

Read

Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalm 33:4-5, 18-19,
20, 22

2 Timothy 1:8b-10

Matthew 17:1-9

LIVING THE WORD

Second Sunday of Lent

March 8, 2020



REFLECTION

How do you feel when you are totally surprised by something? Sometimes we enjoy the excitement of the moment of surprise, reveling in the newfound energy. Other times we may feel unsettled or startled by what we were not expecting. Either way, surprises give us the opportunity to encounter the ordinary in a new way.

Although Peter, James, and John had known Jesus for quite some time, they must have been utterly surprised at the Transfiguration. What started off as an ordinary hike up a mountain ended in a way that could not have been imagined. Suddenly and unexpectedly, Jesus' face shone like the sun and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly and unexpectedly, Peter, James, and John learned something new about their friend: Jesus is the beloved Son of God.

This voice from heaven, in addition to revealing the nature of Jesus to the disciples, also reaffirms Jesus and the path Jesus is walking. God the Father clearly offers a resounding yes to Jesus: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 17:5). If we are mindful, we notice God says the same thing to each of us every day. God affirms God's love for us and celebrates all we are and all we are called to be.



ACTION

Transformation involves a changing or reorienting of oneself, which is not always easy. We must remember, however, that like the Transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor, God is pleased with each of us as we grow and transform in our own lives. Take a few moments today and listen to God speak the same words to you, especially as you allow yourself to be transformed this Lenten season: "This is my chosen Son; listen to him" (Luke 9:35).

*"God speaks in the
silence of the heart.
Listening is the beginning
of prayer."*



—St. Teresa of Calcutta

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What are some of the ways God is calling you to be transfigured?
- ❖ How can you participate in this transformation?



March 8, 2020

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

LECTIONARY #25A

Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalm 33:4-5, 18-19, 20, 22

2 Timothy 1:8b-10

Matthew 17:1-9

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

The Apostles hear a clear voice from heaven in today's Gospel, but most Christians must listen to God's voice by other means. Scripture and the Tradition of the Church help us to hear God's voice, and discern his will in our lives. When we listen to God we can experience many emotions including comfort and a challenge to change.

Q FOCUS: *Listening to God can be a comfort or a challenge.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On Monday we celebrate the optional memorial of St. Frances of Rome. She was a married woman and mother who lived in Italy during the 1400s and organized a community in which people shared their faith and common life but without taking religious vows (called oblates).

Church Teaching Connection

"When we have spread on earth the fruits of our nature and our enterprise—human dignity, sisterly and brotherly communion, and freedom—according to the command of the Lord and in his Spirit, we will find them once again, cleansed this time from the stain of sin, illuminated and transfigured, when Christ presents to his Father an eternal and universal kingdom . . ." (*Gaudium et spes*, 39).

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.

Glory to you, O Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel

Matthew 17:1-9

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

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

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

Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them: His face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." . . . They fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched

them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid." And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone.

As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, "Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

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:

"While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him"" (Matthew 17:5).

► What does it mean to listen to God?

In this Scripture story, the Apostles were able to listen with their ears and hear God's voice directly from heaven. Rarely is God's own voice so clear to us!

► How do we prayerfully listen to God in our own lives?

One of the more common ways we listen to God is by reading Scripture and hearing it proclaimed. At our Sunday Mass we hear three readings plus a psalm. Over the course of three years we hear three different sets of readings, and we call them Years A, B and C. Weekday masses in Ordinary Time have two yearly cycles of readings called Year 1 and Year 2 (the weekday readings are the same each year in Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter). Over the three year Sunday cycle and two year weekday cycle, most of the Bible is proclaimed during Mass. When we hear the Word and engage in a homily explaining Scripture texts, we listening to the Word of God and beginning to understand it. Reading Scripture on your own can also help you grow closer to God by

listening to him through his Word. Prayer such as *Lectio Divina* can help us engage in God's word (an example can be found under Act on the Word). Learning about the historical background of Scripture can also help us listen to God through the proclamation of the Word, because it helps us understand it more deeply and fully. We also listen to God by acknowledging the teachings of the Church. When we learn about what the Church teaches and why she teaches it, we are listening to God. The Holy Spirit leads the Church, and the Church voices the teachings in our apostolic Tradition.

When we listen to God, we may find great comfort in a time of pain or difficulty. A person grieving a newly deceased friend may find comfort reading that God prepares a place for us in heaven. Someone who is suffering illness or pain may be comforted knowing that Jesus understands his pain. A person who is anxious about something may feel relieved when reading about God caring for us day and night. God does provide comfort for his children, and we can be comforted by listening to God.

► Do read passages from the Bible regularly? Do you listen attentively to the Word when it is proclaimed at Mass?

► What do you learn from the Scriptures when you hear the Word?

► How is your relationship with God and others changed when you hear the Word and understand what it is teaching you?

Listening to God may sound like an eternally comforting and relaxing practice, and oftentimes it is just that. However, as C. S. Lewis stated, "If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don't recommend Christianity." Sometimes listening to God can be an uncomfortable or a difficult task. We may be made uncomfortable by what we hear when we listen to God, perhaps gaining new convictions about different issues. Sometimes we may not like what we hear because it means we need to change something in our lives, or reform our own thoughts and ideas. When you listen to God you may realize you need to change some things in your life. In this case, a person can ask God to give continued guidance and also seek good counsel in the Church. Listening to God may elicit different emotional

responses from us at different points in our lives, but listening to God and engaging in Scripture and the teachings of the Church helps us to grow and mature into healthy Catholic adults.

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 150.

When you listen to God, are you often comforted? What does God's comfort feel like to you?

Have you ever tried to listen to God but felt nothing? What do you do with a lack emotion?

Have you ever had the experience of having a strongly held belief of yours swayed after listening to God through scripture or tradition? What was that experience like for you?

Act on the Word

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is an ancient form of prayer, meditation and encountering scripture. The Latin phrase *Lectio Divina* means holy reading, and this form of prayer was used in the early centuries of the Church. Teach the young people this prayer form by first explaining the steps of the prayer. The main steps of *Lectio Divina* are as follows:

- ✧ Quiet the environment, the body and the mind.
- ✧ Read the selected scripture passage slowly. (Use a passage from today's Gospel reading.)
- ✧ Pause for reflection, and read the passage again.
- ✧ Pause for reflection and read the passage a third time.
- ✧ Initiate discussion in small groups. Ask the students to discuss the words that drew their attention, how they connected with various aspects of the reading, and how they are called to act on what they learn about the reading.

Closing Prayer

All powerful Lord Jesus,
you showed the disciples your majesty at
the Transfiguration.
Open our eyes this Lent to see what
you dream for us
so that we may become closer to an image of you.
You live and reign for ever and ever.
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.