

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – All Saints Day
Lesson Plans for Younger Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Isaiah 25:6-9

Background

Every year on All Saints' Day we gather to remember the Saints of the Church who have shaped our faith and furthered God's message in this world. We also take time during that service to pray for "all the faithful departed" who have died since the previous All Saints' Day. Oftentimes we think of All Saints' Day as the feast when we pray for our friends and family members who have died, but that is actually All Souls' Day, which is celebrated the day *after* All Saints Day. The two feasts are connected, but it is important to remember the difference. The celebration of All Saints' Day is an opportunity to thank those brave women and men who lived their lives in such a way that, through their example, we have learned more about the living God. As the hymn "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God" (293 in the Hymnal 1982) teaches us, we celebrate those who lived and died fighting to spread God's word – and we can *strive* to be one too.

A Notation for This Week's Hebrew Scripture

This is the promise! This is the dream! Today's scripture passage features Isaiah's prophesy that God will provide a feast for all people, remove the shroud of death, take away all of our sadness, and bring us to God, "for whom we have waited." Whew! If that doesn't warrant an "Alleluia!" I don't know what does. As Christians, we believe that this prophesy is a foretelling of Jesus coming to walk amongst us, teach us, and carrying our sins to the cross for us – eliminating the finality of death with his resurrection. This image of the heavenly banquet assures us on this All Saints Day that the saints who lived and died telling the story of Jesus are now sitting on the right hand of God, "rejoic(ing) in his salvation."

Theme: God Will Care for Us!

Before Class: Practice your movements for the story. Find a king or queen size sheet that you can use for class.

Beginning: Hang pictures of mountaintops around the room before the class arrives. When the children arrive, invite them to walk around the room looking at each picture. After they have seen all the pictures ask them each to choose their favorite picture and to go stand next to that picture. Next, give each child a chance to tell the class what they like best about "their mountain."

Opening Prayer: Amazing God, thank you for creating this beautiful world. Amen.

The Story: Isaiah 25:6-9

Today's story is a triumphant passage from Isaiah. Have the class stand around the room in a big circle. Ask the children to stand up tall and put their fists on their hips in a "superman" style pose. Tell them that you will all act out the speech from today's story together. They should stand in their "super-pose" until you break your speech for a movement. Follow the script below; stage directions are in italics.

All standing around the room in their "super poses." Once the children are quite in their bodies, proclaim loudly:

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

After you finish the previous verse, lunge forward toward your table and model eating and drinking imaginary feast items. Let the children join in. After a moment call: SUPER POSE! And wait for the children to return to neutral. Then, continue...

And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;
he will swallow up death forever.

After you finish the previous verse, dramatically throw your hands over your head saying, "oh no what is this sheet doing here?" Let the children join in. After a moment "toss away" the sheet and shake off saying "Go away, sheet! God got rid of you!" After the children follow suit, call: SUPER POSE! And wait for the children to return to neutral. Then, continue...

Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.

After you finish the previous verse, pretend that you are crying. Let the children join in. After a moment wipe your tears away in an exaggerated motion saying, "Thanks God!" After the children follow suit, call: SUPER POSE! And wait for the children to return to neutral. Then, continue...

It will be said on that day,
Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.
This is the LORD for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

After the final verse, extend your arms in the air like a big 'V.' (This is called the orans position – it is an exaggerated version of the position a priest uses when praying the Eucharistic prayer.)

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder how that passage made you feel.
- I wonder why the passage is on a mountain top.
- I wonder what the 4 promises God makes in that story are.
- I wonder why this is important.
- I wonder what the “feast” for all people is.
- I wonder what the sheet over the people was.
 - *This question is key for the subsequent activity.*

Activity: For the start of the activity, have the whole class sit together in the center of the room. Then, invite the four children to stand in the corners of the room. Give them the sheet you brought and have each of them hold a corner of the sheet so that it is over the heads of the kids in the middle of the room. You should be sitting under the sheet with the students. After everyone is under the sheet, invite the four students to drop the corner of the sheet so it rests on top of the group – invite the four students to join the group under the sheet.

After the whole group is under the sheet, ask the children how they feel. After everyone has a chance to share how they feel, invite the group to toss off the sheet on the count of three. As soon as the sheet is off ask them how they feel now. Make note of the differences out loud.

Now, you will play a parachute game with the sheet. Have the whole group stand in a circle with each of them holding the edge of the sheet. Help the children to move the sheet up and down with their arms. Once you get into a good rhythm, call out the names of two children standing on opposite side of the sheet – ask them to trade places by quickly moving under the sheet while it is up, before it comes down. Continue until all of the children have a chance to trade places under the sheet at least once.

Getting Closure: Sit on the floor in the middle of the room. Ask the children what they thought about the game. Ask the kids to remember what it felt like to be under the sheet and what it felt like when the sheet went away? Did it feel a little like the freedom of the mountain top?

Closing Prayer: Wonderful God, thank you for the promises you make to love us and care for us, always. Amen.

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