

Read



Deuteronomy 6:2-6

Psalm 18:2-3, 3-4,
47, 51

Hebrews 7:23-28

Mark 12:28b-34

LIVING THE WORD

Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 4, 2018



REFLECTION

Our day to day lives are filled with many different rules. Schools have dress codes, handbooks, and graduation requirements. Family life likely includes chores, curfew, and other expectations that if crossed might result in consequences. Rules give us boundaries and teach us responsibility, especially if they are reasonable and respectfully communicated. When a new rule is thrown at us, we might tilt our heads to the side and wonder why. The Israelites must have felt this way and were a bit suspicious with Moses when he shared the Ten Commandments. However, the focus was so positive! "Love the LORD, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5). This new rule required that the Israelites throw themselves into their faith in a new way. Jesus takes this first commandment one step further, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31). It wasn't a "don't do this" or "don't do that" kind of rule. Instead, the commandment reflects a positive, uplifting, challenging, and practical commandment for the early Christians (and us)—Love!



ACTION

Create a word cloud (wordle) using these two most important commandments. Either create it on a computer (using an online resource) and print it in color, or pick up some markers and poster paper and get to crafting! Post your creation in a place where you will see it every day: your locker, your bathroom mirror, or the front of your planner or binder. If you created it on your computer, save it as a JPG and post it on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. Let this creation and the words that pop off the page be a pep talk for you each day! Living these two great commandments out loud will cause positive ripple effects in your life.



Here are a few online resources to help create your word cloud:

- ✓ www.wordle.net/create
- ✓ www.wordle.net/
- ✓ <https://wordart.com/>

? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ In what ways are you loving toward yourself?
- ❖ In what ways could you be more loving toward yourself?



November 4, 2018

THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #152B

Deuteronomy 6:2-6

Psalm 18:2-3, 3-4, 47, 51

Hebrews 7:23-28

Mark 12:28b-34

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

Usually, the Gospel depicts the scribes as high-ranking Jews who not only bristle at Jesus' tendency to turn their traditions upside down; they also try to trap Jesus in speech in order to cause him to appear controversial. This Sunday's Gospel comes after a series of questions posed to Jesus by the Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees, who try to trap Jesus by asking him tricky questions. The scribe in this Sunday's Gospel seems to experience a conversion of heart. Having "heard how well [Jesus] had answered them" (12:28), he comes forward and asks the question that leads to one of Jesus' most concise yet meaningful teachings: the two great commandments.

Q FOCUS: *I give my all.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

Display the liturgical calendar and help the teens to find today's date. Note that the liturgical year is quickly coming to a close. Toward the end of the liturgical year, the readings begin to focus more and more on the end-time—the time when Christ will come again. We will begin the next liturgical year with Advent. What do the readings focus on in Advent?

Church Teaching Connection

"Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another. Each area is responsible for the care of this family" (*Laudato si'*, 42).

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

Mark 12:28b-34

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

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

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

One of the scribes came to Jesus and asked him, "Which is the first of all the commandments?" Jesus replied, "The first is this: *Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.* The second is this: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* There is no other commandment greater than these." The scribe said to him, "Well said, teacher. You are right in saying, 'He is One and there is no other than he.' And 'to love him with all your heart, with all your understanding, with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself' is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." And when Jesus saw that he answered with understanding, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

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:

The scribe in today's Gospel wants to know which the first of all the commandments is. Jesus answers him by saying the first is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and the second is to love your neighbor as yourself.

- ▶ Which of these commands do you think is easier? Why?
- ▶ What do you think Jesus means when he says to love your neighbor as yourself?
- ▶ Is loving your neighbor as yourself hard? Why?
- ▶ Can you love God without loving your neighbor?

The scribe says that loving your neighbor as yourself is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.

- ▶ Why do you think people burned offerings and made sacrifices to God in Jesus' day?

When the people made sacrifices to God, they were giving up something that they would have really liked to have for themselves. People would take the very best animal, for example, and instead of eating it themselves they would sacrifice it for God. These people understood that they should give God the best of everything. They just didn't realize that loving God meant loving their neighbor. We give God the best of what we have by sharing it with others. What kinds of things must people sacrifice in order to love their neighbor as they love themselves?

- ▶ Are these sacrifices pleasing to God? What makes you think so?

When the scribe says that loving your neighbor is better than making a sacrifice to God, Jesus tells him that he is close to the Kingdom of God.

- ▶ How does this insight bring the scribe closer to the Kingdom?

Growing up, you may have been taught the "Golden Rule": do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Jesus basically says this same thing in the second great commandment in this Sunday's Gospel. He tells us that we should love others as we love ourselves. Jesus was not the first to say this. Similar phrases have been found in documents from ancient Egypt, Greece, and China.

- ▶ Why do you think so many societies hold this value to be important?
- ▶ How does Jesus' first great commandment (love God with all of your being) relate to the second great commandment?

The *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* uses the story of Cesar Chavez to begin chapter 24, which talks about the principles of the Christian moral life. When Chavez was a young man, he met a priest who ministered to Mexican American migrant workers. Through this priest, Chavez learned more about the plight of the poor farm workers and how we, as Catholics, are called to respond. Chavez took it upon himself to organize protests and stand up to the powerful and mighty in order to get better rights for the poor farm workers. He once said that sacrificing oneself for the sake of others is the greatest act of courage.

- ▶ Do you agree with Cesar Chavez's statement that sacrificing oneself for the sake of others is the greatest act of courage?
- ▶ How is sacrifice courageous?

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 62.

How can we use social media to build, and not harm, relationships with our "neighbors"?

In what ways can prayer help us develop the ability to be silent, to be patient, and to listen?

How can you love God with your heart, mind, and strength online and in real life?

Act on the Word

Human Dignity

You will need a copy of today's newspaper to lead this activity.

Distribute a few pages of today's newspaper to each teen or group of teens. Have the teens go through the headlines, highlighting or circling all of the headlines that relate to our call to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. After giving them some time to work, have each teen or group of teens share what they found. How do most people respond to these headlines? How are we, as Catholics, called to respond to these headlines?

Closing Prayer

*Lord God,
you commanded that we should love you above
all things
and love our neighbor as ourselves.
Give us a love that is perfect and true.
May we follow your Son
who showed the depths of his love
by offering his life on the Cross.
Help us to manifest his obedience in our lives
this day.
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.