

# Read

Acts 14:21-27

Psalms 145:8-9, 10-11, 12-13

Revelation 21:1-5a

John 13:31-33a, 34-35

# LIVING THE WORD

## Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 15, 2022



### REFLECTION

Do you love me? It's one of the most vulnerable questions one person can ask another. Love is a beautiful, bold gift. It calls forth deep care and respect from both the giver and the receiver. Love makes us susceptible to change and growth. The more I love another, the more their being impacts my own.

Love is not always easy. Just look at the hard work parents put in to caring for their children. Love is not always free of pain. Just look at the ways married couples sometimes hurt each other with a sharp word or impatient actions.

But love is the only way, Jesus says in today's Gospel. It is the new commandment, the great call of discipleship. To follow Christ is to love others in the way he loved us: fully and unconditionally, with hearts full of mercy. Jesus shows this love in a beautiful, bold way during the Easter season. After much suffering and death, Jesus rises again and paves the way for us to have eternal life, too. This is the model Jesus gives for how we are to live the Christian life. When someone asks, "Do you love me?" the answer should always be yes.

### ACTION

Loving one another is a challenging task. Sure, it's (sometimes!) easy to love our friends, grandparents, and favorite teachers. It's not as easy to love the classmate acting out, the teammate who won't pass the ball, or the stranger you pass on the street. Take one small step this week towards a person you don't already love. It could be as simple as saying hello or holding a door.



Have you ever heard of the "five love languages"? It is one way to approach how we show love and how we receive love in all our relationships. Take this quiz to find out your "love language":

<https://www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/teen-quiz/>

### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Who are the people you love most in your life right now?
- ❖ How do you show love for others?



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## FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

### LECTIONARY #54C

Acts 14:21-27

Psalm 145:8-9, 10-11, 12-13

Revelation 21:1-5a

John 13:31-33a, 34-35

## 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

Love is often construed as a romantic feeling that makes a person feel good about himself and another person. Scripture teaches us that love is far more complex than mere feelings. Love is action, love is orientation toward God, and love is something we do to prioritize God and others as we order our lives. When we love God, we actively choose to put God and his commands before our own wishes. This choice means that we recognize God's importance over our own desires. We recognize the importance of acting in love and not in impulse or selfishness. When we love others, we put their well-being ahead of our own desires. Loving others calls for adherence to selflessness, patience, and kindness. When we love one another we are following God's commands for us.

**Q FOCUS:** *God calls us to orient our lives toward love.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

The Church sets apart the month of May as a special month to remember and honor Mary. During this month, we are called to pray the Rosary and practice other Marian devotions. One way we can do this is by spending a week praying the various Mysteries of the Rosary—the Joyful Mysteries are prayed on Mondays and Saturdays, the Sorrowful Mysteries on Tuesdays and Fridays, the Glorious Mysteries on Wednesday and Sundays, and the Luminous Mysteries on Thursdays. As we meditate

on these mysteries of Christ's life, we consider how Mary was the first disciple and is an example of humble, loving, and joyful faith, always pointing others to Christ.

### Church Teaching Connection

Love of God and love of other people are concepts that are linked closely together and they cannot be disconnected. God created all human beings as members of the same family of God. Because we were all created by God, we are all called to return to God. When Jesus was on the earth he prayed for us to have unity with one another. In that unity, we find love of God and goodness toward one another. We are called to orient ourselves toward this love of God and neighbor, and we are meant to help one another in growth of such love (see *Gaudium et spes*, 24).

## 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

John 13:31-33a, 34-35

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

When Judas had left them, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and God will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As

I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

**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:*

If the Gospels could be simplified to a single command from our Lord, it would be the command to love. But what does this word mean? The English language has fewer words than Greek for the various definitions of the word *love*. When we think of the word *love*, we often think of how we feel about others. The word *love* can conjure images of romantic feelings toward someone else, or perhaps feeling good when around someone else. Love, however, has less to do with romantic feelings, and more to do with our decisions.

When a person loves another person, she is willing to prioritize things for the good of that other person. For example, imagine a pair of friends might go for a walk in the woods, and the weather may turn unpleasant. Suppose one person wants to continue the walk because she has the right gear and the weather doesn't bother her, but her friend doesn't have boots and a jacket so can't safely finish the walk. In such a case love would drive the person to cut the hike short and find safety and a comfortable place to be for both friends. When we love one another, we desire what is best for others. We do not place our desires before their well-being.

► Think about our liturgical seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Time. How does God show his love for us?

When we live lives directed by love, we naturally fall into the commandments God gave his people.

Consider the two greatest commandments that Jesus gave to us. In these two greatest commandments, Jesus told us to love God and to love others. When we orient our lives toward God and his ways, we do it out of love and respect for him. When we love God, we put his ways before our desires. We realize that out of love for God, we must also put the needs and desires of others ahead of our own.

► How do you show love to God?

In our faith life, we love God by following his commands and walking in the light of Christ. We are active in our parish communities. We pray throughout the day. We are sensitive to the faith journey of others. We show our witness of our faith by our actions and words.

Showing love to others does not have to be an extraordinary or grand gesture. Qualities like truthfulness, patience, kindness, and humility are given center stage in our relationships with one another when we act with the love of God. What do these qualities do for relationships, and moreover, what does a lack of love do to relationships? Imagine two relationships. One relationship features kindness, a willingness to apologize and change things when wrong; there is no lying, and there is patience for one another. The second relationship has notes of nastiness and impatience. Pride doesn't allow for apologies, and truthfulness is replaced with lies and false narratives. How we treat one another matters absolutely to God. God desires for his children to love and honor one another as he loves us.

► How do you show love to your family and friends? To those you interact with at school or in extracurricular activities?

## 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 184.*

God calls us to love one another.

Love is not just a feeling, it is an action, too.

Our behavior toward one another matters to God.

# Act on the Word

## Responding in Love

Begin by explaining to the teens some of the roots of our actions. What does it look like when we respond out of love? Often, when we consider responding out of love we compare it only to responding out of hate. Most of the time, responding out of hate isn't as common as responding out of indifference, dislike, discomfort, or fear. When we respond out of indifference, we are responding out of a lack of care. Responding out of dislike or disdain is something that might happen in social situations, or in a situation that involves bullying. Responding out of discomfort may be about fears or unfamiliar situations. Lastly, responding out of fear may be an issue of misunderstanding, a lack of familiarity, or a person not knowing how to approach an issue.

This activity will help the young people look at different scenarios and discuss how they can respond out of love for one another, and avoid responding out of indifference, dislike, discomfort, or fear.

Divide the teens into small groups. Present the groups with the following scenario or create your own. A community has a large influx of refugees from a distant country. Some people in the community have been quite upset about the arrival of refugees anywhere in the country, let alone their own town. The new arrivals do not share a race, religion, or culture with the majority of people in town. Have the groups discuss the following questions regarding the scenario.

- ❖ What can young people do in such a situation?
- ❖ What problems may arise in the school, and how can established teenage residents help ease the transition of the new students?
- ❖ What does it look like when people respond in fear, dislike, or indifference to such a situation?
- ❖ What difference will a loving response make for the students, for the community, and the established residents, and the newly arrived residents?

## Closing Prayer

*God of love,  
you gave yourself totally to us by  
becoming human  
and taught us to give ourselves totally to  
you by loving one another.  
Heal our unhealthy and hurtful  
experiences of love.  
Make us aware of the love made visible  
by your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
that we might live his command to love  
one another.  
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](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.