togetherness and harmony in the church. Harmony doesn't mean that everything has to be the same – like in music, harmony means that everyone working together doing their part create something that fits together.

Acts 4:32-35

Now the whole group of people who believed in Jesus were of one heart and soul. No one owned things of their own. They shared everything they had. Jesus' disciples told everyone they met about Jesus' resurrection. Jesus' followers were blessed by God because of the good work they were doing to share Jesus' story and love with everyone they met. None of the followers were poor or needy. They had everything they needed because some of the followers even sold their houses and used the money to make sure everyone had enough of the things they needed.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what surprised you about the story today.
- I wonder what it means to be of one heart and mind.
- I wonder what you heard God say in the story.
- I wonder what the most important part of this story is.

Activity: Today we are going to talk about what it means to be of "one heart and soul." In the passage from Acts we hear that all of the believers were of "one heart and soul." Does this mean that everyone in the early church agreed about everything? No. But it does mean that the people in the early church understood the importance of prioritizing the big things and overcoming obstacles that could divide them.

Another way of looking at this would be to think of it as all of their hearts picking the most important thing(s) and focusing their attention only on those things.

Today we are going to make a big heart that can be our class heart.

We need to make sure our heart represents the things that are most important to us as a group. These should be the things that we think God most wants us to focus on. Can we think of some things that are very important to us?

Give the children time to offer up suggestions. Help them to move from individual priorities to collective priorities. Instead of, for example “My sister, Martha.” – “Family” could work as a class priority. Other good examples to encourage in the conversation time would be: helping others, sharing God’s love, family, friends, being good, etc.

As the kids come up with good ideas for the class “One Heart” – write them in the heart using the black sharpie/permanent marker.

After you have several of these written in the heart, take the heart off of the wall and put it on the table/floor with the children around it. Pass out crayons/markers and invite the children to decorate the heart together.

Getting Closure: After completing the class heart take the opportunity to re-read the list of things written on it out loud to the class. Ask the children if they think the focus of your church matches with their list? Can you help them think of examples of how your church focus is similar to their class’ heart focus?

Closing Prayer: God of Love and Life, you have brought us together as one church and called on us to have one heart and soul. Help us to keep our hearts always focused on you. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Celebrant/Teacher: Alleluia, Christ is Risen!

People/Children: The Lord is Risen indeed, Alleluia!

*Published by the Formation Office of The Episcopal Church, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.
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