

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – First Sunday after Christmas
Lesson Plans for Older Children
RCL Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Background: Today is the first Sunday after Christmas Day. White is the color of joy in the church, and we are rejoicing that Jesus has come to live among us. The candle in the center of the Advent wreath is the Christ Candle, reminding us that Light of the World has come into the world.

A Notation for This Week's Reading: God's righteousness and goodness is growing throughout the world.

Theme: Joy to the world!

Before Class: Choose the medium by which the class will share good news: Video? Posters? A newspaper that you will print and hand out at coffee hour? Assemble what you need. You will want to bring in that day's local newspaper and perhaps a national newspaper, as well as some news stories from <http://www.goodnewsnetwork.org> or <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/good-news/>

Beginning: Prepare your gathering/prayer space with a white cloth. For the four weeks of Advent and two weeks of Christmas, you will need an Advent wreath and a Christ Candle, or four votive candles and a pillar candle, matches and a candlesnuffer. A chime is helpful to mark transitions but not necessary.

Opening Prayer: Holy God, let the light of these candles remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. May this light glow in us, kindling our love for you, sparking our imaginations, and making us burn with a desire to do your work in this world. Amen.

The Story: Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Ask a child to read the passage, or ask each child to read a sentence. After a moment of silence, invite them to name a word or a phrase or an image from the text that stood out to them. Pause, then read the entire passage aloud again.

I am just about to burst with joy. God has bought me a whole new wardrobe! He has dressed me up in salvation and covered my shoulders with a fancy robe of goodness. I look like I am ready to go to a wedding! Just like the earth pushes little green shoots into the sunshine, and new plants eagerly spring up through the dirt; that's how God is making righteousness and goodness grow all over the world.

I am not going to keep quiet about this. I'm not going to sleep until I know that God's people in Zion and Jerusalem know about God's glory. God will give God's people a new name and a new look about them, so everyone will be bowled over by their beauty. Then

Jerusalem will be like a crown of jewels held in God's hands, ready to place on God's head.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder when you have felt that you were about to burst with joy?
- I wonder how God is making righteousness and goodness grow in the world today?
- I wonder how people today know about God's glory?

Activity: Tell the children that their project today will be to share the good news of how God is working in the world today to make righteousness and goodness grow. Give them sections of the newspaper to look through, and if they struggle with finding good news, share some of the good news stories from the web. Using the medium you've chosen (video newscast, posters, their own newspaper), ask them to choose a few stories and retell them in their own words. Share widely!

Getting Closure: We learn so much about God's goodness, righteousness and glory from Jesus. God works through us to accomplish what needs to be done (feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, freeing the captives) and through this, we show God's love to everyone.

Scripture from "God's Word, My Voice: A Lectionary for Children" by Lyn Zill Briggs. Copyright (c) 2015 Church Publishing. All rights reserved. Used with permission. www.churchpublishing.org/godswordmyvoice

Written by Wendy Barrie

*Published by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.
© 2015 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.*