

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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SCRIPTURE PASSAGE/ LECTIONARY WEEK:	Matthew 28:16-20
SOCIAL PRINCIPLES/ BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS REFERENCES:	¶162, Other Social Issues, L; ¶ 162, Other Social Issues, C.
OBJECTIVE:	Participants will take a deeper look at how Christ calls us to be disciples of All Nations and what it means to include those of different races and ethnicities into the body of Christ.
SUPPLIES NEEDED:	ibles for the group and/or electronic access to a Bible, at least one copy of the 2024 Social Principles, a way to play audio for the group activity section, newsprint/easel paper, markers

LESSON PLAN STRUCTURE (1 HOUR)

CENTERING MOMENT (5 MINUTES)

Say: Welcome everyone. I’m glad tha you are here today. Before we jump in, we are going to take a few minutes to check in with each other. Our check-in question today is:

When, if ever, did I feel included in something this week?

(Invite students to share one at a time. Remind them that sharing is always optional and that this is a space of respect and care.)

Say: Thank you for trusting one another with your stories. Let’s take a moment to ground ourselves as we begin.

Pray: Loving God, thank you for bringing us together today. Open our hearts and minds as we listen to your Word and to one another. Help us to learn how to love more fully, include more boldly, and follow Jesus more faithfully. Amen.

NOTES

Be mindful that not all youth feel included. Be sure to share up front that there is no pressure to answer the question and that it is also okay to answer that you did not feel included this week.

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SCRIPTURE STUDY (25 MIN.)

Say: Today we are reading from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 28, verses 16 through 20. This passage comes after Jesus' resurrection and includes some of his final words to the disciples.

(Invite students to read aloud, either taking turns or with one reader.)

Discussion Questions:

- What words or phrases stood out to you as you heard this passage?
- What directions do you hear Jesus giving the disciples?
- As a follower of Christ today, what do these directions mean for you?
- Jesus tells the disciples to “make disciples of all nations.” How does that challenge us to think about people who are different from us?
- How do you feel the church has done, including people of all races and ethnicities?
- In what ways can we include people who worship or experience God different than we do in the life of the church and the kingdom of God?

Say: Today is Trinity Sunday, we often hear the words, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in baptism.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Jesus includes baptism as part of his instructions to the disciples?
- What fears do you think the disciples may have had when Jesus sent them out to all nations?
- Do you think we carry similar fears or biases today?
- How do you think God feels when people are treated unfairly because of their skin color, language, or culture?

NOTES

Today's scripture passage comes from the Gospel of Matthew and is often referred to as the Commissioning of the Disciples. We begin shortly after the Resurrection of Christ. The commissioning follows through on God's intent to “bless all nations” as the new church begins to form. The disciples are charged with a new directive for more global evangelism.

In today's lesson we will focus heavily on two words, “All Nations”. We will take a deeper look at what it means to include people of all races and ethnicities in the church.

Today is also Trinity Sunday in the life of the Church. Trinity Sunday falls on the 50th day of the Easter Season and celebrates the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost into the Trinity. We heard these words in today's scripture in reference to baptism.

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Discussion Questions:

1. What words or phrases stick out to you as you hear these words of scripture?
2. What directions do you hear Jesus giving the disciples?
3. As a follower of Christ, what do these directions mean to you?
4. Jesus tells us to make disciples of all nations. How might this challenge us to think more about those not like us?
5. How do you feel the church has done including people of all races and ethnicities?
6. In what ways can we include people who worship and experience God differently than ourselves in the life of the church and the kingdom of God?

Say: Today is Trinity Sunday. The trinity is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in one. We often hear these words in baptism.

Reflection Questions:

- Why do you think Jesus shares baptism in his charge to the disciples?
- What fears do you think the disciples may have had when Jesus sent them to all nations? Do we carry similar fears or bias today?
- How do you think God feels when we treat people unfairly because of their skin color, language, or culture?

GROUP ACTIVITY (25 MIN.)

Say: The United Methodist Church believes that faith must show up in how we treat others. Let's take a look at ¶162, Other Social Issues, L (Racism, Ethnocentrism, and Tribalism) which speaks directly about racism.

(Invite students to read silently or aloud, then discuss with a partner or as a large group.)

NOTES

Copies of the New Revised Social Principles from General Conference 2024.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST CONT'D

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think the United Methodist Church has a clear stance on racism?
- What does this statement mean to you personally?
- How do you think Jesus would respond today to racism and injustice in our schools, communities, or churches?
- How can we follow Jesus if we stay silent when we see racial injustice?

Say: Now we are going to listen to a story from New Hampshire Public Radio, about middle school students taking action against racism in their own community.

(Link to New Hampshire Public Radio News Story: [These NH middle schoolers are calling out racism to change their peers' mindsets | New Hampshire Public Radio](#))

Discussion Questions:

What stood out to you in this story?

What actions did you hear students taking in their everyday lives?

(Create a list on newsprint or easel paper of actions students mention.)

Say: Looking at this list, are there any ideas we could try in our church or community?

(Choose one idea together and guide the group through planning.)

Planning Questions:

- What supplies do we need?
- What adult leaders or community partners do we need to involve?
- Who in our group can take responsibility for different parts of this project?
- When and how will we complete this work?
- How will we check in our progress?
- How does this project help us live out our faith by dismantling racism?

NOTES

There are a few different ideas that students are trying in the new story you will listen too. Why we want to encourage your students to create a list, you will see a list below of some of the ideas we are hoping students generate.

1. Survey your community
2. Suggestion boxes
3. Culture/Diversity Spirit Week
4. Positivity Mailboxes

You will see the group will pick one project from your list and try to implement it as an action plan for your church and/or larger community. Please help guide students to think through the questions and pick a project that is obtainable for your context. You may want to think through the list of questions students will be asked ahead of time and reach out to adults ahead of time that will play a part in any of these plans.

We did not list supplies needed to complete the plan in the supplies at the top of this lesson plan as that will be dependent on the project you choose to explore and its scope and size.

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CLOSING MOMENT (5 MIN.)

Say: Over the next few weeks, we are going to continue working on the project we have chosen today. As we learned, the United Methodist Church has made a commitment to end racism and that work starts with people like us, showing up and taking action. We are going to close with a prayer from the United Methodist Discipleship website, which shares daily prayers.

Prayer: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/praying-for-change-daily-prayers-for-anti-racism>

NOTES

If students are curious you may want to consider sharing this link and encouraging them to take a prayer challenge for the next week or month using these prayers. This may also be a great resource to share with their families and/or your whole church.