

Fourth Sunday of Lent – year B

Preparation

Read over these: [Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22](#) and [John 3:14-21](#). Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump at you. Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://www.textweek.com/yearb/lentb4.htm>

http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/lessonPlans/109452_115883_ENG_HTM.htm

http://www.sermons4kids.com/measuring_gods_love.htm

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/lent4kles.htm>

<http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/b/4Lent-b/A-4Lent-b.html>

<http://www.efree.mb.ca/lectionarypuzzles/in-bwmp.htm#lent04>

http://www.cyberfaith.com/proclaiming_faith.cfm?id=305

Gathering

Materials needed

- Small table or end of one table
- Candle and candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- Purple cloth
- Newsprint and markers
- Psalm phrases from previous weeks
- Print up the following on a strip of white paper in large letters:
“**Let us offer thanksgivings to God and tell what God has done with songs of joy**”

Print up the prayer on the newsprint so that the readers can say the prayer with you. Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. With the children place the cloth on the table. Have them help you place the candle and the Bible on the cloth. Place the Psalm phrases from the previous weeks on the table. Have ready the Psalm fraction to place on the table after prayer. Light the candle. Pray the following prayer together:

**God be with us on the journey,
Jesus be with us as we learn,
Holy Spirit be with us as we grow. Amen.**

Hold up the Psalm fraction for the children. Read it to them or have a reader in the group do it. Explain that each week during this season they will get a new psalm piece to add to the worship table.

Place the Psalm fraction on the table. Blow out the candle. Conversations have different levels. Sometimes they are simple and sometimes they are complex. Ask the children how they start a talk with a friend that they know might be difficult. (*Wait for their responses.*) Explain that Jesus knew that God had something difficult for him to do. Ask the children to listen and hear what that the difficult thing is that Jesus is going to need to do.

Story Time

Materials needed

- A comfortable place to tell the story –around a table or on the floor with cushions

Jesus was trying to help his friends understand what was coming. He knew that it was going to be hard for them. Jesus wanted to find the right words so that they would understand the importance of God's work in the world.

One day a friend came to see Jesus. He asked Jesus to tell him why God had sent Jesus into the world. Jesus knew that this was going to be an important conversation. Jesus took a moment to quiet himself and to get ready to speak.

Take a moment to be quiet with the children before going on to the next part of the story.

“A day is coming, and it is coming soon, when I will be lifted up, just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. I want you to remember how much God loves the world. God loves the world so much that God sent me, God's only Son, so that the world can be saved.

The light, and I am the light, has come into the world. I have come to shine on those who believe in God. I have come to help them shine the light all around the world. The light of God shines through all the deeds that they do in my name.

Remember what I have told you. The day is coming soon when I will be given over to the leaders. I will be killed. Remember that I will be coming back. God is not finished with me. God wants the light of good deeds to shine all over the world. God wants the world to be saved.”

Take another moment of quiet. Ask the children if they heard the difficult thing that God needs Jesus to do. How do they think Jesus' friends reacted when they heard this? How did they feel when they heard what Jesus had to say?

Response

Project Idea 1: Candle Craft

In the story today the children heard how the followers of Jesus are known by the light of their deeds in the world. These candles will be reminders of that with their families.

Materials needed

- small, clean glass jars without lids
- votive candles
- white glue
- paint brushes
- glitter
- self-adhesive jewel stickers
- ribbons
- small bowls

Instructions

Give each child a glass jar. Pour some glue into a small bowl. Pour glitter into another bowl. Have the children paint the outside of their jars with the glue. Then get them to roll the jars in the bowl with the glitter. Help them to shake off the excess of the glitter. Have the children choose some self-adhesive jewel stickers to put on the outside of the jar. When they are done decorating their jars get them to tie a piece of ribbon around the top of the jar and then put a votive candle inside the jar. Remind the children that Jesus said his followers could be known by the light that they spread in the world. Encourage the children to light the candles with their families during the rest of Lent at meal times, so that they can remember to be Jesus' light in the world.

Project Idea 2: Deeds of light

Materials needed

- candle and flame picture at end of lesson
- construction paper: white, purple, red, yellow and orange
- markers
- glue
- scissors
- glitter (optional)

Instructions

Make a copy of the candle and flame picture at the end of the lesson. Cut them out and use them to trace onto construction paper. Trace the candle shape onto the white construction paper, so that each child has one and the flame shape on the red, yellow and orange construction paper, so that each child has several. Give each child a candle shape and have them cut out their candles. Get them to print on the centre of the candle 'Deeds of light'. Have them glue their candles onto the purple construction paper. Get them to cut out several flames from the different colours. Explain that over the next few weeks as they see or do good deeds, deeds of light, they are to add a flame to their candle. Hopefully by the time of Easter they will have a candle full of flames. If they can think of good deed that they have already noticed that they should add a flame to their candle now. You may want to let the children to decorate their candles with glitter, if time is available. Encourage the children to place their candles and flames at home somewhere where they can remember to add flames to it.

Project Idea 3: Thanksgiving Cards

Giving thanks is something that we do not always remember to do for those who are special in our lives. With this response the children will be able to thank God for that special person in their lives.

Materials needed

- card stock
- fine line markers
- candle and flame picture at end of lesson
- scissors
- red, yellow and orange tissue paper
- glue sticks
- glitter
- the Psalm phrase for today from the worship table

Instructions

Copy the flame picture from the end of the lesson. Make enough so that each child will have one flame. Cut the flame shapes out. Give each child a piece of card stock and have them fold it in half to make a card. Give each child a flame shape and have them trace it on the outside of the card. Help the children to print the psalm phrase on the inside of the card. Ask the children to think about someone special in their lives that they would like to give thanks for. Have them write their names inside the card and then sign it with their own names. On the outside of the card have the children spread glue into the flame shape and then tear up pieces of the tissue paper, scrunch them up and then glue into the flame. If wanted, let the children use the glitter to decorate the outside the cards with. Encourage the children to give their cards to the person named in the inside of the card.

Closing

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candles. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

**Holy God, lead us to share your love with others,
Loving Jesus, lead us to be brave with others,
Holy Spirit, lead us to follow as children of God.
Amen.**

Candle and Flame

