

7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)

Lesson Plan: Prologue to John, pt. 1

Learning Goals: Students should be able to define the concept of Incarnation and explain its significance to John's Gospel.

Question: In your opinion, where is the best place to begin a story? Why? (or alternative activity)

Prayer.

Discuss question on board. (5 minutes)

Activity: "The Blindfolded Agent"

Item needed: Blindfold

Choose an agent and a captive. Blindfold the agent. Then place the captive in one corner of the room, surrounded by many. When you give the signal, the blindfolded agent should try to find the captive without peeking. During the search the whole group should distract and give false directions, creating a chaotic situation. After a few minutes quiet the group, remove the blindfold, and give the agent 10 seconds to scan the room. (He probably will be able to spot the captive.) Then blindfold the agent and let the search resume along with the distractions. The agent should find the captive easily this time, even with all the noise.

Follow Up Questions:

- (To the agent): Why was it easier to find the captive the second time?
- In what areas of our lives do we act as though we're wearing blindfolds?
- What is happening in our world that could be described as darkness?
- When darkness and light come in contact with each other, what happens?

Read (watch) John 1:1-18

The Gospels begin at different places:

- Matthew - genealogy of Jesus (family tree)
- Luke - birth of Jesus (conception)
- Mark - baptism of Jesus
- John - THE beginning (even before creation)

There are echoes here of Genesis. This is, in a sense, the New Testament's "creation story."

"Word" (What do we mean by "word"?)

- it does not refer to "a group of letters strung together"
- For the Jews the "Word of God" embodied all the power of God (think Genesis 1 - God creating by the power of the spoken word)
- For the Greeks/Romans, "Word (Logos) equaled a force of reason, stability, and purpose in an ever-changing world. It provided an eternal governing principle of order in a world that at times seemed chaotic."

- John is presenting Jesus here, not as the Jewish Messiah, but as the highest of all philosophy and reason (thought).
- Implications of calling Jesus “The Word”:
 - Jesus has no beginning or end - he has always been; there has never been a time when he was not
 - Jesus is God
 - Introduction of the idea of the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit; God is “three in one”)

The Word in Creation

- Everything was created through the Word
- Illustration of the largeness of the world: Star video
- Illustration of the complexity of the microscopic world

The Word is Life

- John uses the term “life” 36 different times in his gospel
- The Word doesn’t contain life, the Word is the source of life.
- Jesus is both physical and spiritual life
- Jesus is the source and giver of all life (John 14:6)

The Word is Light

- John refers to “light” a total of 21 times
- The Word doesn’t contain light, the Word is the source of light
- There is conflict between light and darkness (there can be no peaceful coexistence between)
- Without Christ, we are in darkness.
- Light can be good or bad, depending on your situation

Imagine you are out in the middle of the night in the complete dark (pitch black). You can't see a thing. Suddenly, a light comes on overhead shining down on top of you. You are exposed. You are found. Is that a blessing or a curse? It depends. Are you lost or are you a criminal? If you are a criminal on the run, you may be terrified because you've been found. If you are lost, you're elated because you've been found.

Lesson Summary/Review:

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- The Word
- Trinity
- What are three implications of calling Jesus “The Word” ?