



# Dream the church VISION 2019

Sunday, June 7, 2009

## Trinity Sunday/Vision 2019 Sunday

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*This lesson was written for Vision 2019 Sunday, a time for parishes to give input into Vision 2019, a church-wide exercise to discern, dream, and decide where God wants the Anglican Church of Canada to be by 2019. All Canadian Anglicans are encouraged to give their input, and results will be shared at the next national meeting, General Synod 2010. (Learn more on the website: [www.anglican.ca/v2019](http://www.anglican.ca/v2019))*

*This lesson is an opportunity for children to give their response to the two-part Vision 2019 question: “Where is your church now, and where do you want the Anglican Church of Canada to be by 2019?” This lesson will enable the youngest church members to share in this process and have their voices and visions heard by the wider church. At the end of the lesson you will find how to send their responses in to the national church office.*

*The theme of this Sunday School lesson is “telling our story.” The first part focuses on the gospel reading, where Nicodemus meets with Jesus and learns about how his story fits into God’s bigger story. The second part of the lesson encourages children to connect their stories with God’s bigger story—in this case God’s story for the Anglican Church of Canada.*

### 1. Preparation:

Read over [John 3: 1-17](#), the gospel for this Sunday. Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump out 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.

### 2. Gathering:

Materials needed:

- Small table or end of one table
- Candle
- Candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- White cloth
- Newsprint and markers
- Small votive candles

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 white cloth on the table. Have them help you place the candle and the Bible on the cloth. Light the candle. Then have each child place a small votive candle by the large candle. As you light their candles say, *We are so happy that (name of child) is with us today.*

Pray the following prayer together:

**For a time to learn and share, we thank you God,  
For friendship and stories, we thank you Jesus,  
For the church in which we grow and love, we thank you Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

Blow out the candles. Pick up the Bible. Find your favourite story in the Bible and tell the children about it with a few sentences. Show the children where it comes from. Ask the children if they can tell you their favourite story in the Bible. If you can, find it in the Bible for them so they know where it comes from. Suggest that each person has a favourite story in the Bible that they go back to read over and to learn from. Explain that in church today we are thinking about how our stories connect with God's bigger story, just like all these little stories are part of one big book—the Bible. Explain that today they are going to hear a story from someone who learned something amazing about how his life was part of God's bigger story in the world.

### **3. Story Time:**

#### **Materials needed:**

A comfortable place to tell the story—around a table or on the floor with cushions  
This story is told from the perspective of Nicodemus so you may want a towel or shawl to put over your head to get into the role.

#### **Script:**

*Well, hello there. How wonderful it is to see you all. I am so happy to be here with you today. I have something so special that I need to tell you. It is about an amazing visit that I had with Jesus. He told me something that just surprised me so much.*

*What? What? (Look around as if someone off stage is talking to you.) Oh yes, that's right I need to tell the children my name. So, children, I am Nicodemus. I was one of the leaders of the religious community in Jerusalem when Jesus was around.*

*Now, children, I have to tell you something else about myself. Something that I am not very proud of. I am not a brave man. I was really scared that if the other religious leaders heard that I had met with Jesus that they would do something nasty to me. So, children I asked Jesus to meet with me at night. This is what we had to talk about.*

*"Jesus, we all know that you are a teacher who comes from God. For the things that you do show us that."*

*After that Jesus said the most surprising thing. He said, “Here is a truth for you. No one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born from above.”*

*Now that set me back on my heels. I wasn’t sure what to think or say after that. I asked Jesus, “How can anyone be born after becoming a grown-up? I just don’t understand what you are talking about.”*

*Jesus answered me in this way, “You who were born of the world need to be born of water and of the Spirit if you want to see the kingdom of God. Don’t be surprised that I said to you that you must be born from above. The wind blows where it will. You don’t know where it comes from or where it will be going. It is the same way with the Spirit and everyone that is born of the Spirit.”*

*You need to know children, I was still very confused and asked Jesus, “How can this be?”*

*It was at this point that Jesus told me something that I have never forgotten and has become so much part of my story and I hope that it will become part of your story as well.*

*Jesus said to me, “God loves this world so much. So much that God sent me, the only Son, to come into the world and to save it. So that everyone who believes in me will be saved and live with God forever. God did not send me into the world to tell the world how wrong it is but to point the way to the Kingdom of God.”*

*Children, this changed the way I think about God. I realized that God was bigger than I thought possible. I realized that God’s love is so large. I realized that God through Jesus wants to save us all. I realized that God the Holy Spirit blows through all of our lives if we just listen for it.*

*Thank you children for listening to my story. I am so glad that I was able to be here with you today.*

Ask the children if they have any questions about today’s story.

#### **4. Response:**

Tell the children that now that Nicodemus has shared his story, it’s their turn to share their stories too.

#### ***Idea #1: Tell us your story: Write a letter to the church***

This response is designed for children 10 years of age and older. It will assist the children in telling their own story and their own vision for the future of the church.

#### **Materials needed:**

- newsprint
- markers
- pencils or pens, paper
- envelopes and stamps
- address of Church House:  
(Vision 2019 / Anglican Church of Canada / 80 Hayden Street / Toronto, Ont. / M4Y 3G2) and [Five Marks of Mission](#) (mission priorities used widely throughout the Anglican Communion):

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

**Instructions:**

1. Print up the Five Marks of Mission on the newsprint.
2. Explain that these are important ideas to Anglican churches around the world.
3. Read them over with the children.
4. Explain to the children that they have an opportunity to share with their own church and the wider church their hopes, dreams and visions of what they would like the church to be like in ten years.
5. Have the children work together to list all the ideas that they want to share and have up on the newsprint.
6. Hand out the paper and pens or pencils and ask the children to each write a letter to the church using the ideas that they have created together. Make sure the children write which parish they are from in the letter. As the children are working offer assistance as needed. If you have some children who find reading and writing a challenge then it might be a good idea to work in groups of two or three to write a letter.
7. After they are finished if they feel comfortable have them share the letters with each other.
8. Give them each an envelope and have them print up the address (see above).
9. Place a stamp on the letters and make sure that they get posted.
10. Alternately, if you have access to a computer and are able to transcribe all the letters you may want to send them in by email: [vision2019@national.anglican.ca](mailto:vision2019@national.anglican.ca).

**Idea #2: Tell us your story: Collage Vision**

This response is designed for children 7 years of age and older. This can be a group activity or if you have a larger group put the children into groups of 3 or 4 to work together on it. One way of sharing this response will be to take a high-resolution photo on a digital camera and email it to Church House or alternately you can put them in a large package and mail them directly there.

**Materials needed:**

- poster board
- magazines
- scissors
- glue
- markers
- newsprint
- markers

**Instructions:**

1. In the centre of the poster board print in large letters VISION 2019—OUR CHURCH, OUR FUTURE.
2. Ask the children what they like best about church and list their ideas up on the newsprint. Ask the children what they think the church should be like when they are grown-ups and list their ideas up on the newsprint.
3. After they have listed all their ideas ask them to search through the magazines for

pictures that show the ideas that they have expressed and then cut them out. Suggest to the children that they find as many images as they can. Explain to the children that the church as a whole is looking at what it should look like and be in ten years time in the year 2019 and that their ideas are important to the whole church.

4. When they have finished cutting out the pictures work together to create a collage of all the ideas, remembering that a collage means that the images can overlap each other, by gluing the pictures up onto the poster board around the title in the centre.
5. After all the pictures have been placed use a dark marker to print some of the key words from the list the children created on the newsprint onto their collages.
6. When they are done have the children stand behind their collages and then take their photo with the digital camera.
7. Email the picture into the Vision 2019: [vision2019@national.anglican.ca](mailto:vision2019@national.anglican.ca).

### **Idea #3: Tell us your story: Church Picture and Video**

This response is designed for children 6 years of age and younger. It will give the children a hands-on activity and also a chance to share their vision with the wider church.

#### **Materials needed:**

- newsprint
- church image at end of lesson
- construction paper
- magazines
- markers
- scissors
- glue
- digital video camera
- permission forms at end of lesson

#### **Instructions:**

1. Print up the permission form and make sure that you have the parents/guardians fill out the form before the beginning of the session. If any parent/guardian doesn't want to give permission please make sure that their child is not within the video image.
2. Copy the church image at the end of the lesson so that each child has one and then cut it out for them.
3. Across the top of the construction paper (do one for each child) print the following: OUR CHURCH IN 2019. Set up the video camera on a tripod or on a table so that it captures all of the children as they are working or you could ask someone to come in and film as the children are working.
4. Give each child a copy of the church image and a piece of prepared construction paper.
5. Read the words printed across the top of the paper and explain that the church wants to know what the church should be like when they are grown-ups.
6. Have them glue their churches onto the construction paper and then suggest that they colour it in and draw what they would like the church to be in the future.
7. As they are working ask the children questions that will get them talking about the future of the church such as: What is the best thing about going to church? What should the church always do? What do they want the church to be like when they are grown-ups?
8. When they are finished colouring and drawing their pictures ask each child to talk about their picture, making sure that the images are captured on the video.
9. Thank the children for participating.
10. After the lesson is finished ask someone with enough technical experience to help you to send the video into Church House through the Vision 2019 website.

## 5. Closing:

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle. Thank all the children for being with you today and for sharing with the church what they would like to see the church become in 2019. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

**Holy God, for being with the church from the beginning, thank you.  
Loving Jesus, for telling us stories that make us grow, thank you.  
Holy Spirit, for showing us that future can be good, thank you.  
Amen.**

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Now that the children have had their chance to tell their story and begin to think about what they want the church to become, please share their responses (and your own!). Note that when you participate, you have the option of making your contributions public (on the website) or private (only for viewing by the Vision 2019 team).

Submissions are welcome in many media:

- post a video at [www.anglican.ca/vision2019/yourstory](http://www.anglican.ca/vision2019/yourstory) (10 minutes max.)
- write an email to [vision2019@national.anglican.ca](mailto:vision2019@national.anglican.ca)
- write a letter to Vision 2019 / Anglican Church of Canada / 80 Hayden Street / Toronto, Ont. / M4Y 3G2
- leave a phone message at 1-866-496-3057 (5 minutes max.)

*“Vision 2019 is an opportunity to say  
‘here’s what I think our church needs to be about.’”*

—Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate, Anglican Church of Canada



## Permission Form for Response #3

We the parents/guardians of \_\_\_\_\_ give permission for the video images of our child taken on Sunday, June 7, 2009 at \_\_\_\_\_ to be shared with the Vision 2019 team at the national office of the Anglican Church of Canada. Vision 2019 is a church-wide exercise to discern, dream, and decide where the Anglican Church of Canada should be by 2019. All Canadian Anglicans are encouraged to give their input, and results will be shared at the next national meeting, General Synod 2010.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_