

Read

Wisdom 2:12, 17-20

Psalm 54:3-4, 5, 6-8

James 3:16-4:3

Mark 9:30-37

LIVING THE WORD

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 23, 2018



REFLECTION

Centuries ago, children were considered property and were only valuable if they helped with the family business. In many ways, they were seen as second-class citizens. Jesus treated children with dignity and respect. This shocked his followers! When Jesus places a child in front of his disciples, he is challenging the disciple's notion of who is the greatest. In today's world, children are often held up as little miracles and there is much critique of the trend toward "helicopter parenting" (keeping an extremely close watch on their children, especially in their education). It extends throughout life as parents compare little league stats and seek the best soccer coach for their child while forking out more and more money to prepare little Johnny for the world of competition. Jesus warns against either stance. To be first means to put others down and see others as inferior. We must pause and look deeply at our intentions to ensure that they reflect a love of God of which we can feel humbly proud.



ACTION

This week, research who it is that suffers in our society. Where are today's refugees? What is being done to support them? Check out what CRS (Catholic Relief Services, www.crs.org) or JRS (Jesuit Relief Services, jrsusa.org) is doing to

support those who have nothing. Read the stories of real people struggling to survive yet hold on to their faith with such gratitude. See what your local diocese is doing to support these efforts. If you don't see enough happening, talk to your youth minister and organize an event to bring about awareness at your school or parish. In doing so, you will be putting those society considers to be last at the front of the line.



Listen to the song "God Is"

*from the 2005 debut album,
Defining Beauty, by Danielle Rose.*
You can also find the song on iTunes,
Amazon, YouTube, and Spotify.



QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ In what ways do you feel proud or tend to think you are better than someone else?
- ❖ How might you use your gifts to reach out to those considered "less than" in your eyes?



September 23, 2018

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #135B

Wisdom 2:12, 17-20

Psalm 54:3-4, 5, 6-8

James 3:16-4:3

Mark 9:30-37

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 disciples do not understand Jesus' second prediction of his Passion, Death, and Resurrection; out of fear, they do not question him about it. The disciples argue about who's the greatest and Jesus teaches those who wish to be first will be last and will serve others. Welcoming a child signifies welcoming Jesus and his Father.

Q **FOCUS:** *To ask the Lord for help in time of suffering.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

Thursday of this week is the Memorial of St. Vincent de Paul. A French priest, he became aware of the growing disparity between the rich and poor; therefore, he laid the framework for the Servants of the Poor, which provided for the physical needs of the poor. Recognizing the call to care for not only their physical needs but also their spiritual needs, he established a society of priests, the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians), dedicated to preaching to peasants, catechizing the marginalized, and performing other charitable works. In collaboration with St. Louise Montfort de Marillac, he founded the Daughters of Charity, a new community of sisters not bound by traditional vows or enclosure who are devoted to the sick, orphaned, and imprisoned. St. Vincent is the

patron saint of charitable societies. Many day care centers, hospitals, thrift stores, and soup kitchens are named in his honor.

Church Teaching Connection

"Without the help of grace, men would not know how 'to discern the often narrow path between the cowardice which gives in to evil, and the violence which under the illusion of fighting evil only makes it worse.' This is the path of charity, that is, of the love of God and of neighbor. Charity is the greatest social commandment. It respects others and their rights. It requires the practice of justice, and it alone makes us capable of it. Charity inspires a life of self-giving" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1889; quoting *Centesimus annus*, 25).

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 9:30-37

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.

Jesus and his disciples left from there and began a journey through Galilee, but he did not wish anyone to know about it. He was teaching his disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days

after his death the Son of Man will rise.” But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him.

They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.” Taking a child, he placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it, he said to them, “Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me.”

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 this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus is, yet again, telling the disciples about how he will die and rise from the dead.

► Can you remember times when Jesus brought this up with the disciples before?

► Why do you think the disciples are still surprised at this?

We hear in the Gospel that the disciples did not understand what Jesus was saying, but were afraid to question him.

► Has there ever been a time when you didn't understand something but were afraid to ask? What made you afraid?

► Why do you think the disciples were afraid to question Jesus?

When they arrive in Capernaum, Jesus asks what the disciples have been talking about. They don't want to tell him since they were arguing about who was most important among them. So they don't say anything about it.

► Why do you think the disciples didn't want to tell Jesus what they had been talking about?

► Do you think Jesus knew what they were talking about even though they wouldn't say?

It seems that Jesus guessed what the disciples were talking about, because the next thing he did was bring a child forward. In Jesus' day, children had no power or status. Jesus' choice of the child showed the disciples that Jesus came for the powerless, the oppressed, and those without rights.

► If you were one of the disciples who had been arguing about who was the greatest, how do you think you'd feel when Jesus brought the child forward?

► How would you interpret his gesture?

Jesus defines discipleship by using the example of a child. There are many children who suffer in this world. Let us focus on helping children in need.

► Do you know of an organization that helps single moms? Is there a daycare center in your area?

► Why do you think Jesus used a child as his example? What childlike qualities are we called to have as Jesus' followers?

Jesus asks us to think of being leaders in a different way. Those who aspire to be the first and the greatest must be like servants. Being in a position of serving others might look like we aren't important, but that's not true in the eyes of God! Jesus himself is our best example—he showed his own humility in various ways throughout Scripture.

► How can you put Jesus' teaching into practice today?

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 34.

What is the hardest thing you have to do in order to follow Jesus?

What is the easiest thing for you to do as a follower of Christ?

How might we practice humility in our day-to-day lives at school, with our families, with our friends?

Act on the Word

An Invitation to Serve

You may want to have a copy of your parish bulletin to lead this activity. You will also want to have newsprint or a board and markers or chalk.

Perhaps using your parish bulletin as a reference, make a list of all of the ways in which people can serve others in your parish. Include all ministerial roles, as well as participation in any groups or service opportunities. Talk about all of the different gifts that people bring to the table, and how they can be used. Point out that serving others extends beyond doing volunteer work or helping the poor or sick. Someone who is really good with numbers might serve your parish by being part of the finance committee. Someone who is a good listener might serve others by being part of a support group. Talk about how the teens might take advantage of some of these opportunities. What talents and abilities are present in your group of teens? How might they use these talents and abilities to serve your parish?

Received in Jesus' Name

You will need paper and writing materials to lead this activity.

Invite the teens to spend some time thinking about those times when they, like the disciples in this Sunday's Gospel, have been more focused on how great they are than focused on how they can serve God and others. If Jesus were to catch them bragging, who might he bring into their midst to get them back on track? Invite them to journal about or sketch the person or type of person who Jesus might bring to them. How might they respond? When they finish, invite those who are willing to share their work with the rest of the group.

A Child Shall Lead Us

You will need paper and writing materials to do this activity.

Have teens write the word CHILDREN vertically, with one letter on each line. Challenge them to write an acrostic poem, using each letter to form a word that describes one of the qualities Jesus was teaching about. The letter can be at the beginning, middle, or end of the word. Have volunteers present their poems to the rest of the class if time permits.

Closing Prayer

*Lord Jesus,
you foretold your Passion and Death
as you journeyed with your disciples along the way.
You reveal that true discipleship
is found in the desire to become the servant of all.
May we all be willing to shed our lives
for the sake of the Gospel,
so as to serve without counting the cost.
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.