

Read

Sirach 27:4-7

Psalm 92:2-3, 13-14,
15-16

1 Corinthians 15:54-58

Luke 6:39-45

REFLECTION

Do you think a person could live a healthy life by only eating fast food? Sure, fast food can taste good, and it is quick, but it doesn't always contain what a person needs to grow. And let's be honest, there are some bad things in there too, and if that's all we ate, our health would take a serious dive.

Judging others works in a similar way. Sometimes judging others happens fast, before we even think about it. At times, it might even make us feel good, giving us a sense of superiority over that person: "I can't believe he did that." "There's no way I would ever do that." But judging others really eats away at our own spiritual health and happiness. It doesn't actually make us any better than that person, but makes us worse, less healthy, less happy, and less of ourselves. If we have started to get in the habit of judging others, it is time to stop right now.

Jesus reminds us that when we start to be critical of someone else, we should stop and think about our own actions. Before we start judging, we need to notice the areas where we can work on ourselves to become more Christlike. Knowing that we are all works in progress, we can extend some mercy to those still on the journey, just like us.

QUESTIONS


- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ In what areas do I tend to judge others?
- ❖ What are one or two things I can work on to be happier about myself and less judgmental of others?

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

March 2, 2025

ACTION

Judging others can come from a place of insecurity. To combat this, focus your prayer this week on the truth of God's love for you. Reflect on how God has loved you in the past and is loving you in the present. In response to this love, pray that you notice the "logs" in your own eye that prevent you from loving others as God loves them.

 "You Say"—Lauren Daigle
<https://youtu.be/slaT8Jl2zpl>



March 2, 2025

EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #84C

Sirach 27:4-7

Psalms 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16

1 Corinthians 15:54-58

Luke 6:39-45

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

In today's reading, Jesus seems to jump from topic to topic. First, he talks about a blind person leading the blind, then about teachers and their disciples, then about removing splinters and beams out of each other's eyes, and finally, about good trees and rotten fruit. It's a lot to take in. But the thread that connects all his sayings is our discipleship. Our discipleship should not prevent us from seeing our own faults, and when we follow the path of discipleship well, we will bring many good fruits into the world. When we make sure that we are in right relationship with God, then we are better able to bear good fruit. Our actions and choices will reflect our faith and lead others to Christ.

Q FOCUS: *Every disciple is known by his or her fruits.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

This week we will begin the Lenten season with Ash Wednesday. Although it is not a holyday of obligation, many people attend Mass on this day. It is a day where we outwardly wear a sign—ashes—of our recognition of our sins and our commitment to journey through the desert with Jesus. During Lent we take up practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving so that our outward behavior mirrors our interior disposition. We use this time to turn away from sin, repent, and return to God.

Church Teaching Connection

"Inner strength, as the work of grace, prevents us from becoming carried away by the violence that is so much a part of life today, because grace defuses vanity and makes possible meekness of heart. The saints do not waste energy complaining about the failings of others; they can hold their tongue before the faults of their brothers and sisters, and avoid the verbal violence that demeans and mistreats others. Saints hesitate to treat others harshly; they consider others better than themselves" (Pope Francis, *Gaudete et exsultate*, 116).

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 6:39-45

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 told his disciples a parable, "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,' when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye

first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother's eye.

"A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not pick figs from thornbushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles. A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks."

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:

Jesus continues his Sermon on the Plain today with a message about not judging others. Addressed to the disciples, this message becomes even more important when we remember that the disciples would be leaders among Jesus' followers, and they may be tempted to judge others and see the faults in them rather than the faults in themselves. Most of us have the tendency to overlook our own faults. But, for those who wish to be leaders in Christ, it is even more important that they first discern for themselves their own imperfections and the areas in which they fail to follow Christ. Only then can they lead others with confidence in Christ and help them turn away from sin.

► **Why do you think it is important that leaders be aware of their own sins and relationship with Christ?**

For many people in leadership roles, they lead by example, whether they mean to or not. What someone in power does and says can influence what others do and say. Even if we are not leaders in the traditional sense, our words and actions can influence others as well. Our actions give witness to who

we are as Christians. Therefore, we, too, are called to not judge others without examining ourselves first. We are all imperfect people. We have blind spots that sometimes prevent us from seeing our failures. We should not judge another person until we have recognized our own faults first. In doing so, we can work on our relationship with Christ before helping others find a deeper relationship with him. We must talk the talk and walk the walk.

In order for our Christian community as a whole, both its leaders and lay people, to listen, speak, pray, and act on behalf of Jesus, we must first pray to see our own blindness, failures, and faults as a community. Before we use our words and actions in Jesus' name, we must first center ourselves on Christ and his teachings. Jesus tells us in this reading that "every tree is known by its own fruit." When we follow the teachings of Jesus and align ourselves with his love and life, our work and lives will show it.

► **In what ways do you produce good fruit? In what ways do you not produce good fruit?**

There are so many moral issues that the Church is called to address—racism, hunger, homelessness, poverty, war, environment, immigration, human trafficking, and so on. We might feel overwhelmed by the amount of help that is needed and the amount of people who need us to advocate for them. However, it is important to remember that we don't have to change the whole world, just the world around us in our daily lives. Jesus is calling us to clean up our hearts and get rid of the sin that is there so that we can produce his good fruit and help others. From that small starting point, our daily actions of good works can influence others to do the same, and eventually, the whole world will be transformed.

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 148.

We must address our own faults before commenting on the faults of others.

Our actions should show others what it means to be a Christian.

Jesus calls us to bear good fruit, both individually and as a faith community.

Act on the Word

Heroes and Villains

For this activity, you will need a whiteboard or butcher paper, copy paper, markers or colored pencils, and writing utensils.

Much of our popular culture plays on the tropes of good versus evil and heroes versus villains. Divide the board in two, and label one half “Good/Hero” and the other half “Bad/Villain.” Ask the teens to name characters or individuals from history, pop culture, movies, books, and so on that fit into those categories. Feel free to have them use their phones to research.

Once you have a sizable list, divide the class into two groups, one for the heroes and one for the villains. Ask them to come up with a list of characteristics that are shared by the people in their assigned category.

After the groups have finished, have them come back together as a large group. Ask each group to share some of the characteristics that they came up with. Then make two new categories on the board, “Good Fruit” and “Rotten Fruit.” Ask the young

people, in light of the reading today and what they know of discipleship, what are the good fruits that true disciples of Jesus share with others. What are the bad fruits that occur when people choose to not follow the path of discipleship? Write their responses on the board.

Divide the young people again, this time into several small groups. Assign each group a good fruit and a rotten fruit. Then have them create a short comic strip with a hero whose superpower is the good fruit and a villain whose superpower is the rotten fruit. Share the comics with the large group once all the groups have finished. Remind the teens that their actions and words have the potential to lead other toward Christ or away from him. They can be heroes in their daily lives when their actions and words reflect their faith and relationship with Christ.

Closing Prayer

*God of the vineyard,
you oversee everything that grows
and the fruit that it bears.*

Grant that our works may produce

*only that which is good and pleasing
in your sight,*

*and accept our lives as a fruitful
offering to you.*

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.