

Read



Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19
Psalm 71:1-2, 3-4, 5-6,
15-17

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13
or 13:4-13

Luke 4:21-30

LIVING THE WORD

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 3, 2019



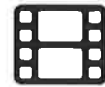
REFLECTION

Do you know your vocation in life? These three powerful readings point to vocation as a follower of Jesus. Born in God's image, Jeremiah tells us that we were formed to be "a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). Then Paul's letter to the Corinthians furthers this calling by reminding us to love. A popular reading for the Sacrament of Matrimony, couples pray this passage in earnest as they embark on their journey. Knowing that following Jesus and living out Marriage vows can be so tough, we are reminded that "love never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:8). The only way love fails is through our free will. Luke goes on to tell us that as we live our vocation to love, it is likely that we will be rejected and challenged in many ways on our journey. In fact, we could be thrown out of town as they tried to do to Jesus! Imagine how teenagers might experience this if they feel called to the priesthood or to serve as a deacon or sister. As a teen, to stand up for your faith in light of societal pressures can feel like social suicide. We must support those discerning this holy vocation which is so necessary to the future of our faith.



ACTION

Look up your diocesan vocation website. Search around on this website and reflect on your own vocation. Pope Francis encourages those who feel inclined toward the religious life in these words: "Becoming a priest or a man or woman religious is not primarily our own decision. . . . Rather it is the response to a call and to a call of love" (Pope Francis, Address to Seminarians and Novices, given July 6, 2013). Consider contacting the vocations director in your archdiocese to see how you can support teens called to religious life. Who knows, it may be a start on your journey to find your own vocation.



Watch this video on the
Sacrament of Matrimony:

<https://vimeo.com/201720271>



QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Reread 1 Corinthians. How do you live love out in your life?
- ❖ Have you considered your vocation to the single, married, or religious life?



February 3, 2019

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #72C

Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19

Psalm 71:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 15-17

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13 or

1 Corinthians 13:4-13

Luke 4:21-30

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

This Sunday's Gospel continues from last week, repeating the last verse of Luke 4 at its start. Jesus preached in his home synagogue and was initially met with glares. These escalated to outright rejection as his neighbors prepared to hurl him over a cliff rather than accepting his teachings. This Gospel provides a context for us to prepare and equip teens for the challenges we face in sharing our faith with others in today's highly secularized society.

Q FOCUS: Stand strong in sharing the Good News of the Gospel.

Liturgical Calendar Connection

The Memorial of St. Paul Miki and Companions, the Martyrs of Nagasaki (February 6), gives context to discuss those who paid the ultimate price for their faith. On February 8, the International Day of Prayer and Awareness of Human Trafficking is marked worldwide. Coinciding with the memorial of St. Josephine Bakhita, the day is dedicated to prayer and awareness raising against human trafficking and slavery. For more ideas, visit the website <http://www.usccb.org/about/anti-trafficking-program/day-of-prayer.cfm>.

Church Teaching Connection

"The Church, 'like a stranger in a foreign land, presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God,' announcing the cross and death of the Lord until he comes (see 1 Corinthians 11:26). But by the power of the risen Lord it is given strength to overcome, in patience and in love, its sorrow and its difficulties, both those that are from within and those that are from without, so that it may reveal in the world, faithfully, although with shadows, the mystery of its Lord until, in the end, it shall be manifested in full light" (*Porta fidei*, 6).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 4:21-30

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

Jesus began speaking in the synagogue, saying: "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They also asked, "Isn't this the son of Joseph?" He said to them, "Surely you will quote me this proverb, 'Physician, cure yourself,' and say, 'Do here in your native place the things that we heard were done in Capernaum.'" And he said, "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his

own native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down. headlong. But Jesus passed through the midst of them and went away.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

In today's Gospel, we pick back up where we left off last week in Luke's fourth chapter. As you will remember, Jesus was being acclaimed as he preached in the region of Galilee. The Holy Spirit moved in him and in the hearts of those who came to hear him. But when Jesus returned to his hometown of Nazareth, he did not receive a hometown hero's welcome. Today's Gospel passage repeats Luke 4:21, in which Jesus told those assembled in his home synagogue that he was the fulfillment of scriptural prophecies.

► How do you imagine that the people of Jesus' neighborhood felt to hear "Joseph's kid" preaching so eloquently?

► Putting yourself in their place, would you have been surprised to hear one of your neighbors referring to himself as the fulfillment of biblical prophesy? How might you have reacted?

The people in the synagogue that day were amazed by Jesus' wisdom and eloquence, but he knew from their stony reactions that they were not truly hearing him. He took the lead, in a sense heading them off at the pass by stating what he expected them to say: that they would ask why he wouldn't work the same miracles in their community that they had heard he had been performing in other places. He gave them past examples, sharing how even in Israel the prophets Elijah and Elisha had faced similar challenges. Even with famine and drought attacking his land, Elijah had not been sent to solve those problems but instead to minister to a poor widow. Elisha had not healed the lepers of his own community, except for Naaman, a Syrian.

► If Jesus is God, why do you believe that he did not simply perform a miracle that day rather than facing this test in his own community?

► For those who knew Jesus as a child, why do you believe that they were so skeptical about believing his teachings?

► Have you known older students from your school who went on to become priests or religious or who now work in ministry? How do you feel when you hear them share their faith? Is this more challenging if you knew them as a small child?

► What might people say about you if you bravely shared your belief in Jesus with an open heart? What keeps you from wanting to do this?

When Jesus was finished speaking, the people in the synagogue—his neighbors—were filled with outrage. How could this young man call himself God, they wondered. They were so outraged that they forced him out, leading him to a high hill with every intention of killing him. Jesus moved away safely, walking right through the angry mob. His own home faith community had rejected him, but he did not give up his mission to bring all of us to salvation. Jesus faced rejection multiple times in his life. We know that he was God, but also that he was fully human.

► How do you think these repeated rejections must have made Jesus feel in his heart? What kept him committed to his mission of salvation?

Those of us who follow Jesus also face rejection. In today's world, it can even be dangerous in many parts of the world to openly proclaim Christian faith.

- ▶ How can we more courageously support those who face religious persecution?
- ▶ Have you ever been attacked or ridiculed because of your faith in Jesus or for being a Catholic? What enabled you to withstand these attacks? How did prayer or the support of friends help you to stand strong in your witness?

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 132.

Jesus moved hearts and performed miracles in Galilee, but when he preached in his home town he was rejected.

We can expect that choosing to follow Jesus and making behavioral choices according to our virtues will cause us to be less popular or even to face attacks.

Act on the Word

The One Who Stood with Jesus

This activity aims to provide teens with an opportunity to practice defending their faith in a friendly, protected setting. Encourage teens to make the most of this safe environment by respecting one another and truly engaging themselves in the activity's mission. Address up front any concerns teens may have about being asked to evangelize by offering alternative "roles" where they may participate to their comfort level. Challenge more highly engaged teens to walk alongside peers supportively.

Divide teens into small groups. Their goal will be to revisit the details of this Gospel and to replay it through role-playing, but with an alternate ending. Teens should identify one person who will portray Jesus and one teen will stand "with" Jesus. The remaining teens will portray the Nazareth neighbors who are angry and ready to hurl Jesus from the hill.

As the role-playing begins, students will act out the Gospel and move to their "hill." Once at the hill, the teen who has been designated to stand with Jesus will now face his or her Nazareth neighbors and defend Jesus as the prophesied Messiah. Without personally attacking the one standing with Jesus, the neighbors should "hurl" attacks against Jesus, perhaps even employing questions or tactics that the teens themselves have encountered in their own faith sharing moments. The teen standing with Jesus should have the final word. The encounter should end respectfully.

If time permits, encourage your groups to go through a few rounds with different teens playing alternating roles. Bring your small groups back to the larger group and ask them to share their thoughts and experiences.

- ▶ How did the one who stood with Jesus feel when he or she was being attacked or questioned?
- ▶ How did those who attacked feel about having to say such things?
- ▶ How could this role-playing experience provide tools or a skill set for teens who might be called to defend their faith to strangers or even to friends and family members?

Closing Prayer

*Gracious God,
you are the source of faith, hope, and love.
Keep these gifts alive in us as we proclaim the
Good News
by the very witness of our lives.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.