

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Fourth Sunday in Lent
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: John 9:1-41

Lent invites us to step off our mental treadmills, take a breath, and look around. Lent invites us to ask: Where are we demanding solutions? Where can we risk staying in tension? Where are we blind just not noticing? What do we thirst for? Where are we bound or stuck? What will we risk doing during these 40 days of Lent to clear a space in which Easter can break through?

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

A man born blind, and a healing that placed the authorities at risk: How does the way we look at things affect our capacity to see?

Theme: Searching for Sight

Before: Gather an assortment of objects such as a set of child's wooden blocks, or several bright-colored plastic Easter eggs, even a batch of small plastic juice cups, which you can hide in plain sight around the room. Also gather things like a small stuffed animal in a paper grocery bag, a bell, and even a cell phone. The point is to invite the children to experience how we find out about things by seeing, by feeling, and by hearing. Obviously, if you have a blind child in your class, you will need to supplement the seeing things with hearing and feeling things. You will also need a bright sheet of construction paper for each child and some white chalk.

Beginning: Say to the children something like this: I think there are seven bright Easter eggs (or 8 wooden blocks, or whatever you have brought and hid) in funny places in this room. I think you can find them. If you see one, get up and go get it and then come back and sit down until everyone has found one. When all the items have been found, ask the children to put them in the center of the table, perhaps in a box or a basket.

Praying: Thank you, God, for all the things we can see with our eyes. Amen.

The Story: This is a story about a man who could not see. He had never been able to see. Even when he was a tiny baby, he could not see. His parents loved him and took care of him, but there were some things he could not do. Jesus saw that the man could not see and decided to fix that. He did something strange. Jesus spat on the ground, made some mud with his spit, and put that on the man's eyes. Then he told the man to go wash his face in the water. The man did what he was told and when he dried off his face, he could see. Wow! He looked up at the birds in the trees, and down at the little ants crawling on the ground. He could see all of this. The other grown-ups argued with each other, "How did this happen? Are we sure this is the same man?" "How come you can see?" they asked the man. He said, "I don't know what happened. I could not see, but someone fixed it so I can see." Jesus went looking for the man. The man said, "I wish I knew who it was that healed me." "I was the one," Jesus told the man. Now the man believed in Jesus.

Activity: Different ways of seeing

Gather what you have brought. To help the children become aware that we can figure some things out without being able to see, offer the stuffed animal in the grocery paper bag. Ask the children, one by one, to reach in, touch it, and see if they can figure out what is in the bag. Ask them to describe what they feel (soft, furry, etc.) Then when all have guessed, bring the creature out for all to see. If time permits, you could do the same thing with a paper bag containing other items such as a toothbrush, a comb, a baby's pacifier, or a spoon; whatever was handy as you gathered supplies. Ask the children to reach in, feel the items, and figure out what they are touching. Then, pour the items out on the table, so they can see what they were feeling.

Option: If time permits, use this suggestion. Tell the children to form a big circle — with room to reach out arms in all directions without touching anyone. Then, ask one child to say: "I can see, follow me!" and then lead the children through some motion: (Run in a circle until we are all back at the place where we began. Hop on one foot. (Any Simon Says type motions). Keep going until each child has had the chance to lead the group.

Activity: Give each child a piece of bright colored construction paper and pieces of white chalk. Tell them that our Gratitude Pictures today will be created using these materials. Ask one child to hold up the piece of construction paper and ask the rest of the children to call out what color it is. Each child, in turn, can hold up their piece of paper and the others can name its color. Ask the children how we know what color the pieces of paper are? Yes, we can see them. Ask the children to draw something that makes them glad.

Getting Closure: Ask if any of the children want to talk about their Gratitude Picture. Share yours also.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, God, for all the wonderful things you have created for us to see. Amen.

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