



THE VIETNAMESE EUCHARISTIC YOUTH MOVEMENT IN THE U.S.A.

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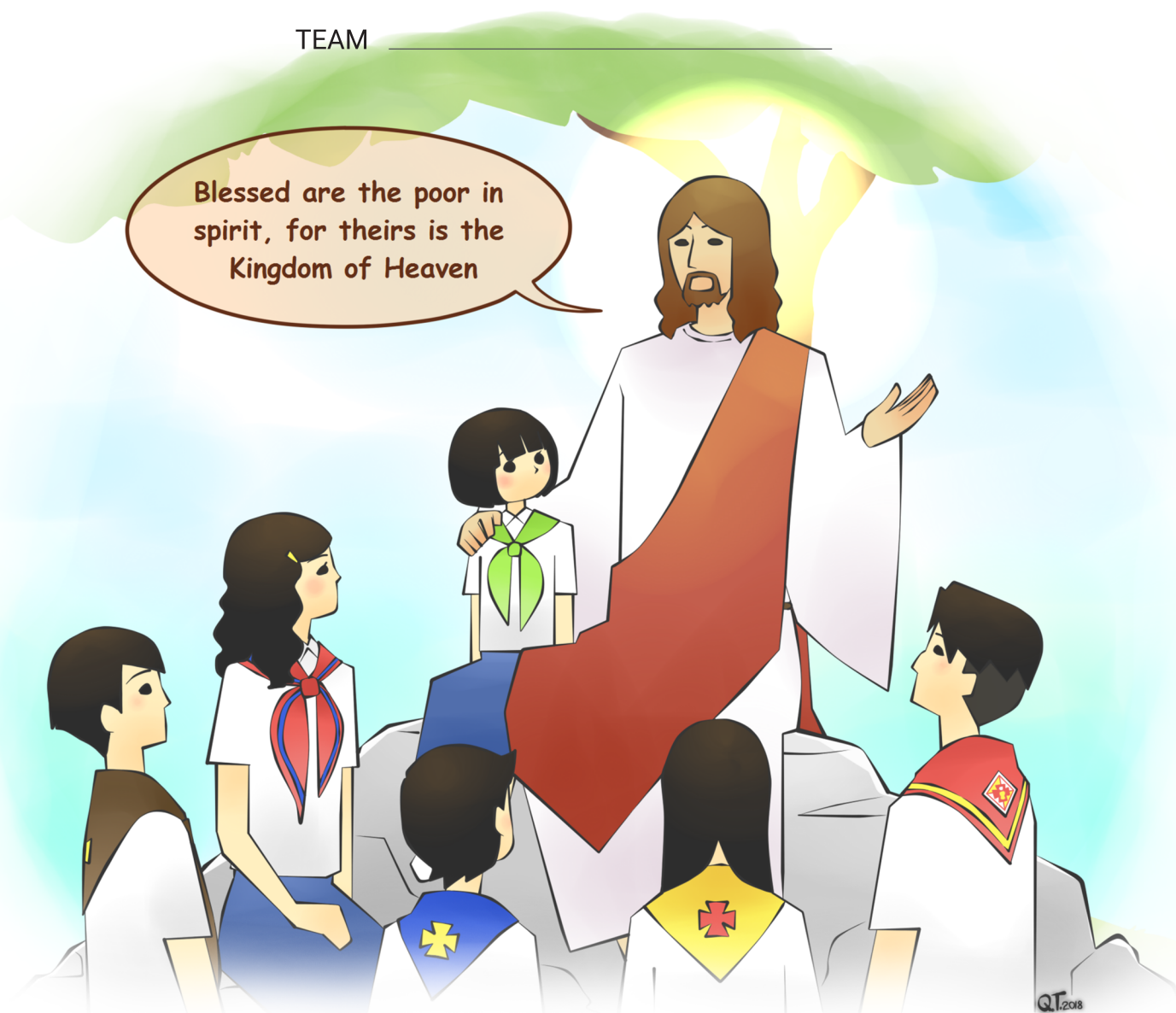
Weekly Gospel Lessons

YEAR
B-C

NAME _____

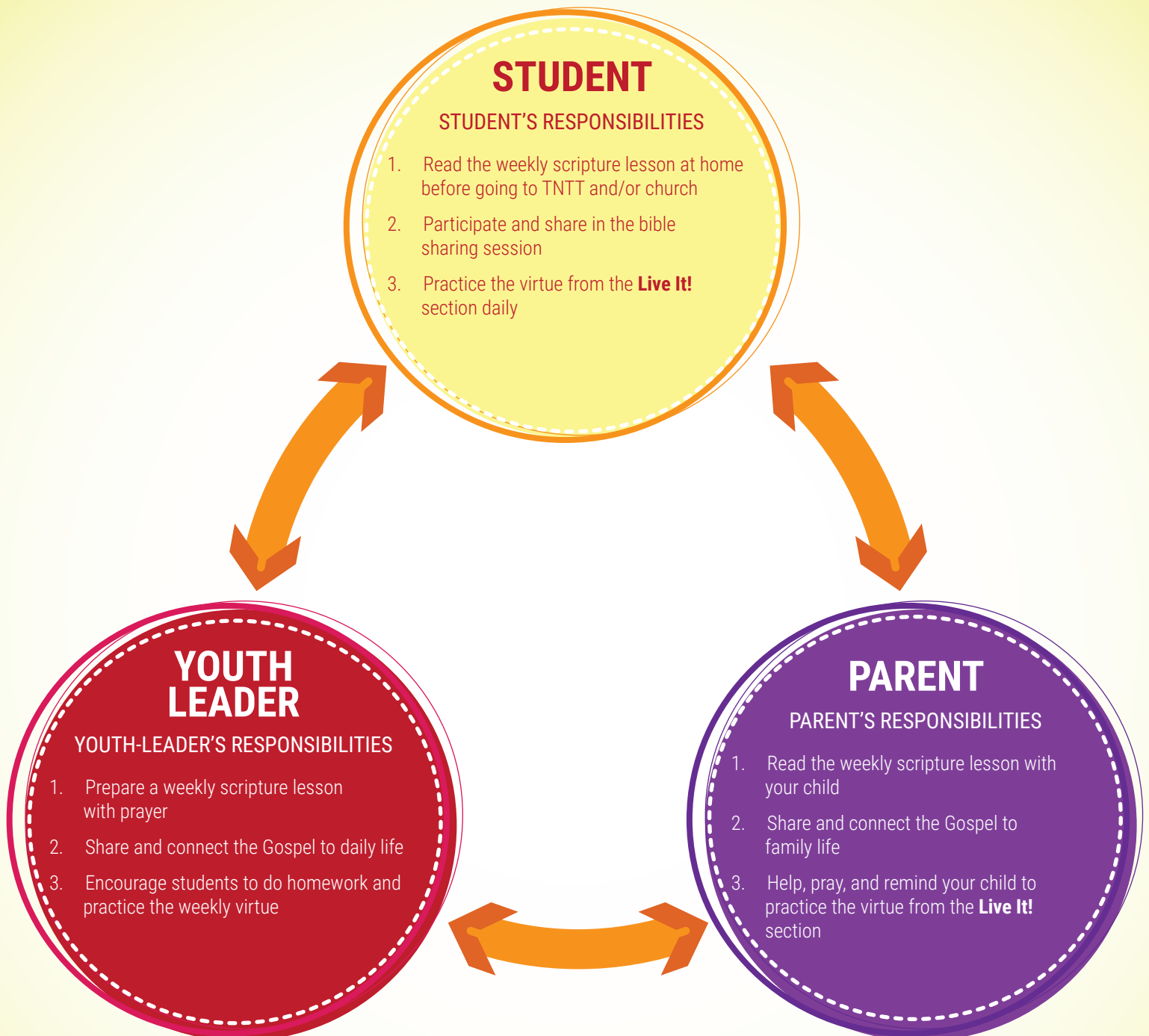
TEAM _____

Blessed are the poor in
spirit, for theirs is the
Kingdom of Heaven



TNTT WEEKLY SCRIPTURE LESSON

STUDENT SUPPORT SYSTEM



Weekly
Gospel
Lessons

Lesson Journal

Date/Page	Week	Lesson	Virtue to Practice	Assignments	
August 1, 2021 Page 2	Ord. B-18	Jesus is the Bread of Life	Truthfulness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
August 8, 2021 Page 4	Ord. B-19	Jesus Gives His Flesh for the Life of the Word	Acceptance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
August 15, 2021 Page 6	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Mary Our Guide and Model to Jesus	Humility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
August 22, 2021 Page 8	Ord. B-21	Jesus is Rejected by Many Disciples	Friendliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
August 29, 2021 Page 10	Ord. B-22	Jesus Asks Us to Live Honestly	Honesty	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
September 5, 2021 Page 12	Ord. B-23	Jesus Heals a Deaf Man	Listenness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
September 12, 2021 Page 14	Ord. B-24	Jesus is the Messiah	Wisdom	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
September 19, 2021 Page 16	Ord. B-25	Jesus Teaches His Disciples a Humility Lesson	Modesty	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
September 26, 2021 Page 18	Ord. B-26	Jesus Teaches Us Not to Sin	Forgiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
October 3, 2021 Page 20	Ord. B-27	Jesus Teaches Us About Marriage—Male and Female	Loyalty	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
October 10, 2021 Page 22	Ord. B-28	Jesus Asks Us to Share Our Fortune to Others	Generosity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
October 17, 2021 Page 24	Ord. B-29	Jesus Reminds His Disciples to Serve Others	Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
October 24, 2021 Page 26	Ord. B-30	Jesus Heals a Blind, Bartimaeus	Sincerity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
October 31, 2021 Page 28	Ord. B-31	Jesus Asks us to Love God and Our Neighbor	Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
November 7, 2021 Page 30	Ord. B-32	Jesus Appraises the Poor Widow's Contribution	Kindness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
November 14, 2021 Page 32	Ord. B-33	Jesus Will Come Again on the Last Day of the World	Readiness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
November 21, 2021 Page 34	Ord. B-34 Christ the King	Jesus is Our King	Reverence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
November 28, 2021 Page 36	Advent C-1	Be Alert for the Coming of Jesus	Watchfulness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
December 5, 2021 Page 38	Advent C-2	Prepare the Way for Jesus	Integrity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
December 12, 2021 Page 40	Advent C-3	Change Our Life for Jesus	Ethical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
December 19, 2021 Page 42	Advent C-4	Mary Brought Jesus to Elizabeth and John the Baptist	Caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
December 26, 2021 Page 44	Christmas C-1 The Holy Family	The Boy Jesus in the Temple	Understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
January 2, 2022 Page 46	Christmas C-2 Epiphany of the Lord	Follow Jesus' Star	Reverence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
January 9, 2022 Page 48	Ord. C-1 Baptism of the Lord	The Baptism of Jesus	Purity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
January 16, 2022 Page 50	Ord. C-2	Jesus at the Cana Wedding	Sympathy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
January 23, 2022 Page 52	Ord. C-3	Jesus is the Messiah	Respect	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue

Lesson Journal

Date/Page	Week	Lesson	Virtue to Practice	Assignments	
January 30, 2022 Page 54	Ord. C-4	The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth	Acceptance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
February 6, 2022 Page 56	Ord. C-5	Believe in Jesus	Trust	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
February 13, 2022 Page 58	Ord. C-6	Jesus Proclaims God's Blessings	Optimistic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
February 20, 2022 Page 60	Ord. C-7	Jesus Asks Us to Love Even Our Enemies	Forgiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
February 27, 2022 Page 62	Ord. C-8	Jesus Teaches Us, "Be True to Ourselves"	Authenticity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
March 6, 2022 Page 64	Lent C-1	Facing Temptations Like Jesus	Determination	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
March 13, 2022 Page 66	Lent C-2	The Transfiguration of Jesus	Obedience	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
March 20, 2022 Page 68	Lent C-3	Jesus Calls Us to Repent	Commitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
March 27, 2022 Page 70	Lent C-4	Jesus Tells Us About the Father's Love for the Lost Son	Self-discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
April 3, 2022 Page 72	Lent C-5	Jesus' Mercy Toward a Woman Caught in Adultery	Gentleness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
April 10, 2022 Page 74	Lent C-6 Palm/Passion Sunday	The Passion of Jesus	Sacrifice	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
April 17, 2022 Page 76	Easter C-1 Easter Sunday	Jesus Rises from the Death	Hope	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
April 24, 2022 Page 78	Easter C-2 Divine Mercy Sunday	Jesus Strengthened the Faith of Thomas	Faith	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
May 1, 2022 Page 80	Easter C-3	Peter Professed His Love to Jesus	Excellence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
May 8, 2022 Page 82	Easter C-4	Jesus Knows His Sheep	Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
May 15, 2022 Page 84	Easter C-5	Jesus' New Commandment	Love	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
May 22, 2022 Page 86	Easter C-6	The Peace of Jesus	Truthfulness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
May 29, 2022 Page 88	Easter C-7 Ascension of the Lord	Be One with Jesus	Unity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
June 5, 2022 Page 90	Pentecost Sunday	Jesus' Disciples Received the Holy Spirit	Openness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
June 12, 2022 Page 92	Most Holy Trinity	Jesus Reveals the Holy Trinity	Understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
June 19, 2022 Page 94	Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ	Jesus' Miracle with Five Loaves of Bread and Two Fish	Sharing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
June 26, 2022 Page 96	Ord. C-13	The Would-Be Followers of Jesus	Loyalty	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
July 3, 2022 Page 98	Ord. C-14	The Mission of Jesus' 72 Disciples	Purposefulness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
July 10, 2022 Page 100	Ord. C-15	Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan	Kindness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
July 17, 2022 Page 102	Ord. C-16	Jesus With Martha and Mary	Wisdom	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue
July 24, 2022 Page 104	Ord. C-17	Jesus' Teaching on How to Pray	Sincerity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the lesson
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Do homework/Practice virtue



Jesus is the Bread of Life

Week B-018

John 6: 24-35

When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus. And when they found him across the sea they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" Jesus answered them and said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. **Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.** For on him the Father, God, has set his seal." So they said to him, "What can we do to accomplish the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that **you believe in the one he sent.**" So they said to him, "What sign can you do, that we may see and believe in you? What can you do? Our ancestors ate manna in the desert, as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat." So Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."



So they said to him,
"Sir, give us this bread always."
Jesus said to them,
"I am the bread of life;
whoever comes to me will never hunger,
and whoever believes in me will never thirst."

1. Explore It!

1. If you were present among the disciples in front of Jesus in this story, what would you ask Him?
2. How are your feeling and reactions when you hear Jesus say, "Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life."?
3. Draw a picture of what it means when Jesus said, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst."

2. Connect It!

There is a popular saying, "You are what you eat." How do we 'make a life' in our daily lives so that the phrase "We are what we eat" connects us when we consume the "Bread of Life"?

3. Reflect It!

1. Jesus becomes the bread of life to feed us, not only to nourish us spiritually, but for us to consume Him entirely by our faith.
2. 'Making a life' is knowing the true purpose of this life, to learn to love God and to love our neighbours. Loving God and our neighbours are where true and everlasting happiness come from.
3. Pain and pleasure, accomplishment and achievement look good on resumes or applications, but are all passing things. We are made for greater things: eternally with God in heaven, through the "Bread of Life".

4. Remember It!

**I am the Bread of Life;
whoever comes to me
will never hunger, and
whoever believes in
me will never thirst.**
(John 6:35)

5. Live It! [TRUTHFULNESS]

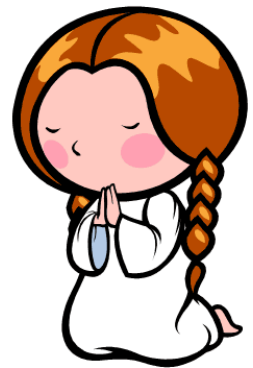
To be truthful means to stay accurate with facts and have a belief of what is true.

You are more likely to have dishonest behaviour if you fear being shamed. To practice your virtue, do the following:

1. Make a list of things that you fear being shamed about.
2. Ask your parents to help explain to you how to overcome your fear of being shamed.
3. Ask God to guide your words and actions when you fear being shamed with the Prayer below.

6. Pray It!

Jesus, Bread of Life, we offer You our lives with open hands. Teach us to surrender our lives fully to You. Bless us with the knowledge that we are Your beloved ones. Open our hearts so the Word of God and the power of the Eucharist will transform our lives, so we can be witnesses to the Love of God and serve Him in each person we meet. May we continue to know Your truth and allow others to be witnesses to Your glory. Amen.





Jesus gives His flesh for the Life of the World

The Jews murmured about Jesus because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven," and they said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? Then how can he say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

Jesus answered and said to them, "Stop murmuring among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day. It is written in the prophets: *They shall all be taught by God.* Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father.

Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."



1. Explore It!

- 1) Imagine all the different types of bread existing in the world. What is its importance and what role does it play in each culture?
- 2) On what occasions is bread served and why?
- 3) How is Jesus, the "Living Bread of Life" similar to the many different breads in the world?

2. Connect

- 1) Bread provides an important time for people to connect with one another, in addition to being the backbone of many culture's diets
- 2) Jesus, the "Living Bread of Life", connect us with one another and is the backbone of our daily nourishment.
- 3) To be nourished by Jesus is for us to allow Him into every aspect of our lives, for Him to claim a central role into our faith.

3. Reflect It!

Every day at school, it is important to feel accepted by our friends, classmates, and community.

What about Jesus? "The Bread of Life" is yearning to be accepted by us too.

Will we turn Him away or allow Him into every aspect of our lives?

4. Remember It!

***"I am the living bread that
came down from heaven;
whoever eats this bread
will live forever."
(John 6:51)***

6. Pray It!

5. Live It! [ACCEPTANCE]

To have **acceptance** means to be a part of, to take an offering, or to agree to.

There is popular saying, "Give peace a chance." Let us make a commitment this week to "Give Jesus a chance" and accept Him into every aspect of our lives.

What are some ways you accept God into your life? Every night, write a small paragraph about how you act, say, or think that allows God to flow through you each day.

Jesus, "the Living Bread," it is a struggle each day for us to feel accepted and to be accepted by our own peers. And yet, we do not realize that You are also struggling, striving to be accepted by us. Grant us the gift of understanding to know how much You love us, the gift of wisdom to accept You into our life, and the strength to endure when we feel abandoned.

Sun:

Mon:

Tue:

Wed:

Thu:

Fri:

Sat:

Mary Our Guide and Model to JESUS

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

And Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, and has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever." Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.



1. EXPLORE It!

As Mary goes to visit her sister Elizabeth, we get to experience how Mary, Elizabeth and even John the Baptist, not yet born, are transformed through their encounter with the unborn Messiah in today's Gospel. For a long time, Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah dealt with childlessness and infertility. However, they remained humble and "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord" (Luke 1:5-7), with God eventually blessing them, in their older age, with their first child John. The baby John, like his mother, has also been blessed and singled out by the Lord for His purpose: to

become the Messiah's herald, to announce the coming of Jesus and prepare people for Jesus' ministry. Both mother and son recognize the Holy presence of the Lord and are among the first to react in praise and adoration for the unborn Messiah: Elizabeth through her praise of Mary and recognition of the Lord that forms the Hail Mary Prayer; and John leaping with joy in his mother's womb. Mary of the three receives the highest blessings and honor and she acknowledges God's favor through her humble hymn of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord that forms the Magnificat.



2. CONNECT It!

Like many, we often blame God or get frustrated with Him when things don't go our way, when our plans and goals don't come to fruition like we intend. Through the examples of John, Elizabeth and mostly importantly Mary, we realize that although we do not understand or agree with God's plan for us, we should trust in Him and believe that whatever trial or burden we may be experiencing right now is only part of the path to find God's true purpose for us. This concept of reliance and dependence on God's understanding instead of our own is very difficult, especially for people who consider themselves powerful, proud or in-control. Mary fulfilled God's calling and became the most "blessed among women" because of her humility and wisdom to trust in God fully.



3. REFLECT It!

When have I doubted God or been frustrated with Him? How or what can I do to tell God that I trust in Him? What do I think God's purpose is for me? How does the Lord intend to use me for His glory?

These are all questions you can ask yourself as you discern God's will at work in your life.

5. LIVE It! [HUMILITY]

We often conflate humility with the word humiliation and feelings of shame or low self-esteem. But the virtue of humility means the humbling of ourselves and the powerful recognition that we depend completely and wholly on God. This week find some time to demonstrate humility in two ways:

- ♦ Humility towards God through humbling ourselves in prayer in front of the Cross or Eucharist. Spend 15 minutes in prayer to reflect on God's calling for you and how you can say "Yes!" as Mary did.
- ♦ Practice humility towards others by serving them. Help someone in need, it can be a small gesture such as holding open the door for someone. Incorporating acts of service in our daily life helps us think of others rather than ourselves.

4. REMEMBER It!

**"BLESSED ARE YOU
AMONG WOMEN, AND
BLESSED IS THE FRUIT
OF YOUR WOMB."**

(LUKE 1:42)



6. PRAY It!



The Magnificat (Canticle of Mary)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
My Spirit rejoices in God my Saviour
For He has looked with favour
on His lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
The Almighty has done great things for me,
And holy is His Name.

He has mercy on those who fear Him.
In every generation.

JESUS IS REJECTED BY MANY DISCIPLES

[Week B-O21]

John 6:60-69



Then many of his disciples who were listening said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, "Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh* is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe." Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him. And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father." As a result of this, many [of] his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him. Jesus then said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" Simon Peter answered him, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God."

1. EXPLORE IT!

- 1) The Disciples of Jesus were witnesses to His miracles. What blessings have God showered upon you this past week?
- 2) In today's Gospel, we see two types of disciples: those who truly accepted Jesus's teachings and those who felt overwhelmed by His teachings. Which type of disciple are you?
- 3) Which Catholic teaching is hardest for you to accept or comprehend?

2. CONNECT IT!

How do you feel when your friends don't want to play with you anymore? Are you going to give up or are you going to ask them to stay and be your friend? No matter how hard you try to convince your friend, remember, don't give up. Being friendly is sometimes having to sacrifice your pride knowing that those who truly value and see the importance of friendship are the keepers in your road towards faith.

3. REFLECT IT!

In today's reading, we are faced with two options. We can either believe in Jesus Christ or leave Him. Over the past couple weeks, Jesus has been sharing with those around Him some difficult lessons to understand. Jesus has claimed that He is the Bread of Life, and that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood. Then today, He foretells that He will ascend into heaven. These lessons are difficult for the crowd to understand, and many leave because they could not comprehend what Jesus was trying to tell them. Today, we face the same exact dilemma. There are those who hear the teachings of Christ and find it too difficult to follow, so they leave the Church. We need to humbly accept that we cannot fully understand everything through human eyes, and pray for the gift of wisdom and knowledge that we may become more faithful.

4. REMEMBER IT!

“Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of

5. LIVE IT! [FRIENDLINESS]

To be friendly means to be kind, pleasant, sometimes joyful towards others.

If you've recently been introduced to someone, or you see some new people around, go up to them and start a conversation. Even saying hi, asking for their name, and saying, "Cool, nice meeting you. I'll see you around later Hopefully," can be good.

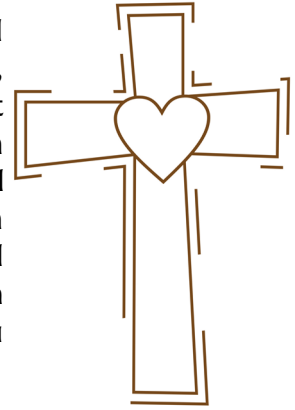
6. PRAY IT!

Heavenly Father, we may not fully understand Your message, but we ask for the gift of understanding, so that we may truly engage in the teachings of Your most beloved son, Jesus Christ. Allow me to be friendly towards others so that I may spread the gifts You've given me. Amen.

Jesus Asks Us to Live Honestly

Mark 7: 1-8, 14-15, 21-23

When the Pharisees with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, they observed that some of his disciples ate their meals with unclean, that is, unwashed, hands. —For the Pharisees and, in fact, all Jews, do not eat without carefully washing their hands, keeping the tradition of the elders. And on coming from the marketplace they do not eat without purifying themselves. And there are many other things that they have traditionally observed, the purification of cups and jugs and kettles and beds. —So the Pharisees and scribes questioned him, “Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders but instead eat a meal with unclean hands?” He responded, “Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written:



This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts. You disregard God’s commandment but cling to human tradition.”

He summoned the crowd again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile. “From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. All these evils come from within and they defile.”

1. Explore It!

In today’s Gospel, the Pharisees challenge Jesus about the actions of his disciples. The disciples of Jesus are seen by the Jewish community improperly washing their hands according to the Jewish customs.

Jesus indirectly answers them with, “Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile.”

What Jesus wants us to remember is that our harmful words express our evil intentions that will lead to harmful deeds. We must be the bigger person and find inner peace so that our actions will speak louder than our words.

2. Connect It!

When was the last time you felt you were “doing enough” for God just by going to church?

Being a follower of Jesus means more than just keeping Sundays. It means to live His word too; follow the Ten Commandments, spread the good news, and love your neighbor.

3. Reflect It!

- ✝ How have my inner most feelings affected those around me?
- ✝ Have I gossiped about others?
- ✝ Have I mocked or made fun of others?
- ✝ Have I been selfish or jealous of others?



4. Remember It!

"This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (Mark 7: 6)

5. Live It! { HONESTY }

Having **honesty** is about being fair, upright, sincere and truthful.

Are you able to be honest with yourself when it comes to your connection with God?

Each night this week, reflect on a moment in which you weren't honest with yourself or others, whether it's telling someone they look great in an outfit, or a compliment you didn't genuinely feel was truthful.

At the end of the week, were you able to see progress? Did you notice any trends?



6. Pray It!

Lord, You have commanded the virtue of honesty, the power against all deceptions. Direct Your Spirit of honesty upon us that our soul may always remain stainless. Guide our daily thoughts, words and actions, to join those living by the Spirit of truth. Amen.

JESUS HEALS A DEAF MAN

Week B-023

Mark 7: 31-37

Again Jesus left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis. And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "Ephphatha!"— that is, "Be opened!" —And immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly. He ordered them not to tell anyone. But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. They were exceedingly astonished and they said, "He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

1. Explore It!

Today Jesus Christ cures a deaf man with a speech impediment. Yet, when He is done, He tells the crowd not to tell anyone of what He has done. The reason He does not want people to spread tales of His great works is because He does not want to be labeled only as a miracle worker. Jesus came to save us, not just physically, but spiritually as well.

2. Connect It!

Was there a time you were stressed, troubled, or sad and needed to be alone? We often talk to God when we need Him. Know that He is always listening wherever we are. It is us that sometimes tunes Him out, not hearing what He has to say day by day. See if you can spot the messages He often blesses us with when we least expect it.

3. Reflect It!

A handicap is a circumstance that makes our progress or success difficult. As we reflect on today's Gospel, let us recall all that prevents us from a full communion with our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Have I gone to Mass on Sunday or have I rebelled and been stubborn about going to Mass? Did I participate in the Mass or did I daydream?
- Have I prayed or read the bible daily?
- Have I been rebellious towards God and His commands?
- Have I misused the name of God by swearing and cursing?



Remember It! 4.

**“He has done all things well.
He makes the deaf hear and
the mute speak.”
(Mark 7:37)**

5. Live It! [Listening]

LISTENING is the ability to continually give one's attention. Are we able to listen to what God is trying to tell us in those silent and isolated moments?

1. Spend 5 minutes this week in conversation with a parent or grandparent. Instead of talking, **LISTEN** and hear what you can learn from their story.
2. Spend 5 minutes this week in silence in front of the Eucharist. Instead of talking to Jesus, **LISTEN** and hear what he might be saying to your heart.

Pray It! 6.

Lord, teach us to listen to those nearest to us, our family and my friends. Teach us to listen to those far from us– the whisper of the hopeless, the plea of the forgotten, the cry of the anguished. Teach us to listen for Your voice — in busyness and in boredom, in certainty and doubt, in noise and in silence.
Teach us, Lord, to listen. Amen.

Jesus is the Messiah

WEEK B-O24

MARK 8:27-35

Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” They said in reply, “John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets.” And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter said to him in reply, “You are the Christ.” Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him.

He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. He spoke this openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”


He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it.”



1. Explore It!

Thousands of people have been following Jesus and listening to His profound teachings. But even those who have seen His miracles and the disciples closest to Him believe them to be only the workings of a mighty prophet. Only Peter has the insight and wisdom to say that Jesus is the **Christ**, the Messiah promised to save humanity. This is the first indication that Jesus is more than just human, but also fully divine and the Son of God.

Jesus then began to tell His disciples of how He will soon be put to death. When Peter is unwilling to accept the message, Jesus now shows how He lacks the understanding to realize God's divine plan.



2. Connect It!

Many times, we associate conventional wisdom with acing tests, getting good grades, and knowing all the answers to life's problems. How can we use our judgment to not only understand the world around us, but how God is present in it?

Only Peter is able to see that God, in the form of a human, beyond all understanding, has been in their presence all along. Sometimes, we can forget to see God in our everyday lives, attributing His works and blessings to something else. Where is God in your life now? Though it may conflict with human reason and explanation, it takes true wisdom not to deny God's existence, but to be able to find His presence in our lives.

3. Reflect It!

- Why did Jesus ask His disciples “Who do people say that I am?” before asking them “Who do you say that I am?”
- How was Peter able to answer, “You are the Christ?”
- Why did Jesus warn them not to tell anyone about Him?
- What prompts Jesus to say that Satan is amongst them?

4. Remember It!

And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?”
Peter said to him in reply: “You are the Messiah.”
(Mark 8:29)

5. Live It! {Wisdom}

Wisdom means to have experience, knowledge, and good judgment.

Who are some people that you believe to have lots of wisdom?

Write a paragraph about the various people that shape your life with God.

6. Pray It!

Lord, You guide Your people with kindness and govern us with love. Give the Spirit of wisdom to those You have called to lead Your Church. Please shelter us in the warmth of Your Grace, send us courage to face the tasks You have set for us, and the wisdom to see Your guiding hand in all our works. Amen.

Jesus Teaches His Disciples a Humility Lesson

Week B-O25 Mark 9:30-37



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 the 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."

1. Explore It!

Jesus is travelling through Galilee but does not want the people to know this because He is still concerned with the formation of His disciples. He talks to them about "The Son of Man" who must be handed over. While the disciples listen, they do not understand and do not ask for any explanations. Perhaps they are afraid to show their ignorance.

When they return home, Jesus asks, "What were you arguing about on the way?" They do not reply. It is this silence that shows their feelings of guilt, because they have been discussing amongst themselves who is the greatest. The competitiveness and prestige, which characterized the society of the

Roman Empire, had infiltrated the Jewish community. Here we see the contrast: while Jesus is thinking of being the Messiah-Servant, the disciples are thinking about who among them was the greatest. Jesus tries to descend while they try to ascend!

Jesus continues to teach and promote the ideal leader who is modest and serves others without hope of earthly reward. A child has no legal status in society, is insignificant, and can do nothing or return anything to the giver. Therefore, receiving a child is a good deed for an insignificant person or from Jesus Himself. Furthermore, whoever receives Jesus receives the Father who sent Jesus.

2. Connect It!

- ⇒ Think of the different ways you help people each day.
- ⇒ Did you do them because it made you feel better, or was it for the sake of others?
- ⇒ Jesus reminds us to be modest in both our actions and thoughts as we spread the news and act with love and kindness.

Always be thankful for the blessings God gives us to work His will through us and the world.

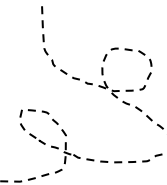
3. Reflect It!

Those who would be first must let go and be last in the “ego-line”, just as a child. Jesus tells His disciples that He is called to un-self, or surrender that self energy even to the point of letting go of His life.

How do you surrender yourself?

Jesus welcomes the little child within each of the disciples and tells the disciples that they do the same.

What is the little child within you?



{ 4. Remember It! }

**“If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all”.
(Mark 9:35)**

5. Live It! [MODESTY]

Modesty means to live a simple life, to make the most out of what we have.

- Often we think we can't live without “essential” items like our smartphones, designer clothing, or the latest trends among our friends. Having modesty is recognizing “true” essentials and understanding the sacrifices by our family to provide in our lives.
- Choose one item that, though usually important in your everyday life, you can do without for a week. Practice **modesty** be refraining to use this item. Write a reflection at the end of the week about what you have learned or experienced through this journey.

6. Pray It!

Dear God, true success is the success of becoming humble. Guide us in this pathway to become noble, just, and good on the outside, while having selfless motives within. Help us to be Christ-like. Please give us Your Grace so we call all gradually grow in this virtue. Amen.

JESUS TEACHES US HOW TO NOT SIN

Week B-O26 Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

At that time, John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us." Jesus replied, "Do not prevent him. There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me. For whoever is not against us is for us. Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward.



"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life crippled than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'"

➔ 1. EXPLORE IT!

Popular culture and tradition teach the mentality of "You're either with us, or against us." People naturally divide themselves into teams, camps, and cliques, in which their side always has to come out on top. Life is a competition, and you have to have to choose sides. Jesus' disciples were the same way — they were astonished upon seeing strangers performing works in the name of Jesus. They naturally try to defend the name of Jesus from those outside their inner circle. However Jesus explains to them that it is the other way around — "whoever is not against us is for us." He shows them that there are only two real teams, that of good and evil. It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from, only your good intentions and deeds.

Jesus takes it a step farther and explains that those against us are anything which might cause us to sin, whether it be a bad influence or friend, or even your own hand or foot. It is not enough to only avoid sin, but to also avoid the temptation to sin.

➡ 2. CONNECT IT!

How often do we reflect on our sins and ask God for His forgiveness? As a VEYM member, we are invited to do this every night as part of living the Eucharistic day. While receiving God's forgiveness, at the same time, we also need to learn how to forgive others who wronged us. .



➡ 4. REMEMBER IT!

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe [in me] to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea". (Mark 9:42)

➡ 6. PRAY IT!

Dear God, please give us the strength to forgive those who have done us wrong so that we may be worthy to be called Your children. Amen

➡ 3. REFLECT IT!

Where sin comes from is not as important as what do we learn about redemption, penance, and holiness.

It is true that we have to spend years learning to be virtuous. We live our days between being "with" Jesus and being "without". The real sin which gains such condemnation by Jesus is that of causing others to be "without".

➡ 5. LIVE IT! [**FORGIVENESS**]

To have **forgiveness** means to be able to voluntarily change feelings or attitudes regarding an offense, to let go of negative emotions and vengeance.

Recall the last time you were angry with another person, regardless of who wronged who. Find **forgiveness** and try the following steps this week:

- ◆ Pray that you may have the peace to let go of any negative feelings, the humility to recognize where you might be wrong, and the courage to seek forgiveness.
- ◆ Pray for the other person, that they may have the clarity to understand your thoughts, and the love to accept forgiveness. Keep that person in your daily prayer until your negative emotions go away.
- ◆ To make sure that you have truly forgiven this person, try to answer "yes" to the following questions:
 1. "Would I help him/her if I know he/she is in trouble?"
 2. "Can I stop looking for him/her to fail?"
 3. "Can I think positive thoughts about this person?"



Jesus Teaches Us About Marriage

Male & Female

Week B-O27

Mark 10:2-16

The Pharisees approached and asked, “Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife?” They were testing him. He said to them in reply, “What did Moses command you?” They replied, “Moses permitted him to write a bill of divorce and dismiss her.” But Jesus told them, “Because of the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother [and be joined to his wife], and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate.” In the house the disciples again questioned him about this. He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife

and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

And people were bringing children to him that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.” Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them.

There are many items in our lives that we know are always a pair: salt & pepper, peanut butter & jelly, coffee & donuts, Adam & Eve. Yet there is another pair, man and woman, which come together in holy marriage.

In today’s Gospel reading, Jesus reminds and teaches us about the commitment made in holy matrimony:

But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother [and be joined to his wife], and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate.

Holy marriage is not simply a ceremony held in front of others or two signatures on a piece of paper. Rather, it is a union blessed by God, where both man and woman commit themselves to one another and where that commitment is founded in love.



1. Explore It!



Salt goes with _____.



Peanut butter goes with _____.



Coffee goes with _____.



Adam goes with _____.



Man goes with _____.

Holy matrimony is a covenant of continuing God's creation, where both commit themselves to bringing forth life. We see in today's Gospel Jesus' love for children:

Let the children come to me, do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

By saying, "Let the children come to me," Jesus is proclaiming that the kingdom of God is established through Jesus and that only by entering into a relationship with God, by coming to him like the children have, are we able to enter God's kingdom in heaven.

2. Connect It!

What makes marriage special? Marriage is special because it is a sacrament, a sign of God's grace and love. Marriage is the love and commitment between a man and woman and is a sign of the perfect and infinite love of God for each one of us.

3. Reflect It!

Jesus in today's Gospel reading teaches us about the relationship between man and woman and between our self and God. As with any relationship, it will only flourish if it is given care and attention. Think about the relationship you have with God. What type of relationship do you have? Do you visit and talk to God daily or do you let the relationship go cold by forgetting about Him?

4. Remember It!

"But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.'" Mark 10:6-8)

5. Live It! [Loyalty]

Loyalty: The virtue and quality of being loyal to someone or something, where there is a strong feeling of support and allegiance.

This week, focus on your loyalty to our Lord, Jesus Christ:

1. Commit to strengthening your relationship with God by praying to him daily.
2. Commit to visiting him in the Blessed Sacrament as much as you can or attending Eucharistic Adoration.

6. Pray It!

The Lord is good to those who hope in Him, to those who are searching for His love. Dear Lord, help us to discover Your love and strengthen our relationship with us so that one day, we may be with You in the kingdom of Heaven. Amen.

Jesus Asks Us To Share

Our Fortune With Others



As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus answered him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: ‘You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother.’” He replied and said to him, “Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth.” Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, “You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” The disciples were amazed at his words. So Jesus again said to them in reply, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through [the] eye of [a] needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God.” Peter began to say to him, “We have given up everything and followed you.” Jesus said, “Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come.

1. Explore It!

Imagine yourself sitting at Starbucks holding a mug of your favorite coffee. You love drinking coffee and are used to drinking it every morning. However, in the back of your mind, you are convinced that there is a different drink that would satisfy your thirst better than coffee. Therefore, you bring your mug up to the counter and ask for a drink that is more satisfying. The barista says, “Of course! We have just the thing, a special brew. It tastes great and will keep you energized for the entire day.” When the barista reaches for your mug, you hesitate. You have never tried this special brew and you are a little suspicious. What if it is not as good your favorite coffee? Maybe you should stick with what is familiar. Since you only have one mug, you cannot have both. However, if you get the special brew, you have to pour out the warm coffee you have in your mug now. What do you do?

The young man in today's Gospel finds himself in this situation. His mug and the coffee he currently is drinking signify his wealth and all the possessions he has. The young man has gotten used to that particular coffee that he cannot imagine anything differently because he is comfortable with it. Yet Jesus is offering him something even better, the special brew that signifies lasting wisdom. Jesus is also promising that by drinking the special brew, he will receive satisfaction, which his money cannot give him. Yet the young man walks away from Jesus because he is afraid of the risk.

Wealth and possessions often gives us a sense of security and it becomes difficult to give such security up. Yet when we become attached to the advantages that our possessions bring, we worry about defending that interest. This applies to not just wealth, but also the desire for wealth, which can change us and make us slaves to the goods of this world. Jesus teaches us that while our wealth and possessions can sustain us here on earth, it is only by choosing Him that we will be with Him in heaven. He invites us to "Go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me" (Mk 10:21).

2. Connect It!

Jesus in today's Gospel reading teaches us about how wealth and material possessions can take over the heart and make it difficult to focus on the true meaning of life, strengthening our relationship with God and choosing Him above all things.

Imagine yourself sitting with the Lord Jesus, having an honest conversation about your life. Jesus asks you:

3. Reflect It!

When your parents call to you to pray with them or to go to church to attend mass, do you tell them you are too busy or have other priorities that take precedence?



What do you often put before your relationship with me?

What is standing in the way of strengthening our relationship?

4. Remember It!

"Go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."
(Mark 10:21)



5. Live It! | Generosity |

Generosity: The virtue and quality of being kind, generous, and not selfish.

This week:

1. Be charitable by donating time or material possessions to those less fortunate.
2. Give a portion of your allowance to a poor and needy person.

6. Pray It!

Lord, You have captured our hearts and opened to us the treasures of heaven. May You always be our treasure and delight and may nothing else keep us from giving You our all. Amen.

Jesus Reminds His Disciples to Serve Others



Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” He replied, “What do you wish [me] to do for you?” They answered him, “Grant that in your glory we may sit one at your right and the other at your left.” Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” They said to him, “We can.” Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink, you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared.” When the ten heard this, they became indignant at James and John. Jesus summoned them and said to them, “You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

1 Explore It!

Spiderman, the comic book turned movie, must have taken a page from the Bible when Uncle Ben said, “With great power comes great responsibility.” The meaning behind the phrase is simple — if you have the ability to do something, make sure that you do it for the good of others. People often think that once they have some form of power, they can laud it over people and abuse it. History has many people that have become corrupted because of great power, such as Napoleon and Hitler. Even at a smaller level, we see powerful people beat down on weaker ones, like bullies.

That is what today’s Gospel is about. Jesus teaches us that while power and authority can be used for good, as we can see through His work and actions throughout the New Testament, he warns us about the danger of power and authority. James and John approach Jesus to request privileged places of authority to sit to the right and left of Jesus. They recognize that glorification

awaits Jesus, but do not understand what Jesus will have to endure in his passion. Yet at the same time, James and John are not the only disciples enticed by visions of a triumphant reign. **“When the ten heard this, they became indignant at James and John.”** Jesus corrects his disciples’ desire for power by reminding them of the suppression and tyranny in which the rulers of the Gentiles display.

Jesus instead tells his disciples that greatness is not measured by the amount of power they hold or the position they retain. Rather, it is measured by their ability to live as servants and slaves, even if that life means suffering oppression at the hands of those who wield power. Jesus himself embodies this message in the passion he will suffer, where he forgoes the power to control his fate, **“For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.”**

2 Connect It!

Jesus asks His disciples to learn to be servants of God and of each other. Your VEYM youth-leader is a servant leader of the Church. They follow Jesus to serve you and others. What about you?

• • • •

3 Reflect It!

Think about the positions and titles that you hold – as a brother or sister in your family, within an organization or club at your school, or within your VEYM-USA chapter.

- What type of authority does that position/title hold? How have you used that position/title? Has it been in a positive or negative way?
- How can you serve in your position/title? What gifts do you have in which you can serve your community?

5 Live It! [Service]

Service: The virtue and action of helping or doing work for another.

This week:

Go out of your way to serve another at each of the following places

- At home
- At school
- At your church
- In your community

4 Remember It!

“For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45)



Pope Francis washing the feet of inmates.

6 Pray It!

God of peace and forgiveness, You have given us Christ as an example of total service, giving us his life. Help us to find favor in Your sight that we may share the cup of Your will and live in generous and fruitful service to others. Amen.

JESUS HEALS A BLIND, BARTIMAEUS

Week B-030

Mark 10:46-52

They came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus, sat by the roadside begging. On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, son of David, have pity on me." And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he kept calling out all the more, "Son of David, have pity on me." Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage; get up, he is calling you." He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus. Jesus said to him in reply, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see." Jesus told him, "Go your way; your faith has saved you." Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.



1. Explore It!

Think of a moment when you were surrounded by family and friends. How nice it is to feel that kind of warmth and love? How would you like to feel like that all the time?

In today's Gospel, Bartimaeus sees himself as someone pitiful, as someone condemned by afflictions. He is unable to get up and move forward and sits and cries out to God. He is shunned by the rest of the world, but however Jesus loves him. Jesus hears him and calls out to him also. When Bartimaeus accepts Jesus' call and musters the courage to get up and come to Jesus, he is able to see again. If we are able to get up and throw away our cloak of self-pity away, if we see ourselves with the same eyes

that God sees us with today, we will no longer be blinded by our self-pity and brood over our injuries. We will see Jesus and will be able to follow him.

Extend this to how we see other people in our lives. Shed the eyes of the secular judgmental world and don the loving views that Jesus sees each one of us. We cannot give what we don't have.

First, see that Jesus loves us constantly and always, even during hard times when we are blinded to His presence during the challenges in life. Then we may see others the way Jesus sees us. We must practice looking for Christ every moment so we may learn to discern His Love for us.

2. Connect it!

Seeing all creatures God created around us with our own eyes is a blessing. We need to believe in Jesus **faithfully** and follow Him **sincerely** so that we can see God's wills and understand God's plans for us clearly with our spiritual eyes.

3. Reflect it!

- How did the blind Bartimaeus see himself?
- How often do you judge yourself and how you look?
- How often do you judge other people based on how they look?

4. Remember It!

**Jesus told him,
“Go your way;
your faith has
saved you.”
(Mark 10:52)**

5. Live It! [Sincerity]

Sincerity: Honest; free from hypocrisy or dissimulation.

Practice this when you are in the bath room or when you see yourself in the mirror. Say to yourself, “I love me as Jesus loves me.”

When you see people in your everyday life: at school, in the street, at home (siblings and parents), on social media, etc., do you find yourself making some judgement against them? When you do, quietly say to yourself “Jesus, help me to love them as You love them”.

In these two ways, train your spirit to be strong and see Jesus in your everyday life. When the life has you down, you only need to focus on Christ to realize where you are. In Him all things are possible.



6. Pray It!

Dear God, help us to see You everyday and all the time. We are inherently weak and unable to see You sometimes. At these times, please grant us Your Holy Spirit and teach us how to pray so that we may see You and be at peace. Amen.



Jesus Asks Us to Love God and Our Neighbor

Week B-O31

Mark 12:28-34

The Greatest Commandment. One of the scribes, when he came forward and heard them disputing and saw how well he had answered them, 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.



1. EXPLORE IT!

Jesus is very clear in telling us that we are to go to heaven if we obey the commandments of: love the Lord with all my heart, all my soul, all my strength, and love one another. When we carry out these two commandments, all other commandments will fall into place. Love the Lord with our whole being, nothing should come before it. Love your neighbors meaning your family, friends and yes, even your enemy including people that you do not like.

2. CONNECT IT!

Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta wrote: "We are commanded to love God and our neighbor equally, on the same level. There is no difference. Love for our neighbor must be equal to our love for God. We don't have to search for opportunities; we have them twenty-four hours a day with those around us.

How is it that we do not see and we miss these opportunities?"

Can we tell who is our neighbor now? Of course, they are our parents and siblings. Then go and love them as Jesus commands.

3. REFLECT IT!

To Love God fully is to love him as a child loves a parent—with total trust. Many of us believe there IS a GOD, but so many are not able to believe IN GOD. There is only ONE God, means Jesus is more to you than your habits, your desires, your wants, your ways, and your truth. He is the way, the truth, and the life. Until you accept Him and accept that He is YOUR way, YOUR truth, and YOUR life, you will always struggle in this life. Peace comes to those who seek Him. Blessed are those poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

4. REMEMBER IT!

**‘To love God with all
your heart, with all your
understanding, with all your
strength, and to love your
neighbor as yourself’
(Mark 12: 33)**



5. LIVE IT [RESPONSIBILITY]

Responsibility: The state of being responsible, accountable, or answerable, as for a trust, debt, or obligation.

You can only be as holy as you are at home. Sometimes, the hardest people to love are your own family members. We often take our family members for granted and do not show them our love properly.

1. Practice showing love to your family members. They are your closest neighbors. It may feel strange at first if you are not used to it. That's just your habitual sin groaning when it sees light.
2. Start asking Jesus to help you love Him. "We do not know how to pray as we ought" so we ask the Spirit to guide us. When you feel like you are overwhelmed by a bad habit, may it be laziness, procrastination, anger, frustration, sadness, low self-esteem, or no motivation to do things, invoke Jesus's name and ask Him to send his Spirit to help you overcome those moments. Focus on Him so that you may walk on water and achieve it. For alone you can do nothing but anything is possible with God. This is how we practice believing in God.

6. PRAY IT!

Dear Jesus, please help us see You in ourselves and others so that we may love You completely with all our hearts. Amen.

Jesus Appraises the Poor Widow's Contribution

WEEK B-O32

Mark 12:38-44



In the course of his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to go around in long robes and accept greetings in the marketplaces, seats of honor in synagogues, and places of honor at banquets. They devour the houses of widows and, as a pretext, recite lengthy prayers. They will receive a very severe condemnation." He sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents. Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, "Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."

1. Explore It!

1. How does God invite us into His loving presence?
2. Why does Jesus ask us to give our whole livelihood, our life, all of our possessions in this teachings?
3. Why does Jesus use the example of the poor widow (one of the lowest class of people in the ancient world) to teach?

2. Connect It!

When we read this Gospel, the image that typically comes to mind is the collection during mass when we see the congregation pass around the collection basket and some people putting in money. The message that Jesus is illustrating is not simply about how much or how little you put in to the basket. The message instead contains a theme of kindness and humility. Rather than being like the scribes who Jesus refers to as hypocrites, Jesus calls us to be humble like the elderly woman. It wasn't about the wealth that she brought to church in terms of monetary value. It's about how much she brings of herself to offer to God. If you come to mass, but your mind is focused on what you will be eating after mass or what you will be doing later on in the day, you aren't fully there. However, if you bring your body, mind, heart, and soul to mass and spend the full hour with Christ, you will have fully imitated the poor widow in today's Gospel.

3. Reflect It!

Although God loves us dearly and always wants the best for us, He often prompts our response to His love. He invites us to practice the virtues of fortitude and patience by trusting Him in our everyday lives. Often in life, He will present us with many situations where we may take the opportunity to trust IN Him and believe IN Him, example when negativity happens in our life, such as losing someone close or some other challenging ordeals. The failure to respond to His invitation with total devotion and trust is frustration, resentment, anger, and stress. During these times of trials, we may learn to trust in God. Trust that He loves us and is with us through our hour of suffering. The reward for this trust is the feeling of peace, of calmness, and the ability to overcome these challenges the best way possible. To truly recognize that we are in Heaven constantly even though we are undergoing harsh challenges. Although I walk through the shadow of the valley of death, I fear no evil because God is with me.

4. Remember It!

***"...but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."
(Mark 12:43-44)***

5. Live It! [KINDNESS]

Kindness is an act of doing good to bring happiness to others.

To be kind means to be considerate of others. Kindness brings positive traits that help shape the kind of person God wants us to learn and grow into. Being kind also means recognizing those that are in need of kindness, such as the poor or the secluded.

Each night, reflect on your day and think of times where you showed kindness, or where you could have shown it if you were a bit more aware. Write a small paragraph of what you did, or what you will do to make sure you share kindness throughout the day.

Thoughtfulness is the beginning of great sanctity. If you learn this art of being thoughtful, you will become more and more Christ-like, for his heart was meek and he always thought of others. Our vocation, to be beautiful, must be full of thought for others....

— Mother Teresa —

6. Pray It!

Dear Jesus,

Thank You for loving us completely and whole heartedly. Bless us with the compassion You had in others, so that we may offer kindness to everyone we meet. Allow us to share Your love and good works so we too can learn to be positive in a world in need of Your presence.
Amen.



Jesus Will Come Again on the Last Day of the World

Jesus said to his disciples:

"In those days after that tribulation the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. "And then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds' with great power and glory, and then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky.

"Learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that he is near, at the gates. Amen, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

"But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."



1. Explore It!

There was once a prisoner who was placed on death row. As the time drew near, the prisoner was marched to the river where the rope was then wrapped tightly around his neck to the bridge below. However, as the commander gave the order, the rope miraculously broke and the prisoner fell into the water. He started frantically diving and swimming away, but was instead suddenly moved by the beauty of the creatures and flowers around. A moment later, he saw a spider and was touched by the beauty of the arachnid with water droplets clinging to it, sparkling like diamonds. Suddenly, the soldiers started firing from across the bridge. He tried to glide under the rain of bullets and finally swam ashore. Slowly opening his eyes, he saw a field of wildflowers. Absolute beauty, he thought. But soon, he heard bullets

whizzing through the bush. He got up, and ran straight home where he arrived safely. He called for his wife; she opened the door and welcomed him home with a warm hug.

But, none of the happened. Flash back to bridge, where the prisoner hangs lifeless for his crimes. His many attempts to run away and every chance of him being alive was just pure imagination. With his last thoughts, he dreamt that he was living a second time and he saw life with completely new eyes. This was the first time he felt the world was perfect and a precious gift. If only he was still alive, he surely will live a different life.

To us, the prisoner might represent each one of us because we, too, will die one day. But we do not know when we will die as death someday will come to us as to the

2. Connect It!

When going on a journey, isn't having a list important so we can be ready for any situation? Jesus asks us to always be ready during our journey of life for His second coming. Is your list of trust, love, and happiness through Him complete? Remember that the easiest way of completing this list is to grow with God through committing to prayer, understanding scripture, and spreading His love.

3. Reflect It!

Today's lesson invites us to think about moments we will share when we meet the Lord in the last moments of our lives.

1. At this time, will we come to the Lord with our hands full of charitable acts or will we be empty handed?
2. If we dedicate our lives to serving God, how can we use the talents that God has given to us?

We have the opportunity to prepare ourselves for those fateful moments. Let us live these short but important moments for the glory of God. For then, we will seize happiness in His kingdom.

4. Remember It!

*"And then they will see
'the Son of Man coming in
the clouds' with great
power and glory"
(Mark 13:31)*

5. Live It! [Readiness]

Readiness: a state of preparation

New Year's Resolutions

- Think about a few resolutions as to what you need to watch for or pay attention to. Write a letter stating your resolutions and put in a self-addressed envelope. This will be mailed to you in a later date. Additionally, what resolutions would you suggest for the faith community and the world?
- As Christmas draws near, how do you get ready to prepare for the coming of Jesus? How will your readiness this year be different from last year?

6. Pray It!

Dear Lord Jesus, we believe that joy and true happiness lies within You. Guide us to always seek the kingdom of heaven, to not worry about the earthly wealth and lose the reward You promised to those faithful and those who always seek You in all things. Amen.

JESUS IS OUR KING

Week B-O34
John 18:33b-37



Pilate said to Jesus

"Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?"

Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I?"

Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?"

Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here."

So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?"

Jesus answered, "You say I am a king."

For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth.

Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

1. EXPLORE IT!

The monarchical time has passed but the world is still filled with selfishness and dictatorial "kings." In this context, people are still waiting for a King to save and liberate them from the oppressive misery. The Word of God declares that He is the King whom still brings modern meaning and value. Christ the King is not like any other kings on earth. He did not resort to military, political, or institutional force other than being the King of the Truth. He preached the truth that God is Love, who "so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

2. CONNECT IT!

A king is a leader of his people. That makes it a pretty good name for Jesus, doesn't it? Have you ever heard Jesus called a king?



There are several different places in the Bible where He's called one - and this week's Gospel reading is one of them. Can you find another place in the Bible where Jesus is called "king?"

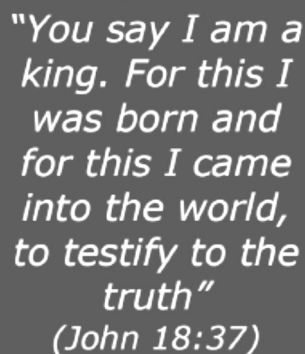
Why do you think

He might be called that? What does it mean when we call someone "king?"

3. REFLECT IT!

1. Is Jesus the King of my heart? Or do I still have many other kings that are dominant and are dominating my life? Other rulers do not give us happiness and the meaning of life, only Jesus fulfills the profound desire of the human and the divine.
2. Can I truly open myself to welcome Jesus into my heart? Only Jesus can free me from all the earthly slaves and bring me true freedom. Only my life and my decisions are guided by the King himself.
3. Love is the statute that the Kingdom of Jesus requires. It is the most important statute and has the most transforming power. I belong to the Kingdom of God through the Sacrament of Baptism. So, have I live this statute of love? If you have not lived this statute of love, you have not completely belonged to this kingdom and have not become a true citizen of this kingdom.

4. REMEMBER IT!



*"You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth"
(John 18:37)*

5. LIVE IT! [REVERENCE]

Reverence: The virtue that inclines a person to show honor and respect for persons who possess some dignity.

Many people deserve our reverence because of the knowledge, love, and sacrifices they made for us, whether we know it or not. Some great examples are our grandparents, who might have taken care of your parents AND you as you were growing up. Another is our teachers, who are a source of information for us to grow. And of course Jesus, who continues to teach us to live faithfully.

Showing reverence doesn't just have to be for people. Each night, think of things or places that deserve reverence and talk to your parents about them {hint: one example is where you go each Sunday!}. Can you make the connections why they're important?

6. PRAY IT!

Jesus, King of Love, please give us the heart of God. Help us to experience God's immense love and to respond to Him generously and heartily. Amen.

2. Connect It!

Advent marks the beginning of a waiting period for the coming of Jesus. back then, people would look to far off places for signs, like the sun, the moon, the stars, and even the weather. Today, it is oftentimes very hard to notice the signs around us that indicate Jesus' coming. We are often distracted by all the things that are going on in our lives from studying, to hanging out with friends, to extracurricular activities. It can become very easy to miss those simple signs! The Gospel today challenges us to dig a little deeper in our lives and find clues that Jesus is leaving for us that indicates where He is present in our lives and to bring ourselves closer to Him in preparation for His coming.

3. Reflect It!

Think about the bad habits and actions that distance you from God

- ◆ Are there times when you revert to those bad habits?
- ◆ What can you do to end those bad habits?
- ◆ Conversely, how can you strengthen your relationship to God?
- ◆ Are there actions you are doing that you can continue to do or do more of to build your faith and be worthy for the time you must stand before the Son of Man?

4. Remember It!

**“BE VIGILANT AT ALL TIMES
AND PRAY THAT YOU HAVE
THE STRENGTH TO ESCAPE
THE TRIBULATIONS THAT ARE
IMMINENT AND TO STAND
BEFORE THE SON OF MAN.”
(LUKE 21:36)**

Being watchful means always watching the actions of someone or something: paying careful attention to someone or something so that we're prepared against carelessness or unawareness.

God calls us to be watchful not in the physical things, but more our spiritual surroundings. Are you mindful of when you pray? Go to church? Confession? How others around you talk and relate to God? Each night, write a small paragraph about what you were watchful for from morning to the evening. Talk to your parents, and see if you're on the right track on your life with God!

5. Live It!

WATCHFULNESS

6. Pray It!

Lord, help us be at home with You, that we may listen to Your word and walk in Your way. Lord, help us welcome You once again and make room for You in our daily life, that You may make Your home in our hearts. Lord, may we be generous with others from the richness You have shared with us through Your goodness. Lord, may we truly bring peace to others that we may be at peace with ourselves and one with You. Lord, clarify our vision that we may see You in others and sense You within our own souls. Lord, flood us with Your light, and help us to brighten the lives of those whom we find most dark. Amen.

Prepare the Way for Jesus

Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert. John went throughout the whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah: A voice of one crying out in the desert: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."



1. EXPLORE IT!

You arrive to school on Monday morning and your principal announces that your favourite celebrity will be visiting on Friday and that you would be among a select group of students who will get the chance to take a photograph with the star. From now until Friday, how will you prepare? Do you go and buy a new outfit? Or, do you contemplate on what you will say to the celebrity?

Whenever an important person visits, may it be the President, the Pope, or a celebrity, an announcement is made in advance regarding their visit. It allows time for people to prepare for the important event to ensure the visit goes well. That is exactly what is happening in today's Gospel. John the Baptist is announcing Jesus' coming and calling everybody to be ready to welcome him.

2. CONNECT IT!

The word "Advent" originates from the Latin term for "coming towards." Jesus is "coming towards" us in a new way this Christmas and John the Baptist's message is a call for us to get ready, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." We are called to examine our souls on a regular basis, especially in this joyful season of Advent.

3. REFLECT IT!

We all need to fill in some spiritual potholes and clear away unwelcome debris so that the graces God has in store for us can fill our hearts. What are those spiritual potholes, actions and habits that weaken your faith, that you need to fill?

[4. REMEMBER IT!]

“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.” (Luke 3:4)

5. LIVE IT! [INTEGRITY]

Integrity means to have good principles; honesty

This week, with integrity prepare your soul for the coming of the Lord:

1. Take 15 minutes each night to reflect on the day and have a conversation with God.
Prepare yourself to receive God spiritually by praying the Act of Contrition and the Spiritual Communion.
2. Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

6. Pray It!

Father, all-powerful God, Your eternal Word took flesh on our earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of Your plan. Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice, which announces His glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for His coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.





The crowds asked John the Baptist, "What should we do?" He said to them in reply, "Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He answered them, "Stop collecting more than what is prescribed." Soldiers also asked him, "And what is it that we should do?" He told them, "Do not practice extortion, do not falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages."

Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Exhorting them in many other ways, he preached good news to the people.

1. Explore It!

In the Gospel reading today, St. John the Baptist challenges all of us to change our lives for God. If we have more than we need, we can share it. If we require something from someone, only take what is just. From the directions St. John the Baptist was giving, people began to wonder and question if he was the savior they were expecting, but John the Baptist quickly reassures them that someone much more regarded is coming after him who will do miraculous things. This is why we must prepare ourselves in this season of Advent.

2. Connect It!

Last Sunday's Gospel focused on preparing ourselves for the coming of the Lord and today's Gospel reading continues to focus on our relationship with God, in addition to our relationship with those in our community. In that time, tax collectors were disliked because they were viewed as unethical and soldiers were despised because they enforced the rule of the Roman Empire in foreign lands. Yet, these hated individuals are the ones to ask John the Baptist for guidance. It is a reversal of expectations and a call to return to God's love through baptism. As the crowd wonders whether John the Baptist is the Messiah, John the Baptist makes it clear to the people that his ministry is in preparing for the Messiah and that he knows his role in God's plan for salvation. By encouraging the crowd to act similarly in repenting and receiving baptism, John's teaching suggests that each person has a role to play in God's salvation.

3. Reflect It!

In what ways have you shared the Good News of Jesus' birth with those around you?

Have you only focused on yourself or purchased materialistic gifts, yet not shared with the poor and less fortunate?

With our baptism, we become children of God. What can we do to be worthy of that title?



4. Remember It!

**"I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals."
(Luke 3:16)**

5. Live It! [Ethics]

"Ethics not only directs a man on how to act if he wishes to be morally good, but also obligates him to do good and avoid evil."

(a definition from Catholic Encyclopaedia)

The third Sunday of Advent is also called Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete is a Latin word that means "rejoice." Let us rejoice and share this joy with those in need. This week, donate to a food pantry and sacrifice an afternoon to serve your community and/or church.

6. Pray It!

Father in heaven, the day draws near when the glory of Your Son will make radiant the night of the waiting world.

May the lure of greed not impede us from the joy which moves the hearts of those who seek Him.

May the darkness not blind us to the vision of wisdom which fills the minds of those who find Him.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

Mary Brings Jesus to Elizabeth and John the Baptist

Week C-A4

Luke 1:39-45



Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

1. EXPLORE IT!

Have you ever watched the show Pokémon? If you have not, you probably know the famous saying whenever one of the characters (Ash, Misty, Brock) chooses a Pokémon during battle. They say, "Pokémon, I choose you!" Each of the Pokémon has special talents and plays a different role in the storyline of the show. Today's Gospel reading is similar to that of Pokémon. Instead of the anime show, let us reflect on Jesus' salvation and the calling each of us has been put on earth to respond to. The angel Gabriel had just visited the Blessed Virgin Mary and through the Holy Spirit, Mary conceives Jesus in her womb. A few months earlier, Elizabeth, Mary's older relative, also conceived a child, John the Baptist. The amazing encounter we witness in today's Gospel between not only Mary and Elizabeth, but also Jesus and John the Baptist is powerful. John leaps for joy while he is still in Elizabeth's womb as soon as Jesus, who is in Mary's womb, enters the room. Already, from the very beginning, both John and Jesus, and Elizabeth and Mary, are fulfilling their missions, because a God-given purpose, a calling, is at work in them.

2. CONNECT IT!

When we say the "Hail Mary", we are indeed referencing this scene from today's Gospel. "Blessed are you among women." That line is a continual reminder of the person that is our Blessed Mother. She is a symbol of unwavering faith in her daily living. We are called to adore and model our lives after her example of her faith. It is appropriate in this season of Advent that we consider the role of Mary in God's plan of salvation. Elizabeth describes Mary as the first disciple the one who believed God's word to her would be fulfilled. Mary's faith enables her to recognize the work of God and her openness to God allows him to work through her. Because of this, we love and honor Mary who intercedes for us all the time.

3. REFLECT IT!

We are all called by Christ to be part of God's story of salvation. What role are you being called to play? As a child of God, what are you called to do? What kind of life are you called to live? In what ways can you bring the Good News to those in your family, to your friends, and to your community?

4. REMEMBER IT!

**"Blessed are you who believed
that what was spoken
to you by the Lord would be
fulfilled." (Luke 1:45)**

5. LIVE IT [CARING]

Caring: The virtue of understanding, kindness, concern, and compassion for others.

Caring isn't enough to simply see or recognize. God calls us to action, just like Mary through the Holy Spirit. Each day, look around God's creation and see if anything needs caring, whether its helping a friend, or cleaning the environment, to sacrificing your time for others or doing the chores so your parents can have an easier time.

6. PRAY IT!

O come, O Key of David, come
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appears.
Rejoice, rejoice,
Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.
Lord, may we rejoice that Jesus Christ is
born anew in our hearts and in our home.
Amen.



The Boy Jesus in the Temple

Week C—C1

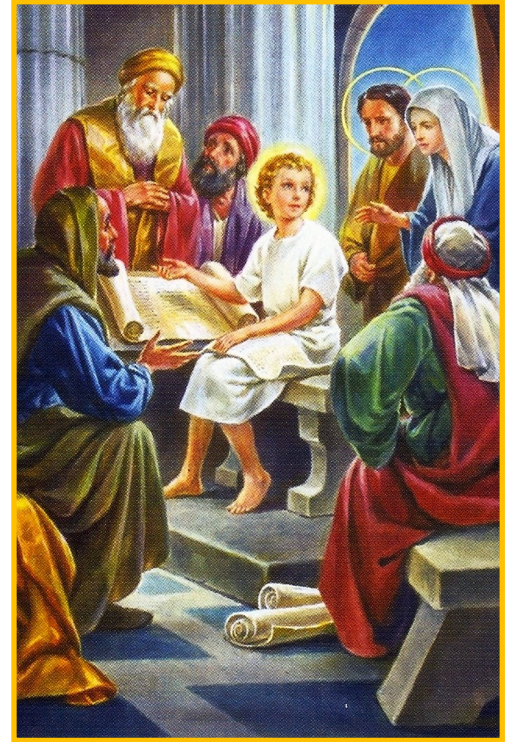
Luke 2:41—52

Each year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him.

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety."

And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them.

He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favour before God and man.



1 | EXPLORE IT!

Just as they had done for many years prior, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus head to Jerusalem where they spent the feast of Passover. When it was time to head home, Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents, thinking that Jesus went with the caravan, spent a day looking for Jesus. Eventually, their search returned them to Jerusalem where they found Jesus in the temple, sitting and discussing with the teachers, who were impressed with Jesus's responses and His understanding of God's teachings. The parents questioned Jesus on why He had stayed behind, and Jesus responded that He must be in His Father's house, leaving His parents puzzled. Regardless of his response, Jesus went back to Nazareth with his parents. As He grew in age, Jesus grew even wiser while also remaining obedient to Joseph and Mary.

2 | CONNECT IT!

Jesus remained behind in the temple because He was aware of His mission and His relationship with God the Father. He knew that His purpose was to spread God's love and save us from sin. While we may not understand our relationship with God in the way that Jesus did, we should still strive to grow in closeness with God. We should constantly put out the effort to talk to God and learn about Him. We can listen to the Scriptures more attentively in Mass or talk to our priests, parents, or youth leaders to expand our understanding of God.

3 | REFLECT IT!

Do we prioritize hanging out with our friends over going to Mass? Do we value our relationships more than our relationships with God? Are materialistic gifts more meaningful to us than the gifts God has given us? In this week's Gospel, Jesus put His mission and His relationship with God the Father above everything else in His life. How can we follow the example Jesus set for us and do our best put God first? We can set aside time in our day to spend time talk to God, or we can put in the time to learn and understand God, like young Jesus did in the passage. Through these actions, Jesus also begins to reveal to His parents that He is truly the Son of God, sent to save mankind from sin. Like Jesus, we need to be true to ourselves and to our faith. We should show the world who we are by spreading the good news of God's love and using our understanding of Him to bring others closer to Him.

4 | REMEMBER IT!

*"AND **JESUS** ADVANCED IN WISDOM
AND AGE AND FAVOUR BEFORE
GOD AND MAN. " (LUKE 2:52)*

5 | LIVE IT! [**Understanding**]

Understanding - to grasp the significance, implications, or importance of something.

In this passage, Jesus shows us that He understands His role in God's plan. We, too, must strive to understand what God wants us to do. While Mary and Joseph did not yet understand the reasons of Jesus' actions, He understood how his parents felt, so Jesus went home with them and was obedient to them. We need to be able to understand our parents, teachers, and friends so that our relationships with them can blossom. This week, go out of your way to understand why your parents do what they do. Talk to them and try to understand their views so that your relationship can grow.

6 | PRAY IT!

Heavenly Father, we pray that You may help us understand one another as well as understand Your intentions for us. Please give us the patience to listen and respond accordingly to Your will. Amen.

Epiphany: Follow Jesus' Star

Week C-C2
Matthew 2:1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage."

After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.

They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

1. Explore It!



Having been foretold through the stars of the birth of the King of Kings, three magi traveled east towards Jerusalem to bring gifts to the newborn king. King Herod startled at the birth of a rival King asked his advisors where the newborn Christ might be born. The advisors informed King Herod and the magi of a prophecy that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of the "ruler, who is to shepherd [the people of] Israel." Herod asked the magi to find the newborn child and report their findings to him so that he, too, could do him homage. Continuing their journey, the magi followed the star as it shined brightly over the location of the newborn. Delighted at their success upon seeing Mary with her son, the magi knelt down and paid homage. They then presented him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh as a tribute to the King of Kings. Afterwards, they went back to their home country using a different path, having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod.



2. Connect It!

Now as it was then, Jesus has the same effect on people in the world. There are some people who see Jesus as a rival and nuisance to their lives, and there are those who see Jesus as King. Which group do you belong to? The magi needed to follow a star to find Jesus, but we do not need to follow a star to find Jesus as he is already in our lives. His love shines brightly in us already. We need to allow that glow to radiate to lead others to Jesus presence.



4. Remember It!

"Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage".

(Luke 2:2)



6. Pray It!

Dear Jesus, like the star guiding the magi to You, continue to radiate Your love in our lives as a beacon of hope so that we may not stray in our journey. Help us to be the best we can be, as a testament to our faith, reverence and love for You. Amen.



3. Reflect It!

In the magi's visit, they brought Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. In today's time, these gifts are impractical, but we can still be like the magi and present Jesus gifts worthy of his Kingship. Coincidentally, VEYM has already taught us how to present gifts worthy of Jesus, Bó Hoa Thiêng or Spiritual Bouquets. Each time we perform a task in the Spiritual Bouquets whether it was to attend mass, do a good deed or just sit with him during adoration, we are offering to Jesus our love.

What can you do this week to pay homage to Jesus? What sacrifices or deeds can you do to fill out your spiritual bouquet to offer up to Jesus and be magic ourselves?



5. Live It!

| Reverence |

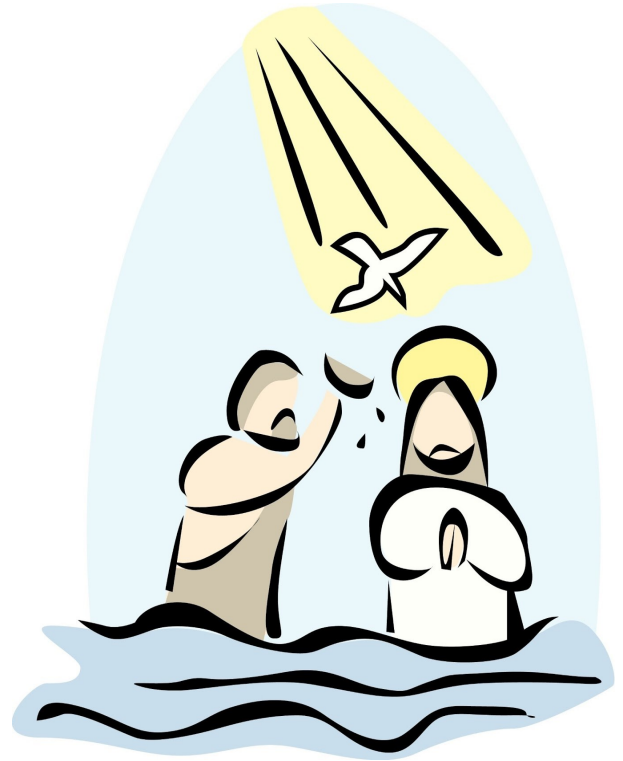
Reverence - respecting someone but upped another level with devotion and adoration.

Like the magi, Catholics not only respect Jesus, we revere Him as King of Kings. You and I show reverence to Jesus every week when we attend mass and bow before the tabernacle, crucifix or Eucharist. Continue your reverence of Jesus every week at church or before the Altar at home. When you get the chance, you can pay Jesus the ultimate reverence by attending Visitation or Adoration at our weekly classes with your friends or anytime you are free this week. But if you can't go to church, spend five minutes at night at the altar in your own home and just be with Jesus.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah. John answered them all, saying, “I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming, I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire.

After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”



1. EXPLORE IT!

The Messiah, “The Anointed One,” is the great liberator in the war against Satan that the people have been expecting for generations. When the people see John the Baptist proclaiming and doing great works in the Jordan River, they are filled with hope and expectation that John might be the Messiah they have all been waiting for. However, John the Baptist tells a different story, and hints that the real Messiah is coming soon.

Today’s passage has two declarations on the identity of Jesus.

The first declaration is provoked by John the Baptist:

“I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming, I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire.”

The second declaration is by God himself from heaven during Jesus’ baptism:

And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

2. CONNECT IT!

In this week’s Gospel, we observe the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus. This event marks the beginning of the earthly ministry of Jesus. It gives us an opportunity to reflect on our own baptism. By baptism, we share in the priesthood of Christ, in his prophetic and royal mission (CCC #1268). We also began our earthly ministry in the name of Jesus even if it was when we were infants.

3. REFLECT IT!

During the Sacrament of Baptism, the holy water cleanses us body and soul and the Holy Spirit enlivens us. We receive God's graces to live our lives in accordance with Christ's life and his teachings, to live holy and keep ourselves pure. At the start of this new calendar year, let us reflect upon ourselves and see if we have started the year correctly and wisely with good thoughts and pure hearts. With pure hearts come pure intentions and good deeds.

4. REMEMBER IT!

"I AM BAPTIZING YOU WITH WATER, BUT ONE MIGHTIER THAN I IS COMING, HE WILL BAPTIZE YOU WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE."
(LUKE 3:16)

5. LIVE IT!

[PURITY]

Purity is the virtue of benevolence - acting without any trace of evil or selfish motives.

- ◇ Intentions are pure only when they are free of self-interest, egoism, desire, envy, cruelty, spite, greed, malice, lust, trickery, and dishonesty.
- ◇ Motives are pure only when they are free of power, control, and coercion.
- ◇ Pure love is giving, not taking, not a transaction, not a means to an end.

(a definition from <https://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Virtues/Purity>)

1. Name some thoughts, intentions, or actions that show purity and impurity:

PURITY	IMPURITY

2. This week, we will do our best to live with the pure thoughts, intentions, and actions from the list above.

6. PRAY IT!

Lord Jesus, we earnestly wish to be pure in thoughts, words, and the actions that we do. Give us a deep sense of modesty to protect our eyes from anything that might dim the light of our hearts that must mirror the purity in You. Help us have the strength and courage to live a life of purity on the road to living in Your example. Amen.

Jesus at the Cana Wedding

WEEK C-O2 John 2:1-11

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come."



His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told the them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from — although the servers who had drawn the water knew —, the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs at Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

1. EXPLORE IT!

A wedding is a function of the family. One must be within the circles of the bride and groom to receive the invitation.

Wine is regarded as a "must have" accommodation for all important events.

"Woman" is the name given to Eve before "the fall" when she was still sinless and pure in God's eyes. When Jesus replied, "Woman" signifies Mary as the new Eve, born sinless and sinless throughout her life.

Mary said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." She has complete confidence in Jesus' ability to resolve the problem of out of wines.



2. CONNECT IT!

Imagine you are invited to your friend's wedding reception and after a few hours, the restaurant ran out of wine. Would it concern you? If so, what would you do? Now, tie this back to the significance of the Gospel today.

3. REFLECT IT!



When Jesus said, "My hour has not yet come", He is indicating his passion, death, resurrection, and ascension to the people around him.

"So they filled them to the brim" shows how the servants did exactly as they were told. It is important to be obedient in fulfilling God's will.

4. REMEMBER IT!

**"DO WHATEVER HE
TELLS YOU."
(JOHN 2:5)**

6. PRAY IT!

Lord Jesus, our hearts belongs for Your perfection. Not only do You share in our sufferings, but also voluntarily accept them. Please give us the courage to share in other's suffering. Amen.

5. LIVE IT! (SYMPATHY)

Sympathy is a feeling or impulse of compassion.

Ways you can show compassions for others:

- 1) Set aside time for bonding/ catching up with your siblings or friends
- 2) Think twice before sending a text to your friend gossiping about someone or post a text on social media about a celebrity/idol
- 3) Tell your others what they are doing right instead of pointing out the bad things

What else can you do to show sympathy or compassion to others?

JESUS IS THE MESSIAH

WEEK C-3

LUKE 1:1-4; 4:14-21



Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all. He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty in captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the

attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

1. EXPLORE IT!

Theophilus means beloved of God. Who this person is, is unknown. This is the only time the name is mentioned in the Bible (Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1). Theophilus could be a generic calling for "all Christians".

Jesus begins His public ministry when He returned to Galilee. This happened after He was baptized and tempted by the devil in the desert.

"Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." What Jesus is saying is that the waiting is over, the Messiah has arrived, which was Him in the midst of all the people in the synagogue.

2. CONNECT IT!

When Jesus came back to Nazareth from a long journey, the town people did not welcome Jesus back to town with open arms. In what ways can you welcome to your family members from being away from home for a long period?

1. Parents coming home from work.
2. Brothers/sisters coming home from college out of town.

3. REFLEC IT!

“...to bring glad tidings to the poor.” “The poor” refers not so much to a social condition but to a very religious attitude of indigence and humility toward God.

Jesus came to bring freedom to those who have been captive by the blindness and oppression of sins.

4. REMEMBER IT!

“TODAY THIS SCRIPTURE
PASSAGE IS FULFILLED IN
YOUR HEARING.” (LUKE 4:21)

5. LIVE IT!

RESPECT

Respect includes how you feel about someone and how you treat him/her. Having respect for someone means you treat them as how you would want to be treated. Showing respect to someone means you act in a way that shows you care about their feelings and well-being. Examples of respect:

1. You keep quiet in a library to show that you care about others' need to read without interruption.
2. You follow your parents' rules to show them you care and respect their teachings.
3. You dress, speak, and act in a way that show you care about what you know is right and safe, because you care about yourself and your well-being.

Take 1 of the 3 examples above and practice it during the next week.

6. PRAY IT!

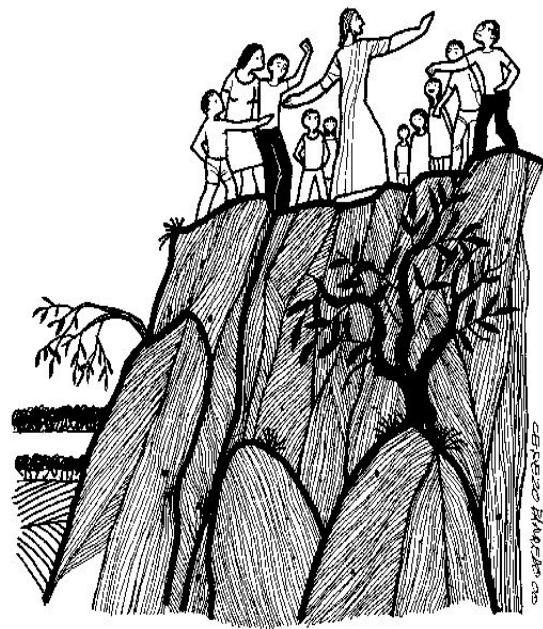
Oh good Jesus, teach us about respect and help us master this important value so that our respect towards others truly reflect Your love for us. Amen.

The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

WEEK C-04

Luke 4:21-30

Jesus began speaking in the synagogue, saying: "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They also asked, "Isn't this the son of Joseph?" He said to them, "Surely you will quote me this proverb, 'Physician, cure yourself,' and say, 'Do here in your native place the things that we heard were done in Capernaum.'" And he said, "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong. But he passed through the midst of them and went away.



1. EXPLORE IT!

In today's Gospel, it was clear that the people wanted Jesus to fulfill their expectations, hence the "physician, cure yourself". As the Gospel continues, Jesus is called by God to fulfill His Father's kingdom, rather than the aspirations of the people around Him. When Jesus did not fulfill the people's wishes, they drove Him out.

2. CONNECT IT!

What would you do if you want to join a popular group of friends and they wanted you to do a task for them before they will accept you to the group, but you feel that the task is against your conscience?

3. REFLECT IT!

"Do here in your native place the things that we heard were done in Capernaum." The townsman presume that they have special entitlement to see Jesus performed miracles as He did in Capernaum and elsewhere.

When Jesus did not perform miracles, the pride of the townspeople was hurt and this made them angry, to the point of trying to kill Jesus. Jesus "passed through the midst of them and went away". There are much more important work (fulfillment of the kingdom of God) to be done then to entertain the wishes of others.

4. REMEMBER IT!

"And he said, "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place." [Luke 4:24]

5. LIVE IT! (ACCEPTANCE)

Acceptance is a person's assent to the reality of the situation without attempting to change it or protest against it.

Practicing acceptance prepares us to live peacefully in this changing world. Below are tips for your practice this week.

1. Accept "who we are". Choose not to judge what happens to us or our lives. Instead believe that everything happens for a reason and that better things will always follow. That's the beginning of true acceptance.
2. When facing a problem: accept what's happening and look at whatever happens through a positive mindset, and choose a peaceful state of mind.
3. Find the lesson learned from every challenge/problem will help you embrace it instead of fighting it.

6. PRAY IT!

We thank You for being above us and knowing what is best for us. In this life, we are all searching for our purpose and asking for your will to be done. We pray that as each of us comes to a point in our lives where we dare to ask You to reveal Your will for us, You would put us in a place of acceptance of what You reveal to us. It may not be what we want, but it will surely be what we need in order to live a life fully invested in You. Amen.



BELIEVE IN JESUS

WEEK C-05

LUKE 5:1-11

While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch." Simon said in reply,



"Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets." When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that they were in danger of sinking. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.

1. EXPLORE IT!

In today's Gospel, Jesus once again reminds us to have faith and believe in Him, and only good can become of it. In today's Gospel, when Jesus tells Simon to cast his net, Simon replied "we have worked all night and caught nothing". Simon's reply suggests some hesitation. Keep in mind the context of the story, Jesus was a carpenter by trade, not a fisherman, whereas, Simon, a fisherman. Despite the hesitation, Simon continues to lower the net and the rest is history. Through listening to Jesus' words, Simon became the "rock" of the Church and a true fisher of man.

2. CONNECT IT!

Have you ever felt lonely, sad, and depress? During the times you were lonely, sad, or depress, a person may came along and ask, "Is everything ok, how can I help?" Perhaps you turned that person away. Have you ever wondered for a moment that the person you turned away might be the work of God to ease your loneliness, sadness and/or depression?

3. REFLECT IT!

The changing of the way in which Simon addresses Jesus from “Master” to “Lord” shows Simon recognizing he is in the presence of God. In recognizing so, he feels he is not worthy to be in the presence of God.

“I am a sinful man.”

-We are all sinners, repent and trust in God, and He will make us great!

4. REMEMBER IT!

*“DEPART FROM ME,
LORD, FOR I AM A
SINFUL MAN.”
(LUKE 5:8)*

5. LIVE IT! [TRUST]

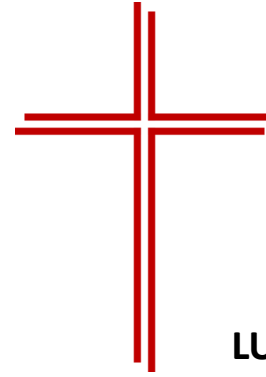
Trust is relying on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.

List whom to trust from most to least:

6. PRAY IT!

O Jesus Christ, in time of darkness and helplessness, help us to have perfect trust in Your protecting love and strengthening power so that nothing may frighten or worry us. Amen.

Jesus Proclaims God's Blessings



WEEK C-06
LUKE 6:17, 20-26



And he came down with them and stood on a stretch of level ground. A great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon. And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said:

"Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. But woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.

1 | Explore It!

In today's Gospel, Jesus stands before a crowd of His disciples, and the people from all over the countryside, and begins proclaiming God's blessings to them. He begins by preaching to them that those who are poor will receive the kingdom of God, that those who are hungry will be fed, and that those who are crying will rejoice. Even if they are hated and hurt, they are still blessed, and their reward will be in heaven. In contrast, He declares misery on those who are rich, filled, laughing, and well-liked.

2 | Connect It!

We have probably all heard the Beatitudes before, but what is Jesus really trying to teach us? Jesus reminds us about the blessings that we have in our lives. There are many times in life where we face struggles, whether it be that we are poor, hungry, crying, or hated. In these moments, it is easy to focus on the difficulties we are going through. But rather than calling us cursed, Jesus calls us blessed instead. Why?

Jesus is reminding us that behind every struggle is an opportunity for joy, for how can we feel joy without ever having felt pain and suffering? For example, studying for a test may be difficult; however, in the end, the joy of getting a good grade makes the hours of studying worth it. In the same way, it is through these experiences that we can grow and become closer to Jesus, who also lived a humble and difficult life alongside us. Blessed are we who suffer, for then we will feel the true joy of the kingdom of Heaven.

3 | Reflect It!

In our lives, it is easy to say that those who are poor, hungry, and hated are suffering, and that those who are rich, fed, and loved are blessed. But Jesus challenges us to find the positive in our difficult times, for they are often blessings in disguise. A fight with a friend provides opportunities to grow closer with one another. A lost game gives us chances to work harder and become better. What difficulties do you encounter in your daily life that may be a blessing in disguise? What might God be trying to show you and give you through these struggles?

4 | Remember It!

**"Blessed are you
who are poor, for the
kingdom of God
is yours."
(Luke 6:20)**

5 | Live It! *[optimism]*

OPTIMISM: hopefulness and confidence about the future or the successful outcome of something

It is easy to encounter a difficulty in our life and feel angry or sad for ourselves. But God encourages us to stay positive! Think about your next big test or project this week. How difficult will it be? Be positive and work hard to get that good grade. This week, challenge yourself to think of three positive things that have happened to you each day and how they have helped you grow.

6 | Pray It!

Dear Jesus, help me see the blessing in the struggles I may encounter in my life. And when I encounter those who are suffering, may I not shy away from them, but rather, be a blessing so that they can encounter Your joy through me. Amen.



Jesus Asks Us to Love Even our Enemies

“But to you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit [is] that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount.

But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as [also] your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”



In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches us what it means to love your neighbor, including those who you would consider an enemy. Treat others well without expecting anything in return. Do not fight back if someone insults you; if someone takes from you - give more than they asked. Why does Jesus teach us this? Jesus explains: it's easy to be nice to others if they are nice to you - even sinners love sinners. But the truest essence of love includes loving others, including your enemies, regardless of receiving anything in return from them. The reward from God the Father will be even greater! Be merciful as God the Father is merciful. Do not judge and you will not be judged. Give and more will be given to you. Love and you

2. Connect It!



What does it look like to love your enemy? Let's take a look at a real life example:

In 2001, Renee lost her daughter Megan in a car accident at the hands of a drunk driver, a 24-year-old named Eric who reportedly was a great young man, but made an unfortunate and tragic mistake. After Megan's death, Renee began giving presentations about drunk driving, and in time, God put it on her heart to forgive Eric and even reach out to him in prison. She soon realized despite Eric being the one behind bars, she was the true prisoner until she set herself free of the anger and bitterness she held towards Eric.



3. Reflect It!

How are we supposed to love our enemies? How are we supposed to pray for those we "hate" or even "hate" us in return? Loving your enemies is not a romantic love, or *eros*, to "fall in love" with your enemies. Neither does it connote *phili*os, which is a friendly or fraternal love. Rather, Jesus wants us to love our enemies with an *agape* type of love - a benevolence of goodwill towards others. Agape love is the same unconditional love we have for God, and so Jesus reminds us that with the same love we must love all those around us - as the image of God is in the hearts of all.

So who is someone who hurt you? Who is someone who has treated you badly? Or even insulted you? What if you could somehow see a hint of the image of Christ in them? What about someone you hurt, someone you treated badly, or someone you insulted? Can you imagine how your relationship with them or even those around you can change with *agape* love? Jesus tells us to "do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you" (Luke 6:27). Jesus is asking us to *agape* others no matter how they treat us, to open our hearts to them, and to not let hatred for them invade our hearts.



6. Pray It!

Dear Jesus, You know what is in our hearts, You know our rights and our wrongs, and yet You love us even more. Teach me to love like You, to love even in our anger and frustrations. Jesus, we love You. Teach us to love You. Amen.

As a result, Eric found his own faith in Christ and the two developed a unique friendship. Eventually, Renee asked the courts to cut Eric's sentence in half. He made a terrible mistake taking the life of two young girls in that accident. Renee told him that she serves a God who commands her to forgive and she needed to be set free as much for herself as for him. After Eric finished his prison sentence in 2012, Eric began to stand by Renee's side at her presentations, which is a story the world needs to hear! He'll be a free man, in more ways than one. Renee had been on a journey of hatred, anger, and bitterness, but she learned how to forgive the young man who took her beloved daughter's life.



4. Remember It!

"Do to others as you would have them do to you."
(Luke 6:31)



5. Live It!

[Forgiveness]

Giving someone another chance after they have done something wrong to offend you.

Everyone makes mistakes, but instead of seeking revenge, make amends - demonstrate love and compassion rather than trap yourself in an endless cycle of anger and hate.

Lewis B Smedes once said, "To forgive is to set a prisoner free, and discover the prisoner was you." Who is somebody who offended you recently, and you have been holding on to that anger and hate? Maybe they don't even know you offended them. Reach out to them and forgive them. Set yourself free. Allow yourself to forgive and love.

Jesus Teaches Us, “Be True to Ourselves”

Week C-08

Luke 6:39-45



And he told them 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 thorn bushes, 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.”

1. Explore It!

In this week’s passage, Jesus tells a parable to the people that were listening to His teaching. He states how the blind cannot lead the blind, how a disciple can’t be better than His teacher but can be like his teacher when he is trained, and how one can’t remove a splinter from another’s eye while not realizing the wooden beam in their own. Jesus then continues to explain about how good things do not come from evil or rotten places. Jesus uses all these examples to tell us we should not focus on what others are doing with their lives, but rather we should focus on ourselves. We shouldn’t judge and point fingers at others when we ourselves are also flawed.



2. Connect It!

Sometimes we are quick to assume things and tell others what we think is right. However, like Jesus said in the Gospel, we should worry about our own problems before we're able to do anything to help someone else. We cannot help someone if we can't help ourselves. If you and a friend are in a situation where you both

get hurt, you wouldn't be able to effectively help your friend until you have reflected about your actions first. You could be tempted to call out someone for sinning even though you aren't free of sin yourself. We should focus on God, our own behaviors, and not worry about what others are doing.


In this passage, Jesus tells us ways to avoid or deal with temptation. Think of a time when you were guiding someone down a certain path when you yourself didn't know where you were going. Were you steered in the wrong direction by someone else? Jesus is telling us to focus on

ourselves so that others' actions won't lead us in the wrong the direction, or vice versa. Jesus is also warning us that evil things come from evil sources so that we may be more aware of the evils around us and avoid following them.



3. Reflect It!

4. Remember It!



"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." (Luke, 6:45)

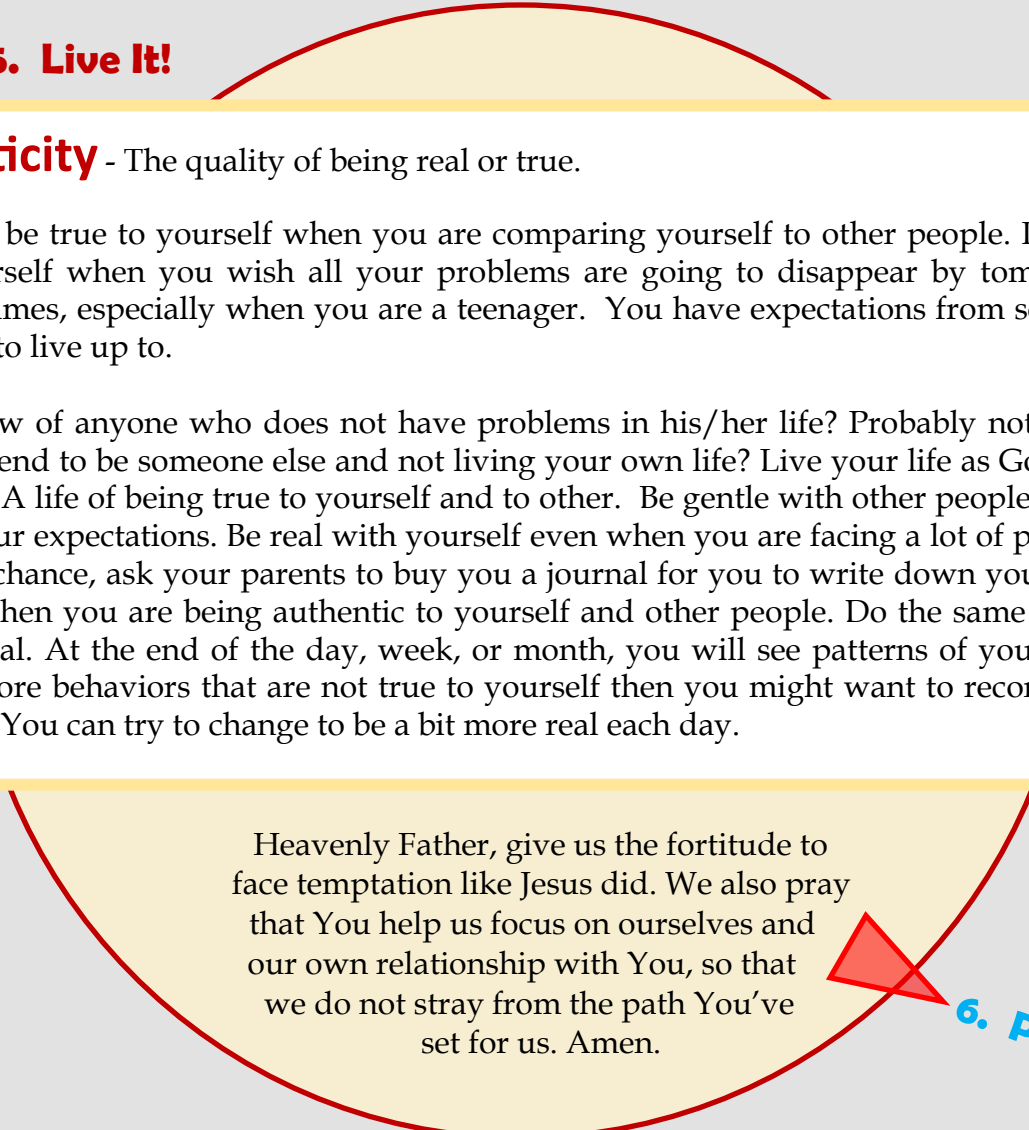


5. Live It!

Authenticity - The quality of being real or true.

It is hard to be true to yourself when you are comparing yourself to other people. It is hard to be true to yourself when you wish all your problems are going to disappear by tomorrow. Life is difficult at times, especially when you are a teenager. You have expectations from school, parents, and friends to live up to.

Do you know of anyone who does not have problems in his/her life? Probably not. Why do you need to pretend to be someone else and not living your own life? Live your life as God teaches you how to live. A life of being true to yourself and to other. Be gentle with other people when they do not meet your expectations. Be real with yourself even when you are facing a lot of pressure. When you have a chance, ask your parents to buy you a journal for you to write down your feelings and behaviors when you are being authentic to yourself and other people. Do the same when you are not being real. At the end of the day, week, or month, you will see patterns of your behaviors. If you have more behaviors that are not true to yourself then you might want to reconsider to work on yourself. You can try to change to be a bit more real each day.



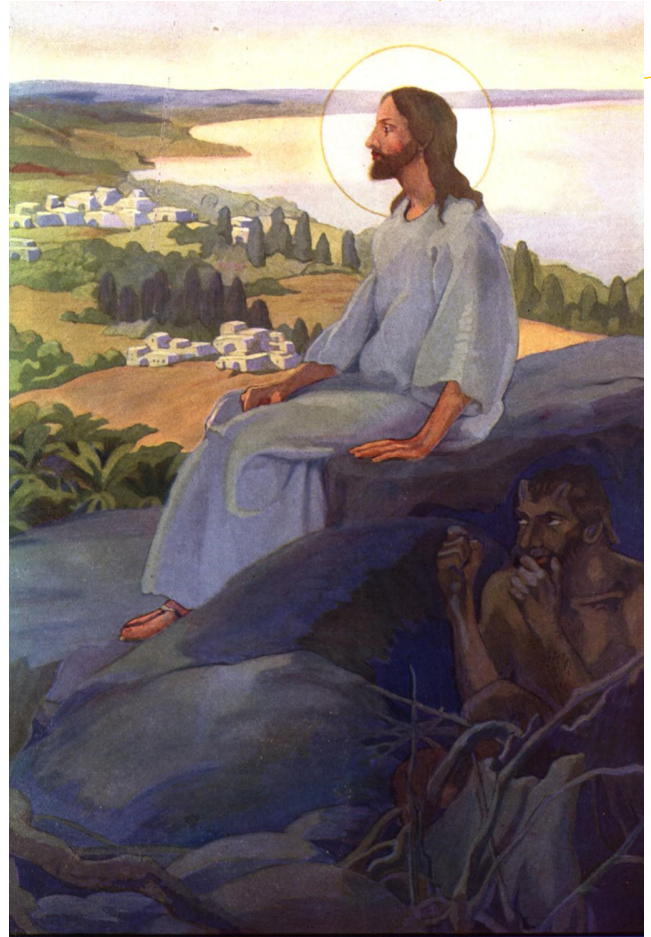
Heavenly Father, give us the fortitude to face temptation like Jesus did. We also pray that You help us focus on ourselves and our own relationship with You, so that we do not stray from the path You've set for us. Amen.



6. Pray It!

FACING TEMPTATIONS LIKE JESUS

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over he was hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" Then he took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a single instant. The devil said to him, "I shall give to you all this power and their glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever I wish. All this will be yours, if you worship me." Jesus said to him in reply, "It is written: 'You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve.'" Then he led him to Jerusalem, made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,' and: 'With their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him in reply, "It also says, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'" When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.



1. EXPLORE IT!

In this week's Gospel, Jesus reminds us that evil is real and that it exists among us. From the reading, the devil offers nothing but glory and material wealth. The devil often disguises through attractive and persuasive means. The temptation may be strong, however, it can be overcome with God's help. Ultimately, when the devil can't get to you, it will leave you alone. Think about this scenario and relate to the Gospel. You and your friend are studying in the library, and your friend walks away from his laptop without closing it. What would you do? Tell him/her to close it; walk over and close it; or walk over and read what is on the laptop?

2. CONNECT IT!

The devil throws temptation at us every minutes, hours, and days in our lives. As a VEYM member, the Eucharist is the center of our lives which is also the shield to block all temptations thrown at us. In time of need, turn to the Source of Life through a short prayer to protect you from the temptation. What would Jesus do?

3. REFLECT IT!

"...was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil."

-Does not mean that the Spirit led Him to temptation, but is the power that sustain Jesus during His temptation by the devil.

4. REMEMBER IT!

**"It is written:
'You shall
worship the Lord,
your God, and
him alone shall
you serve.'"
(Luke 4:8)**

5. LIVE IT!

[DETERMINATION]

Determination is firmness of purpose; resoluteness.

List fun activities that you like to do in your daily lives and select 1 or 2 to abstain from during Lent season.

1. _____

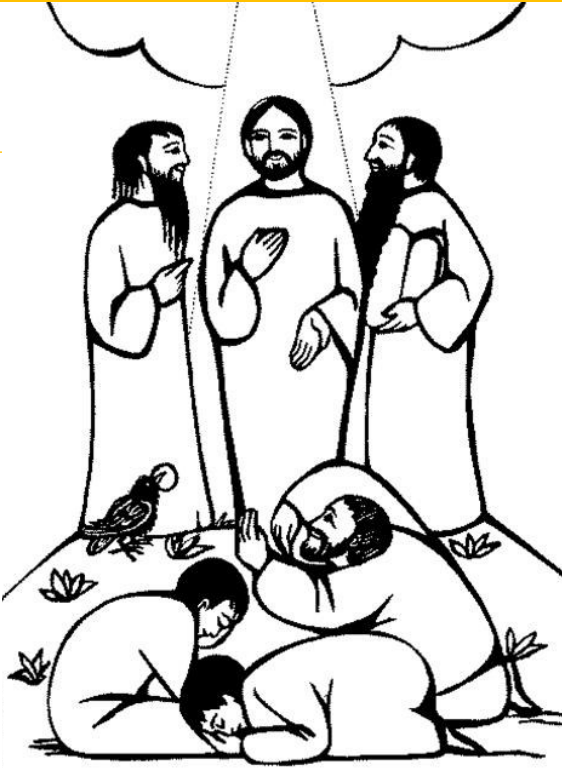
2. _____



6. PRAY IT!

Lord Jesus, grant us a sense of You being near us when we falter from weariness in our well being. May we hold our determinations to trust in You. Help us to know what is useless, that we may not give unnecessary energy, and to know what is worthwhile, that we may acquire strength through the power of truth. Amen.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS



About eight days after he said this, he took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray. While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions had been overcome by sleep, but becoming fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As they were about to part from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” But he did not know what he was saying. While he was still speaking, a cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they became frightened when they entered the cloud. Then from the

cloud came a voice that said, “This is my chosen Son; listen to him.” After the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. They fell silent and did not at that time tell anyone what they had seen.

1 EXPLORE IT!

- ♦ Who represent Jesus in Mass?
- ♦ What similar event happen during Mass?

2 CONNECT IT!

- ♦ Who do we need to listen to on this Earth?
- ♦ What can you do to show your parents, elders, and teachers that you are listening to them?

REFLECT IT! 3

“Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my chosen Son, listen to him.” At this point, Moses and Elijah (who are representatives of the old covenant) have left, leaving only Jesus alone. The cloud is a symbol of God’s presence told Peter, John, and James to do as Jesus command just as Mary told the servants “Do whatever He tells you.” at the wedding in Cana.

4 REMEMBER IT!

**“THIS IS MY
CHOSEN SON;
LISTEN TO
HIM.”
(LUKE 9:35)**

5 LIVE IT!

OBEDIENCE

submission to a higher power or authority.
Jesus say, “I do always the things which
please my Father” (John 7:29)

*What things can we do to please
our Father?*

PRAY IT! 6

Jesus, You who obeyed Your
Father to the end, teach us the
meaning of obedience so we can
comply to Your will. Bless us with
the strength to always obey You
until our last breath. Amen.

Jesus Calls Us to Repent

WEEK C-L3

LUKE 13:1-9



At that time some people who were present there told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices. He said to them in reply, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did! Or those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!" And he told them this parable: "There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none, he said to the gardener, 'For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. [So] cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?' He said to him in reply, 'Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future. If not you can cut it down.'"

1. EXPLORE IT!

"He said to them in reply, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans?" Jesus is not condemning Pilate, but merely comments on the guilt of those so murdered.

2. CONNECT IT!

In school, what do you do before a test? Studying for the test so that you can score high on it. Repenting is similar to studying because you want to score high in front of God when He is judging you.

3. REFLECT IT!

In the parable, Jesus is trying to tell us to repent and be ready for judgement. God waits patiently for us to bear fruit .

4. REMEMBER IT!

“BUT I TELL YOU, IF YOU DO
NOT REPENT, YOU WILL ALL
PERISH AS THEY DID!”

(LUKE 13:2)



5. LIVE IT! [COMMITMENT]

Commitment is pledging yourself to something or someone with dedication and loyalty. Making a commitment is making a promise or a vow.

What commitment are you going to make for God, your parent, your friends, or for yourself during this Lent?

6. PRAY IT!

O Lord God, as we submit ourselves to You, we commit to doing everything we do, to saying everything we say, and to choosing everything we choose, for the sake of Your Kingdom and not ours. Father, we pray this in the name of Your son, Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior. Amen.

Jesus Tells Us About the Father's Love for the Lost Son



The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to him, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So to them he addressed this parable: "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that

country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers."' So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began. Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, 'Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.' He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'"

1. EXPLORE IT!

Jesus invite the sinners to repent and change their ways of life, He is the Redeemer, not the Excluders (Pharisees) whom disapproves and excludes all that doesn't see to their ways.

2. CONNECT IT!

When we use our free time doing nothing worthwhile, we have acted just like the younger son in the Gospel, squandering all his inheritance for nothing. How can we use our free time that is worthwhile to us and to other people in our lives.

3. REFLECT IT!

"he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation." Just as we can lose our inheritance (heaven) through sinful acts.

"He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him." God never gives up on us, He always welcome us back to His family through the sacrament of penance, reconciliation, and confession.

4. REMEMBER IT!

**"Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you;
I no longer deserve to be called your son." (Luke 15:18)**

5. LIVE IT! [SELF-DISCIPLINE]

Self-discipline is the ability to control one's feelings and overcome one's weaknesses; the ability to pursue what one thinks is right despite the temptations to abandon it. Make a list of things to do and check it off when done. Also make a schedule for the tasks, chores, studying, and etc.

6. PRAY IT!

Dear Lord, please don't let us continue putting off until later what we can do today. We do not know what tomorrow may bring or how many days I have on this Earth. Please instill in us a sense of urgency and help spur us into motion rather than squandering our free time. Amen.

Jesus' Mercy Towards a Woman Caught in Adultery



Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground

with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She replied, "No one, sir." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more."

1. EXPLORE IT!

Imagine yourself a judge in a court case. On the prosecution side is a famous lawyer who has practiced law for a long-time and is reputable for his knowledge of the law. On the defense side is a new lawyer whose recent popularity and ability to inspire has caused the prosecution lawyer to be envious. While the court case is about a young woman accused of adultery, the focus is really on the prosecution's desire to brand the defense lawyer as one who does not keep to the law, because no one disagrees that the young woman had committed adultery. As the judge, you do not have to make a judgment on the guiltiness of the young woman, rather, you decide on what her sentence will be. What will you do?

Today's Gospel is like the story about the court case. While the Pharisees represent the prosecution, Jesus is the new lawyer who the Pharisees are envious of and seek to smear in bringing the adulterer to Him. In their actions, the Pharisees interests are a self-justifying performance of the Law seeking to entrap Jesus so that they have a reason to prosecute Him because the Law of Moses states that an adulterer would be stoned to death. Jesus stops them all in their tracks by inviting her fellow-sinners to keep the Law by stoning her if they are without sin. Nobody is left to throw stones cleanly. Jesus then offers her, a sinner, mercy and forgiveness, and sends her on her way to sin no more.

2. CONNECT IT!

Through the story of the adulterous woman, Jesus reminds us that we are all sinners and are in need of God's forgiveness. There may be times when we are like the scribes and the Pharisees, where we are envious of others because of their knowledge, looks, influences, etc. Other times, we may be like

the scribes and the Pharisees when we judge and condemn others, where we verbally or mentally throw stones at another person. Yet Jesus teaches us that we all need to forgive others who have wronged us or hurt us. Like Jesus, we must forgive and give others a second chance to be good.

3. REFLECT IT!

Just as Jesus approached the woman in today's Gospel, Jesus also approaches us the same way. He shows us mercy and forgiveness, and gives us a choice to either go back to our former way of sin and death or to reach out to a new way of life and happiness with Him. This is true of our own lives and the way we judge others. In what ways have you judged others and "thrown stones"? How can you respond to God's mercy and forgiveness and show mercy towards others? Do you know the joy of repentance and a clean conscience?

4. REMEMBER IT!

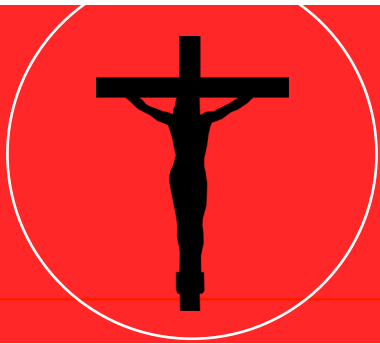
"Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore." (John 8:11)

5. LIVE IT! [GENTLENESS]

This week, show **gentleness** and forgiveness to those who hurt you. If you have not done so yet, ask God for mercy and forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation and remember, "Go, [and] from now on do not sin anymore."

6. PRAY IT!

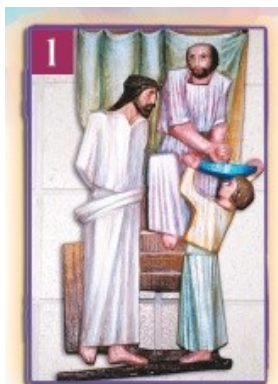
God our Father, we find it difficult to come to you, because our knowledge of You is imperfect. In our ignorance, we have imagined You to be our enemy; we have wrongly thought that You take pleasure in punishing our sins; and we have foolishly conceived You to be a tyrant over human life. But since Jesus came among us, He has shown that You are loving, that You are on our side against all that stunts life, and that our resentment against You was groundless. So we come to You, asking You to forgive our past ignorance, and wanting to know more and more of You and Your forgiving love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Prayer of Saint Augustine)



WEEK C— PALM/PASSION SUNDAY
Luke 22:14—23:56



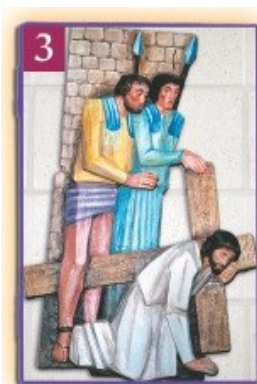
THE PASSION OF CHRIST



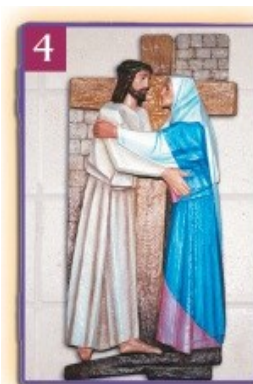
Jesus is condemned to death.



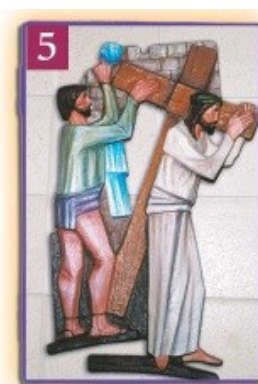
Jesus takes up His cross.



Jesus falls the first time



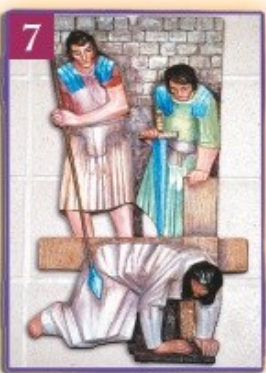
Jesus meets His mother



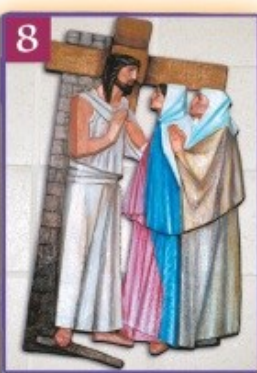
Simon helps Jesus carry the cross.



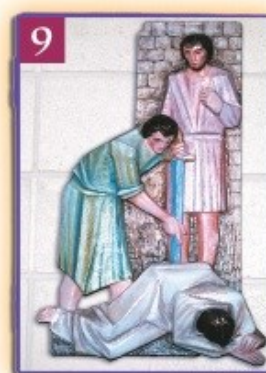
Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.



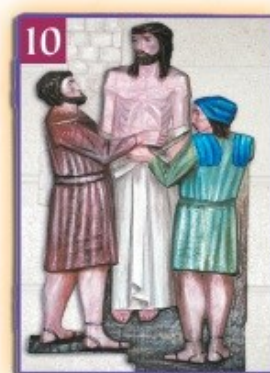
Jesus falls the second time.



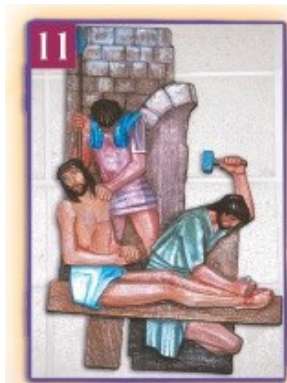
Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem.



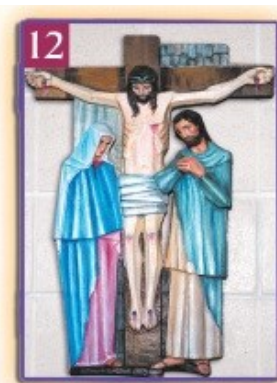
Jesus falls the third time.



Jesus is stripped of His clothing.



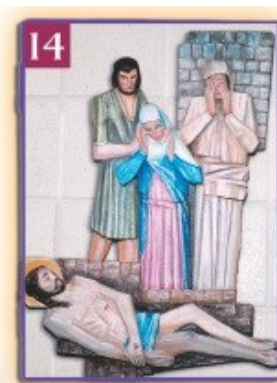
Jesus is nailed to the cross.



Jesus dies on the cross.



Jesus is taken down from the cross.



Jesus is buried in the tomb.

1. EXPLORE IT!

Jesus begins the journey towards His sacrifice with Passover. It shows the foreshadowing of the upcoming crucifixion and death of Jesus with the woman breaking the jar of perfumed oil on His head. The apostles were mad that it happened, but Jesus tells them to leave her alone and that her actions will be known when the Gospel is proclaimed to the entire world as a sign for things to come. On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Jesus starts to tell the apostles of His death by saying that one of them will betray them. After that, He gathers the apostles for breaking the bread and drinking of the wine to begin the new covenant. He tells all of the apostles that their faith will be shaken and they will be scattered like sheep without a shepherd but when He rises that they will meet again. Peter believes that his faith will never be shaken but Jesus tells him of his undoing by denying Him three times. Jesus takes the disciples to Gethsemane to pray. While He is praying, the apostles were tired and decided to sleep. Jesus wakes them up for the upcoming betrayal. Judas comes with a crowd and betrays Jesus as it was predicted. Jesus allows this to happen without a fight and is taken away. The chief priests and elder priests questioned Jesus about everything that is to come: that he is the king of the Jews, he will be risen and rebuild the temple in three days. Pilate is astonished at Jesus with the acceptance of all the accusations being said. Meanwhile, Peter, not realizing before it was too late and noticed, had denied Jesus three times. When Peter had, he wept and became humbled. The day of the crucifixion, the people had a decision to make: release Jesus or a murderer, Barabbas. The people responded in saying that Jesus is to be crucified and release Barabbas. Pilate made the decision to make that so for the people had decided. Along the way when Jesus is carrying the cross, He is made fun of, threw things at Him, said mean things. They had reached the place of the crucifixion and the guards prepared Jesus. At three o'clock at the afternoon, He cries out and bows His head in death. Joseph asks for Jesus' body and Pilate asks the centurion to confirm that He is dead. The centurion spears Jesus on His side and it shows that He is dead. He is wrapped in linen and then is brought to the burial site.

4. REMEMBER IT!

"This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." (Luke 22: 19)

2. CONNECT IT!

The Gospel leads us to the new covenant that Jesus prepares in the Last Supper; He prophesizes His death and resurrection. He tells certain things that will happen that will shape several people's lives, like Peter and Judas. Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him, but He allows it to happen so that His will be done and that Jesus can be sacrificed in order to atone for the people for their sins. For Peter, Jesus must show that he is just like everyone else. You will often be tested and sometimes you will fail. Peter is humbled by this and realizes that his faith can always be improved and that he can always learn more. This will lead to the salvation of man and will continue towards His resurrection.

3. REFLECT IT!

Have you ever sacrificed something for the greater good of others? Jesus sacrifices Himself for our sins and so that we can learn from His image to live life in a certain way. How hard is to sacrifice something? He knows of His upcoming death yet He still goes through with it to save us all. Jesus could have just run away from hiding or He could have saved Himself from death; however He still sacrifices Himself because He loves us so much that He is willing to die for us. Can we do such a thing like that or at least similar every day?

[**SACRIFICE**] - *A loss or something to give up for the sake of a better cause.*

5. LIVE IT!

The easiest things to sacrifice for us is time and money. Spend some time at a charity function to help the helpless and the homeless. Spend some money towards a charitable cause to help other people. If not, help your parents in an activity so that they can spend their time doing something else, like washing the dishes, helping cook dinner, do housework, or help them out with their shopping.

6. PRAY IT!

Dear God, thank You for Your gift in Your son, Jesus Christ. Thanks Jesus for Your sacrifice for our sins and for the new covenant for us to partake. Help us to learn to sacrifice a little bit each day so that we too can sacrifice ourselves for the greater good and into a new way of life and to eternal life. Amen.



Jesus Rises from the Dead

WEEK C-EASTER SUNDAY

JOHN 20:1-9

The Empty Tomb

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the scripture that he had to rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned home.



1. EXPLORE IT!

Mary of Magdala was in shock because she did not understand what had happened. She saw Jesus' crucifixion and saw the soldier thrust a spear in His side. Yet the stone was no longer in front of the tomb and Jesus' body was no longer there.

The joy of the apostle John is apparent in today's Gospel. John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, remembered everything Jesus had said would happen and all the promises He had made. Jesus is alive and His love is stronger than death! Through His resurrection, Jesus conquers death and sin.

The reality of Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead is the basis of our hope.

2. CONNECT IT!

Jesus calls on each one of us to come to the tomb and discover Him. We may be in the dark about how the Resurrection took place, yet Jesus is telling us that we must be like the disciples, to believe without seeing and to allow the Christs' resurrection to begin in each one of us. In other words, share Christ and show others that Jesus is our savior and our life.

3. REFLECT IT!

Just as the joy and hope the disciples experienced in discovering an empty tomb and that our Lord has resurrected, so too are we called to discover the same joy and hope in Jesus Christ. How will we cherish the presence of Christ Jesus, who is alive within us today?

4. REMEMBER IT!

"THEY HAVE TAKEN THE LORD FROM THE TOMB, AND WE DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY PUT HIM." (LUKE 20:2)

5. LIVE IT! (**HOPE**)

Hope is a feeling from the heart of an expectation for something to happen. When we hope, our heart can heal, our desires and dreams can be fulfilled, and our days become brighter. Through hope, our journey becomes lighter as we shift our focus from our hardships to our wishes.

For this week, pray the Act of Hope each night when completing the spiritual journey.

(Act of Hope)

O my God, relying on Your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of Your grace and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

6. PRAY IT!

Lord, our Father, by raising Christ, Your Son, You conquered the power of death and opened for us the way to eternal life. Let our celebration today raise us up and renew our lives by the spirit that is within us. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God,

Jesus Strengthened the the Faith of Thomas

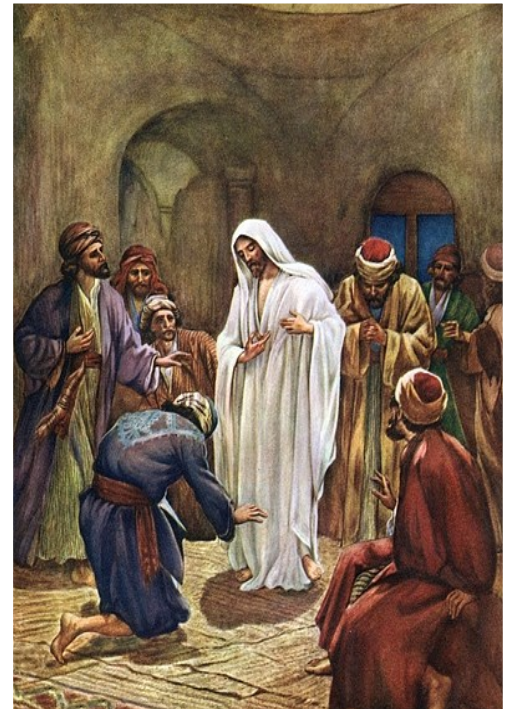
WEEK C - DIVINE MERCY JOHN 20:19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.



1. EXPLORE IT!

There is an interesting book called, "Believe It or Not," by Robert Ripley. Mr. Ripley enjoyed collecting strange and amazing bits of information that were unbelievable, but true. According to Mr. Ripley, a boy went to the doctor because he had a pain in his foot. The doctor discovered that the boy had a tooth growing in the bottom of his foot. Can you believe that? I think I would have to see it to believe it!

Another story in the book was from a man who had a chicken that laid a perfectly square egg. Now, I have seen white eggs, brown eggs, even spotted eggs, but I have never seen a square egg. I think I would have to see it to believe it!

Today's Gospel has three distinct, yet united sections. Jesus appears to the frightened apostles, minus one. He offers them peace, then offers them His mission which He received from His Father, and then breathed upon their chaos and through the gift of the Spirit tendered the gift of forgiving sins. Seven days later, Jesus appears to the same group of apostles, plus one. This one, Thomas, needed to see signs and wonders. Jesus invited him to read the signs and wonder no more. Thomas did just that.

At the end of the Gospel we hear enough for us to believe without seeing. There were other signs and wonders after the Resurrection, but these which have been recorded are offered so that the readers and pray-ers of this Gospel may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God and through this faith, there would be true life through His Name.

2. CONNECT IT!

There are many emotions and experiences in today's Gospel reading that may apply to us. As the apostles gathered together with the doors purposely locked, it shows the fear they experienced in possibility of being discovered to be a follower of Christ, and the shame they have for abandoning their Teacher, our Lord, when He was crucified. We, ourselves, also may experience, doubt, fear, and shame because we need more faith in God.

Just like the apostle Thomas who said he would not believe unless he saw and experienced firsthand that Jesus indeed has resurrected, we may at times say the same thing to God. Yet Jesus tells Thomas, and is telling us, to have faith. Thomas wanted to see more than he had heard his companions had seen. Yet what Jesus teaches us today is seeing does not believing, but rather, to believe is a way of seeing beyond what can blind us.

3. REFLECT IT!

This seeing beyond is the gift of the Spirit and it leads to us being sent out beyond as well. We are sent, as He was sent to us, to attract others to the Sender. Have we ever doubted God's presence in our lives? In what ways can we be more faithful to Christ?

4. REMEMBER IT!

**"...Blessed are those who
have not seen and have
believed."
(John 20:29)**

5. LIVE IT! [FAITH]

This week, focus on truly living the Eucharistic Day. In the morning, give thanks to God for protecting you through the night and offering all things to Him that will come your way during the day. During the day, take time to include God in your life, receiving spiritual communion and if possible (at least once during the weekday), attend Mass and receive communion. At night, offer God your sacrifices and make perfect contrition so that you remain in God's hands.

6. PRAY IT!

Father in Heaven, ever-living source of all that is good, keep us faithful in serving You. Help us to drink of Christ's Truth, and fill our hearts with His Love so that we may serve You in faith and love and reach eternal life. In the Sacrament of the Eucharist You give us the joy of sharing Your Life. Keep us in Your presence. Let us never be separated from You and help us to do Your Will. Amen.

Peter Professed His Love to Jesus

WEEK C-E3

JOHN 21:1-19



At that time, Jesus revealed himself again to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself in this way. Together were Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, Zebedee's sons, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We also will come with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. When it was already dawn, Jesus was standing on the shore; but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, have you caught anything to eat?" They answered him, "No." So he said to them, "Cast the net over the right side of the boat and you will find something." So they cast it, and were not able to pull it in because of the number of fish. So the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tucked in his garment, for he was lightly clad, and jumped into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, for they were not far from shore, only about a hundred yards, dragging the net with the fish. When they climbed out on shore, they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you just caught." So Simon Peter went over and dragged the net ashore full of one hundred fifty-three large fish. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, "Come, have breakfast." And none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they realized it was the Lord. Jesus came over and took the bread and gave it to them, and in like manner the fish. This was now the third time Jesus was revealed to his disciples after being raised from the dead.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." He then said to Simon Peter a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Simon Peter answered him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." Jesus said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that Jesus had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Amen, amen. I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, "Follow me."

1. EXPLORE IT!

Today's Gospel focuses on Jesus inviting His followers to first, "come and see." Whereas coming is when one is introduced or initiated into the experience of Jesus, seeing is believing that Jesus is truly Christ, Son of God, who has risen. Peter, in today's Gospel, is initiated through the four Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Communion, and Confirmation.

Peter is symbolically baptized when he hears that it is Jesus talking to them from the shore. Peter jumps into the water wrapped in a garment. Peter's action is the symbol we use for the first step in coming to Jesus, through jumping or immersing into water and being clothed in garment, this indicates a new form of life. For Peter and for the newly baptized at Easter, this is only a beginning.

As with every Baptism and Reconciliation, all previous sins are forgiven, including the three times Peter denied Jesus

previously. As Peter warms himself beside the fire, he is welcomed back by Jesus through the bread and fish Jesus offers him, the Sacrament of Communion. Through Baptism, the apostles come to find Jesus finding them, calling them, forgiving them and feeding them with Himself.

The final sacrament of initiation is Peter listening to Jesus' the three probing questions, "Do you love Me?" Jesus is not only saying that He loves Peter by calling him out of his boat and into Communion with Him, but through Peter intently listening to Jesus and responding that indeed he loves Jesus. Peter listens and feels the love of Christ, as we experience during the Sacrament of Confirmation.

After Peter's initialization through the four Sacraments, he receives the object of this reception, an invitation to "follow me." Peter and the disciples "have seen and believed" and their belief is lived out in following Jesus into the mysteries of his life and theirs.

2. CONNECT IT!

Peter was initiated through the four Sacraments. Similarly, Jesus wants and welcomes us to experience and receive the Sacrament of Baptism, Reconciliation, Communion, and Confirmation. Jesus is calling to us to live and be witness for Him by growing in our faith and experiencing firsthand, through the Sacraments, what it means to be a child of Christ.

During this season of Easter, we are celebrate our belongingness and passion to follow Jesus. Through jumping into the water, receiving spiritual nourishment and forgiveness, and spiritual strength, we're ready to follow Jesus.

3. REFLECT IT!

In what ways have you followed in Peter's footsteps, may it be denying Jesus or even following Jesus and confessing your love for Christ? How can you let the Light of Christ shine through you?

4. REMEMBER IT!

"Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."
(Luke 20:15)

6. PRAY IT!

God of love, source of mercy and compassion, weave Your dream for the world into the fabric of our lives. Remove the scales from our eyes and lift the indifference from our hearts, so that we may see Your vision – a new reign of justice and compassion that will renew the earth. Transform our lives, so that we may accomplish Your purpose. Anoint us with Your Spirit that we might bring good news to the oppressed, bind up the brokenhearted, and proclaim release to the captive. Give us a new urgency and a new commitment to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, and visit those who live in isolation. Help us to reach out to those whom no one else will touch, to accept the unacceptable, and to embrace the enemy. Surround us with your love, fill us with Your grace, and strengthen us for Your service. Empower us to respond to the call of Jesus – to deny ourselves, to take up our crosses, and to follow. Make us Your disciples. Amen

5. LIVE IT!

[EXCELLENCE]

Excellence means the quality of being outstanding or extremely good. This week, focus on the Gospel reading for each day. Before you go to bed, read that day's Gospel and take a moment to reflect on what God is saying to you. How is God showing you the way to be the best you can be? The best Catholic, the best son or daughter, the best...?

JESUS Knows His Sheep



Jesus said:

"My sheep hear my voice;
I know them, and they follow me.
I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.
No one can take them out of my hand.
My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all,
and no one can take them out of the Father's hand.
The Father and I are one."



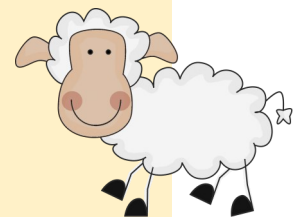
1. EXPLORE

In contextual reading, the Feast of Dedication that the reading is from is an eight day festival of lights, where Jesus roams and is confronted by Jews gathered asking if he's truly the Messiah, just say so. It's through this reading we see Jesus speaking about the flock He oversees. We understand that it is God that gives and asserts unity of power and reveals that the words and deeds of Jesus are the words and deeds of God. Jesus doesn't need to outright say anything, those who are in his flock, those who choose to follow will simply know, follow, and obey.



2. CONNECT IT!

Parents are easily the most recognizable shepherds in our life. They're the ones that endure anything and everything we do as we grow into adults, being there for all our joys, and all our falls. Many youth tend to forget the hardships of our parents understand and are responsible for when their children are faced with actions that displease them or feel they're being treated unfairly. Are you able to shoulder their responsibilities when you feel you can do a better job? Being a shepherd, whether for others or for your own self, requires much more than being able to act on your own, it's knowing your limits, experience, and ability to protect.





3. REFLECT

The theme of shepherds and sheep is a recurring one in the bible. In the Old Testament, God is sometimes portrayed as a shepherd. Being one is not an easy job; sheep are pretty defenseless, and shepherds have to protect them from predators like lions and wolves. Sheep also have a tendency to stray from the flock, making them especially vulnerable. Shepherds endure the hardships of being away from their homes and putting up with simple food and harsh weather while

pasturing sheep. Their lives can be endangered when confronted by desperate predators. Sheep learn to recognize their shepherd's voice, which makes it easier to separate different flocks when flocks are mixed together for grazing or protection.

- How do you relate to Jesus as the good shepherd?
- When is it reassuring to know that Jesus is watching out for you?
- How do you see yourself helping to shepherd other people as a follower of Jesus?

4. REMEMBER IT!

"MY SHEEP HEAR MY
VOICE; I KNOW
THEM, AND THEY
FOLLOW ME."
(LUKE 10:27)

5. LIVE IT!

[RESPONSIBILITY]

To be accountable, having duty, and at times having an opportunity or ability to act independently.

Have you ever had the responsibility like shepherds do, like leading teams at your youth chapter or maybe in your school project? What was it like being someone with a variety of duties, to be accountable for the group to make sure everyone was taken care of? Write about an experience each night and be ready to share when asked!

6. PRAY IT!

Lord grant us the mental strength to understand the responsibility of being a good shepherd for You. To be holy in Your light and to lead with courage and confidence in the face of uncertainty and adversity. Amen.

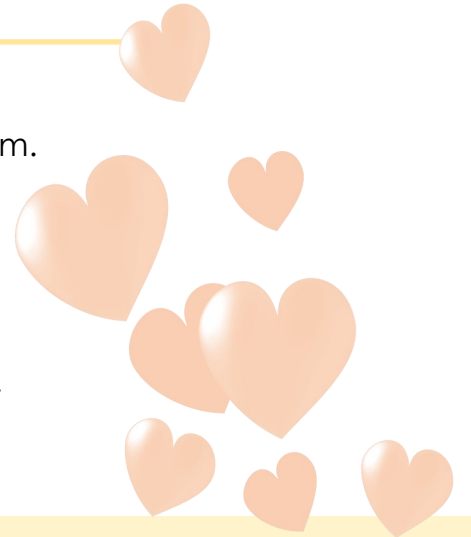
Jesus' New Commandment



WEEK C-E5

JOHN 13:31-33a, 34-35

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."



1. EXPLORE IT!

Jesus spoke these words after He had finished washing the disciples' feet. Firstly, He made it quite clear that our loving one another was not a suggestion, but a "new commandment" to men from God. This love we are to have for one another is not optional, but a required mark of the Christian.

Secondly, this love is to be of the same quality as Christ's. He implied that we would judge the quality of our love by His, "just as I have loved you". This sentiment should be deeply rooted in every Christian then: I don't judge my spirituality by comparing myself with others, but with Christ. When we do this there is only one possible response, repentance and humility.

Thirdly, Jesus gave the world the authority to judge our Christianity by the love we have for one another. Regarding this verse Francis Schaeffer aptly commented, "Upon His authority He gives the world the right to judge whether you and I are born-again Christians on the basis of our observable love toward all Christians. That's pretty frightening." This is a high calling, but it will be to the world's good and our joy to pursue it in Christian community.

2. CONNECT IT!

Ever been in a situation where you compared yourself to others and thought you're "better" than them? Did you have better grades? Maybe a nicer looking backpack perhaps. Cooler clothes? Jesus teaches us to not use these kinds of comparisons, more so to understand through humility and to judge through our love and compassion for others. Are you able to understand the blessings you have and share accordingly to others, something Jesus may have done himself? Everyone has a different story to tell, and the story Jesus wants us to continually share is to simply love one another as He has loved us.

3. REFELCT IT!

The sense of impending separation had added an unwonted tenderness to our Lord's address, and He had designated His disciples by the fond name of 'little children.' The same sense here gives authority to His words, and moulds them into the shape of a command. The disciples had held together because He was in their midst. He would guard them from the disintegrating tendencies that were sure to set in when He was gone; and He would point them to a solace for His absence, and to a kind of substitute for His presence. For to love the brethren whom they see would be, in some sense, a continuing to love the Christ whom they had ceased to see. And so, immediately

after He said: 'Whither I go ye cannot come,' He goes on to say: 'Love one another as I have loved you.'

He called this a 'new commandment,' though to love one's neighbor as one's self was a familiar commonplace amongst the Jews, and had a recognized position in Rabbinical teaching. But His commandment proposed a new object of love, it set forth a new measure of love, so greatly different from all that had preceded it as to become almost a new kind of love, and it suggested and supplied a new motive power for love. This commandment 'could give life' and fulfil itself.

4. REMEMBER IT!

**"... LOVE ONE
ANOTHER. AS I
HAVE LOVED
YOU, SO YOU ALSO
SHOULD LOVE ONE
ANOTHER."
(JOHN 13:34)**

5. LIVE IT! [LOVE]

A variety of different feelings, states, and attitudes that range from interpersonal affection to pleasure. Can refer to an emotion of a strong attraction and personal attachment.

Love comes in a variety of forms; what are the forms of love you identify with and share with the world? Each night, write about an experience where you had to share a different brand of love that is relatable to Jesus. Even if you believe it may not relate, write about why you think so, and be ready to share with someone!

6. PRAY IT!

Lord, allow us to love purely without condition or requirement. Grant us the understanding of what it means to love like You with my family, friends, all that we care about, and all those that may have hurt us in the past. Amen.



THE PEACE OF JESUS



Jesus said to his disciples:
"Whoever loves me will keep my word,
and my Father will love him,
and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.
Whoever does not love me does not keep my words;
yet the word you hear is not mine
but that of the Father who sent me.

"I have told you this while I am with you.
The Advocate, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send in my name,
will teach you everything
and remind you of all that I told you.
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
Not as the world gives do I give it to you.
Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.
You heard me tell you,
'I am going away and I will come back to you.'
If you loved me,
you would rejoice that I am going to the Father;
for the Father is greater than I.
And now I have told you this before it happens,
so that when it happens you may believe."

1. EXPLORE IT!

Jesus told his disciples that after His death, God would send the Spirit of Truth to be with them forever. Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the Advocate, the one who defends us from sin. The Holy Spirit also guides us into all truth, helping us to grasp the meaning of Jesus' words, actions, and miracles.



2. CONNECT IT!

Symbols come in a variety of ways, whether it's shown physically through an emblem or insignia, or spiritually with how we act or speak. One such symbol is the cross; some place it in their cars, others wear it around their necks. Many also have trinkets with the cross on their wrist, and so forth. Each one of these methods is our own way of being an advocate and witness of Jesus. Of course, simply being an advocate isn't enough, but we can use them as catalysts and reminders of what He expects of us, just as He did of the disciples, when the gift of the Holy Spirit was given; to continue the spread of the Good News!

3. REFLECT IT!

The Advocate terminology is very personal in the book of John and doesn't mean someone who stands up for you, like lawyer or a friend per-se, it's more of a teacher, witness to Jesus, who represents the continued presence on earth of the Jesus who has returned to the Father; it teaches the realities of "everything and remind you of all that I told you", and testifying to this truth. As we live out our faith, it is the Spirit that animates us as disciples empowering us to use our unique gifts to make a difference in our world. Jesus promises his followers that the Holy Spirit will abide in us. How are you aware of the Holy Spirit's presence in your life?

4. REMEMBER IT!

"PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU; MY PEACE I GIVE TO YOU. NOT AS THE WORLD GIVES DO I GIVE IT TO YOU."

(JOHN 14:27)

5. LIVE IT! [TRUTHFULNESS]

A state or fact of being realistic, relating to realism, or the state of being true which may be loyal, honest, just, steadfast, or essential.

Being truthful in this week isn't simply to just "tell the truth", but can also be seen as an advocate for truth: Jesus's words, actions, and teachings. Help and share the truth of Jesus each day by relating a problem you encounter with what Jesus would do and say. Are you able to relay Jesus's teaching as a solution?

6. PRAY IT!

Lord, grant us the understanding and wisdom to be an advocate of Your word, to realize the truthfulness of Your teachings and to convey honestly and sincerely to everyone around us. Let Your light shine through us so that others may see that Your truth is essential to our living holy. Amen.

Be One with *Jesus*

"I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me.

Father, they are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world also does not know you, but I know you, and they know that you sent me. I made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them."



1. *Explore It!*

In this week's Gospel, we directly hear Jesus as He prays to God after the last supper for several intentions. Jesus prays not only for His disciples but also for those who will believe in Him through the disciple's word. He prays that all His disciples and followers will be united as one: with each other, with Him and God so that all may believe and share in the glory of God's perfection. Jesus also thanks God for gifting humanity to Him and hopes that we too may be with Him so we can see the glory God has given Him since the beginning of time. Lastly, Jesus prays that though the world does not truly know God, we know Jesus. Through His teaching, we will fully know the love of God for Him and through that, know God's love for us.



2. Connect It!

Living the Eucharistic Day!!! As members of VEYM, we are told day in and day out that our goal is to live close in union with God and Jesus through the Holy Eucharist. Did the youth leaders and Chaplains just make this up? No! As you have just read, it is a direct prayer from Jesus Himself. Why? If we are one with Jesus, we can receive the glory God bestows on all His children in heaven. Likewise, it is our chance to know God's love. As you may have heard, "love is all you need." Imagine a world without love. Now imagine a world full of love. What difference is there?



3. Reflect It!

All Jesus wants is for us all to be united with Him. Unfortunately, the world is so divided with each other, how can we even start? And in many cases, our division (such as racism, bullying, etc.) has led to hatred and violence. Uniting the world together is a large task, but like all tasks, we must take baby steps. We should start with our own community. Are there times in which you contribute to the division with others such as gossiping or picking on others? What can you do to stop that? And if you don't do gossip, what have you done to include others in your life? Maybe next time when you see someone standing outside the group conversation you can include that person by asking them about their opinion and feelings.



4. Remember It!

*"I wish that where I am
they also may be with me..."*
(John 17:24)

5. Live It!

[UNITY]



Unity: the state of being united or joined as a whole.

United! We can't be divided! Unity is when everyone works towards oneness: one cause, one movement, one thought. Jesus prays that everyone is united together as one with God. The Church also prays that we all unite, as one with Her. During mass, we are united with Catholics all around the world praying for "One holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church" celebrating the Eucharist. In addition to praying for Church unity, we should also pray for a united society. Treat everyone as a child of God and part of His one united family. Next time you see yourself or your friends excluding others for a petty reason, challenge yourself to step up and stop it. If we can make our world more inclusive and loving, then there may be a chance for the entire world at large.

6. Pray It!



Dear Jesus,

Allow us the strength and wisdom to live as You live and love as You love. Help us to further Your kingdom by pulling others into Your arms so that we all may be one with You in heaven. Amen.

JESUS' DISCIPLES RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT

WEEK C - PENTECOST SUNDAY

JOHN 20:19-23



On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

1. EXPLORE IT!

The scripture comes right after Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene who seems to be "holding onto him", the earthly being of Jesus, who responds "I have not yet ascended". This sets up the current passage where the author John puts a large emphasis that it is His ascension and thus, becoming the father of the disciples at this point, is what allows the Holy Spirit to descend onto the disciples. When Jesus talks about the "sending", He formally makes them Apostles, "one who is sent away". This adds a new dimension to the disciples who were simply followers. We see God's teachings come full circle when God breathed on the first man and gave him life, so now the disciples new spiritual life comes from Jesus.

2. CONNECT IT!

The Church continues Jesus' ministry of reconciling people to God in a special way through the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Although Baptism takes away original sin, it does not remove its effects, namely our tendency to sin. Since we are members of the Church, our sin not only offends God, but also harms the community. Therefore, we need to be reconciled to God and the Church. Celebrating the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation helps us to do that.

3. REFLECT IT!

Imagine the disciples locked in a room, full of fear. Then Jesus miraculously appears, showing them that neither fear nor human obstacles can keep out Christ and his offer of peace. The disciples' fear is suddenly turned into rejoicing. Jesus hands on His mission to the disciples and gives them the Holy Spirit so that they may reconcile people to the Father by forgiving sins in God's name just as Jesus had done.

How do you share Christ now?

In what ways can you help others to see Christ?

4. REMEMBER IT!

[OPENNESS]

5. LIVE IT!

Openness is an overarching concept or philosophy that is characterized by an emphasis on transparency and free, unrestricted access to knowledge and information, as well as collaborative or cooperative management and decision-making rather than a central authority.

When was the last time you experienced God's love and mercy in the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation? Even if it has been a while, God and the Church are always there waiting with open arms. Consider making time this week to be reconciled and renewed for Him!

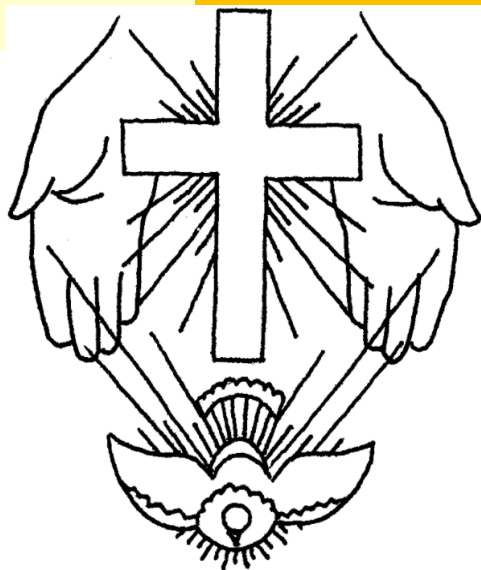
"Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."
(John 20:22-23)

6. PRAY IT!

Lord, allow our hearts to flow with the openness of Your love and truth. Allow it to flow with the Holy Spirit as it did with the disciples so we can grow in Your light. Allow it to reflect what's in our hearts to those we interact with each day following in Your footsteps. Amen.



JESUS REVEALS THE HOLY TRINITY



Jesus said to his disciples:
"I have much more to tell you,
but you cannot bear it now.
But when he comes, the Spirit of truth,
he will guide you to all truth.
He will not speak on his own,
but he will speak what he hears,
and will declare to you the things that are coming.
He will glorify me,
because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.
Everything that the Father has is mine;
for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine
and declare it to you.

1. EXPLORE IT!

Jesus tells the Apostles of someone's coming; the "advocate," who is the Holy Spirit. Yet the Holy Spirit does not work alone. Rather, we see in today's Gospel of the Holy Trinity -- The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit -- in what Jesus says to the Apostles.

More specifically, it is by God the Father, who sends His Son, Jesus Christ to us, that it becomes possible for the Good News to be proclaimed. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles will courageously set out to speak of our Lord. We understand a simple unity between the Holy Trinity; We look up the Father, while we're with the Son and others around us, and the Holy Spirit is within us always. All aspects of our life revolve around God.

2. CONNECT IT!

One of the easiest comparisons to the Holy Spirit is a spiritual advisor. Someone who easily fits that role is our God parents, the clergy, and even our parents! Were there times when somethings happened that you could not understand? Maybe their wisdom and perspective can help decipher, give meaning, and provide a differing viewpoint to broaden your horizons!

3. REFLECT IT!

One of the beauties of the Holy Spirit is the different forms and traits it represents in a variety of cultures. The Hispanic spiritual teachings emphasize the Holy Spirit with the gifts of love, freedom, truth, life, and hope. How can you accept and increase the gifts of the Holy Spirit in your life?

- ◇ Love lets us find joy in the midst of suffering and pain. Christ did not end human suffering, instead He showed how suffering for those we love can bring new life to them.
- ◇ Freedom from material goods, false gratification, and additions nurture the lifestyle we adapt as disciples of Jesus.
- ◇ Truth about God, us, and history can be achieved only through God's Revelation. The Spirit gives us the light to discover this truth and the strength to direct our lives by it.
- ◇ God's life in us helps us to overcome prejudices, promote reconciliation, foster unity in diversity, and work for justice and peace.
- ◇ Hope in being forever with God and the people we love is continuously nourished by the Spirit, who gives us a glimpse of the glory to come despite our earthly limitations.

4. REMEMBER IT!

"BUT WHEN HE COMES,
THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH,
HE WILL GUIDE YOU
TO ALL TRUTH."
(JOHN 16:13)

5. LIVE IT!

[UNDERSTANDING]

An individual's perception or judgment of a situation, sympathetic awareness or tolerance, to have comprehension and the power of abstract thought.

Do you fully understand the variety of issues surrounding you? Each night, talk to your parents or someone who can help you gain greater understanding and ask them about something you've always wanted to know or wondered about. At the end of the week, be prepared to share what you asked and learned!

6. PRAY IT!

God, give me the gift of understanding, to appreciate the love my parents give me, the freedom to worship You, the truth You reveal through the scriptures, the life Jesus lived and sacrificed for us, and the hope that we're doing all we can to be in Your good graces Lord.

JESUS' MIRACLE WITH FIVE LOAVES OF BREAD AND TWO FISH

WEEK C-MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

LUKE 9:11-17



JESUS SPOKE TO THE CROWDS ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND HE HEALED THOSE WHO NEEDED TO BE CURED. AS THE DAY WAS DRAWING TO A CLOSE, THE TWELVE APPROACHED HIM AND SAID, "DISMISS THE CROWD SO THAT THEY CAN GO TO THE SURROUNDING VILLAGES AND FARMS AND FIND LODGING AND PROVISIONS; FOR WE ARE IN A DESERTED PLACE HERE." HE SAID TO THEM, "GIVE THEM SOME FOOD YOURSELVES." THEY REPLIED, "FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH ARE ALL WE HAVE, UNLESS WE OURSELVES GO AND BUY FOOD FOR ALL THESE PEOPLE." NOW THE MEN THERE NUMBERED ABOUT FIVE THOUSAND. THEN HE SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES, "HAVE THEM SIT DOWN IN GROUPS OF

ABOUT FIFTY." THEY DID SO AND MADE THEM ALL SIT DOWN. THEN TAKING THE FIVE LOAVES AND THE TWO FISH, AND LOOKING UP TO HEAVEN, HE SAID THE BLESSING OVER THEM, BROKE THEM, AND GAVE THEM TO THE DISCIPLES TO SET BEFORE THE CROWD. THEY ALL ATE AND WERE SATISFIED. AND WHEN THE LEFTOVER FRAGMENTS WERE PICKED UP, THEY FILLED TWELVE WICKER BASKETS.

1. EXPLORE IT!

TODAY'S GOSPEL TELLS US ABOUT JESUS' MIRACLE: THE FEEDING OF 5,000 PEOPLE FROM FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES, THE FORESHADOWING OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST. THIS IS THE ONLY MIRACLE DISCUSSED IN THE FOUR GOSPELS.

THE SETTING IS THIS: JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES ARE IN GALILEE AND THE DISCIPLES HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM PREACHING AND CURING GODS' PEOPLE AND THE APOSTLES TELL JESUS ALL THEY HAD DONE. JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES WITHDRAW TO A CITY CALLED BETHSAIDA. THE CROWDS, MEANWHILE, LEARN OF THIS AND FOLLOW HIM. JESUS RECEIVES THEM AND SPEAKS TO THEM ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

THE DISCIPLES WERE WORRIED ABOUT THE CROWD GROWING HUNGRY AND APPROACHED JESUS FOR A SOLUTION. HIS SOLUTION WAS, "GIVE THEM SOME FOOD YOURSELVES." THE DISCIPLE REPLIED THAT THEY ONLY HAVE FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES; NOT ENOUGH TO FEED A CROWD OF 5,000. YET IN THE MIRACLE THAT WE WITNESS, JESUS MULTIPLIES THE LOAVES AND FISH, DOING SO TO FEED ALL WHO WERE PRESENT.

THE CROWD ALL ATE AND WERE SATISFIED.

2. CONNECT IT!

THE LANGUAGE, “JESUS TOOK ... LOOKED UP ... BLESSED ... BROKE ... GAVE”, IS ALSO THE SAME LANGUAGE USED IN THE LAST SUPPER WHEN JESUS INSTITUTED THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST (LUKE 22:19) AND IN THE STORY OF EMMAUS WHEN JESUS APPEARED TO THE TWO DISCIPLES (LUKE 24:30).

WHEN JESUS CHALLENGED HIS DISCIPLES, “GIVE THEM SOME FOOD YOURSELVES,” HE WAS ALSO GIVING THE CHURCH THE SAME RESPONSIBILITY, TO CELEBRATE THE EUCHARIST TO FEED GOD’S PEOPLE. FURTHERMORE, JUST AS JESUS FED 5,000 PEOPLE FROM THE FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH, THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST MUST LEAD TO THE MULTIPLICATION OF LOAVES TOO, THAT IS, TO SHARING OF OUR FAITH AND BRING THOSE TO DISCOVER CHRIST.



3. REFLECT IT!

THE FOOD WE EAT NOURISHES OUR BODY FOR ALL OF THE ACTIVITIES IN OUR DAY. THE EUCHARIST NOURISHES OUR SPIRIT AND HELPS US LIVE OUR LIFE OF FAITH IN GOD. PEOPLE ARE HUNGER FOR FOOD LIKE THE HUNGER OF THE CROWD IN TODAY’S GOSPEL.

THE DECEASED DOES NEITHER NEED NOR HUNGER FOOD. ARE YOU HUNGRY FOR THE EUCHARIST?

4. REMEMBER IT!

*“They all ate
and
were satisfied.”
(Luke 9:17)*

5. LIVE IT!

[SHARING]

SHARING: — TO GIVE A PORTION OF (SOMETHING) TO ANOTHER OR OTHERS.

WHEN JESUS SHARES HIS BODY AND BLOOD WITH THE DISCIPLES ON THE NIGHT BEFORE HE DIED, HE WAS CONTINUING HIS CARE, LOVE AND SUPPORT WITH THE PEOPLE WHO WERE ABOUT TO CONTINUE HIS MISSION OF LOVE TO THE WORLD.

THIS WEEK, WE WILL SHARE OUR FOOD TO FRIENDS AT SCHOOL, GIVE MONEY TO THE POOR AND PRAY FOR THE SICK TO SHOW GOD’S CARE AND LOVE TO OTHERS.

6. PRAY IT!

WE THANK YOU FOR ALL WE ARE, AND ALL WE POSSESS. EVERYTHING IS A GIFT FROM YOUR INFINITE GENEROSITY. HOW BOUNTIFUL IS YOUR KINDNESS. HOW ENDURING YOUR MERCY.

GIVE US HEARTS THAT ARE MOVED BY THE PLEAS OF THOSE WHO CRY OUT ON BEHALF OF THE CHILDREN, THE REFUGEES, THE SICK, AND THE SUFFERING. GIVE US HANDS THAT ARE EAGER TO SHARE WHAT YOU HAVE ENTRUSTED TO US. GIVE US FEET TO VENTURE WHEREVER THE SPIRIT LEADS. IN JESUS’ NAME, WE PRAY. AMEN.

The Would Be Followers of Jesus

When the days for his being taken up were fulfilled, he resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem, and he sent messengers ahead of him. On the way they entered a Samaritan village to prepare for his reception there, but they would not welcome him because the destination of his journey was Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?" Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they journeyed to another village.

As they were proceeding on their journey someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered him, "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head."

And to another he said, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, let me go first and bury my father." But he answered him, "Let the dead bury their dead. But you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." And another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say farewell to my family at home." To him Jesus said, "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God."

1 | Explore It!

As He was traveling to Jerusalem, Jesus stopped by a Samaritan village but was not welcomed by the people there because His destination was Jerusalem. Seeing this, James and John asked Him if He wanted them to call down fire to consume the village. Jesus scolded them, and they continued onto the next village. On their way, they were approached by someone who said he would follow Jesus wherever He went, but Jesus reminds him that the Son of God has no place to rest His head wherever He goes.

Jesus tells another man to follow Him, but this man asks to see to his father's funeral before following Jesus. At this Jesus tells him that the dead can bury the dead. A third person says he will follow Jesus after saying goodbye to his family. But Jesus reminds him that those who look at what they have left behind are not a good fit for the kingdom of God.





2 | Connect It!

In today's Gospel, Jesus speaks about discipleship and the implications of becoming His follower. Those who follow Him must leave the comforts of their homes and families and let go of their old lives to move into uncharted waters. His followers must leave behind what they have known and done and go in completely new directions.

To be a disciple of Jesus supersedes all other obligations and requires total commitment and loyalty to Him. He doesn't stop the men from burying the dead or saying goodbye to their families out of disrespect. But rather, He is reminding them that, as His disciples, they must live without regrets over the past and only move forward with Him. In our own lives, it can be easy to be distracted by the things that are going on around us: grades, relationships, drama, material objects. As His disciple, Jesus calls us to cast those earthly things and desires aside to trust and follow Him.

3 | Reflect It!

Jesus does not require us to be perfect or rich or beautiful or very talented to be His disciple. Above anything, Jesus requires loyalty and unconditional commitment to Him and His message. In today's society, it can be easy to be swayed by our peers to stray from our path as a young Catholic. It can be even easier to let things like games, tv shows, and hanging out with our friends distract us from our obligations as a Catholic.

What are some things in your life that are pulling you away from your purpose as a young Catholic and follower of Christ? In what ways can you minimize these distractions in your life?

4 | Remember It!

"No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62)

5 | Live It!



[LOYALTY] faithful adherence to a sovereign, leader, or cause; faithfulness to commitments

The challenging thing about being a young Catholic in today's society is the fact that there are many people and opinions pulling us in every direction. It is easy to be persuaded to step away from the path of Jesus' disciple. Challenge yourself to remain steadfast on your journey as a young Catholic, whether that is choosing to do what's right when your peers may be telling you otherwise or helping others to understand your choices as a young Catholic.

What action steps can you take when these distractions present themselves? Whether it's reading the Bible, having a mentor, or immersing yourself in a young Catholics group, find ways to minimize those distractions and to keep your eyes set on Christ.

6 | Pray It!



Dear Jesus, May You continue to guide us to remain steadfast on our path as a young Catholic. Although life may distract me or try to pull us away, please give us the strength to overcome these distractions and grow in our faith as Your disciple. Amen.

The Mission of Jesus' 72 Disciples

1 Explore It!

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way. Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.' Whatever town you enter and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, 'The dust of your town that clings to our feet, even that we shake off against you.' Yet know this: the kingdom of God is at hand. I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom on that day than for that town.

The seventy-two returned rejoicing, and said, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name." Jesus said, "I have observed Satan fall like lightning from the sky. Behold, I have given you the power 'to tread upon serpents' and scorpions and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

In today's Gospel, Jesus sends 72 disciples out on a mission ahead of Himself to every town He would be visiting. These disciples went ahead in pairs - laborers for the coming harvest. He instructs these disciples to carry nothing with them, but to bring peace to any home that welcomes them, and leave any home that does not welcome them. In each town, the disciples would cure the sick, drive out demons, and prepare the Kingdom of God.

Upon returning to Jesus, the disciples are excited to share their stories of driving out demons in His name. Jesus tells them they should not be excited that they could drive out demons, but rather be glad that they, as laborers of His harvest, would have their names in Heaven. As His disciples, Jesus gives them the power to "tread upon serpents," and no harm would come to them.



2 Connect It!

What does it take to be a disciple of Christ? Are there any prerequisites needed? Absolutely not! It does not matter if you are rich or poor, educated or intellectual, outspoken or even articulate. We all have a mission to go out into the world and be disciples of Christ. But know that Christ does not send us out into the world all alone, but rather with our friends and our Church. Being a disciple of Christ does not necessarily mean we go door to door evangelizing the Good News each day. Instead, use the gifts that God has given you to share with those around you. Live your life spreading love, kindness, and positivity to those around you. That is the mission of the disciple of Christ.

St. Teresa of Avila once wrote: "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which He looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which He blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are His body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours."

4 Remember It!

*"The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest."
(Luke 10:2)*

3 Reflect It!

In his final message at World Youth Day in 2013, Pope Francis gives the youth of the world this mission: "Go, do not be afraid, and serve." If you yourself have ever encountered Christ, then it is your mission to share that encounter with those around you. This is the challenge for us all to be disciples.

Are you a true disciple of Christ? A true Christian walks with purpose and direction, living a life for Christ. What are the gifts that God has given you? Think about one gift that you feel can help those around you. What is that gift? How can you use that gift to bring others closer to God?

5 Live It!

[PURPOSEFULNESS]

To be purposeful is to have a mission
with a clear focus

Many times we start with a vision of what you want to accomplish, make a plan, and then reach small goals at a time until you complete your mission. God has a plan for you, but you cannot just sit there and wait for His plans to unfold, but rather, make things happen! This week, think about a small need in your community - maybe cleaning up the park, serving food at the homeless shelter, helping around the church office, or maybe doing extra chores at home - and be that change!

6 Pray It!

Dear Jesus, teach us to be Your hands and feet. Give us the courage and strength to be Your disciples - to be fearless as we spread the Good News to the world. Amen.



JESUS'

Parable of the Good Samaritan



1. Explore It!

In this week's Gospel, Jesus was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" In response, Jesus tells us a parable about the Good Samaritan - a story about a man who was robbed and beaten on his way to Jericho from Jerusalem. A priest came by, and when he saw the man, he went around him on the opposite side of the road. A Levite also came by the man and like the priest, ignored him. A Samaritan traveler, however, came across the man and decided to treat his wounds. He took the man to an inn, cared for him, and even paid the innkeeper to take care of him. Jesus explains to the people listening that a true neighbor is a person who treats others with mercy, and tells the people to go and be likewise.

There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?"

He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.

But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.'

Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?"

He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy."

Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."



2. Connect It!

In this Gospel, Jesus explains to us that everyone should be considered our neighbor. The Samaritan helped the injured man without knowing who he was or where he was from. In today's world, there are many people, such as refugees, immigrants, or people of color, who are discriminated against and judged when all they seek is a better life. God made everyone in his image and loves us all the same, so we should love and care for everyone like

God asked us to. We should show love and compassion to everyone regardless of who they are or where they come from, just like the Samaritan did. Whether it's our family, friends, or even complete strangers, we should always help our neighbors to the best of our ability. By doing so, we can show others the depth of God's love and spread that love to them.



3. Reflect It!

The Samaritan did not care who the man was or where he was from. All he saw was a man in need and decided to do whatever he could to best help him. How many times have you walked past a person in need of help and decided not to help them? How many times has a friend asked you for something but you chose to ignore a simple request? Why did you choose to ignore them? How did it make you feel? We should all strive to be like the Good Samaritan to all of our neighbors.



4. Remember It!

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29)



5. Reflect It! [Kindness]

Kindness — the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate.

In this week's passage, the Good Samaritan showed great kindness to the man. We, too, should try to show kindness and compassion to all of those around us. Through this simple act, we can show the world God's love. However, don't just help someone when it's convenient. Go out of your way to help someone in need, even if you don't know that person. This week, try to perform one random act of kindness for someone at school, at home, or even in the street.



6. Pray It!

Lord, we pray that You make us more aware of those that need our help. Please give us the strength and ability to best help our neighbors and let them see Your love through our words and actions. Amen

JESUS WITH MARTHA AND MARY

WEEK C-O16
LUKE 10:38-42

Jesus entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me." The Lord said to her in reply, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her."



1.

EXPLORE IT!

Jesus is welcomed into the house of Martha and begins speaking to all those around. Martha's sister, Mary, sat right at Jesus' feet and intently listens. Martha, tired from serving her guests, became upset with her sister, and asks Jesus to tell Mary to help her. Jesus, instead of telling Martha what she wanted to hear, tells Martha she is stressed for all the wrong reasons and needs to look for the one thing that which is most important - listening to Jesus teachings - which is what Mary has chosen to do.

2.

CONNECT IT!

The life of a high school student can be stressful - homework, exams, sports, clubs and not to mention life at home - parents, chores, family. With all these things making our lives stressful and hectic, how can we handle it? Jesus reminds us to calm ourselves by sitting down, relaxing, and simply listening to him. With the many things in the secular world, we end up worrying and stressing over things we may not have control over. Many times the answer to our stressful lives is just Jesus. Mass or adoration is the perfect time to destress. Come sit with Him, listen to Him in Word of God, talk with Him in prayer, or just be at peace in His presence. At least for a brief moment your life will be calm and serene.

3. REFLECT IT!

In our fast paced and sometimes chaotic world, we are so busy with many responsibilities that at times we forget to stop and appreciate what is most important in our lives. For example at a birthday party, we might be engrossed in the guests that we forget about the birthday boy/girl. Specifically with all the academics, athletics, extracurriculars, family and friends in your life, do you sometimes forget someone important in your life? When was the last time you sat down in adoration and simply talked to Jesus? What can you do to include Him in your life on a more constant basis?

4.

REMEMBER IT!

"MARTHA, MARTHA, YOU ARE ANXIOUS AND WORRIED ABOUT MANY THINGS."

(LUKE 10:41)

5.

LIVE IT! {WISDOM}

Wisdom is more than just knowledge. It is the ability to both think and act on your knowledge experience and understanding. Wisdom is also the first and arguably the greatest gift of the Holy Spirit as it allows you to act accordingly on the 6 other gifts of the Holy Spirit. But how do we gain wisdom in the first place? The answer is through God. Listen to God through the bible readings and church teaching to hear what the Holy spirit is teaching us so that we may then go out and proclaim the good news through both our words and actions. In addition, you should also listen to your parents, teachers, Youth-Leaders and priests as they have much wisdom/experience to convey. This week, write down a wisdom from your parent, teacher or Youth-Leader which you find valuable and apply it to your life.

6.

PRAY IT!

Dear Jesus, at times when we feel overwhelmed and stressed, grant us the wisdom to overcome our troubles and see Your calming presence in our lives so that we can be a testament to Your love.
Amen.



JESUS' TEACHING ON HOW TO PRAY

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us, and do not subject us to the final test."

And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend to whom he goes at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, for a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey and I have nothing to offer him,' and he says in reply from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked and my children and I are already in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything.' I tell you, if he does not get up to give the visitor the loaves because of their friendship, he will get up to give him whatever he needs because of his persistence.

"And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish? Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"



1. EXPLORE IT!

In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches His disciples about prayer. Jesus tells them to start by praying to our Father in heaven, who provides us our daily needs. He teaches His followers to forgive others, just as our heavenly Father forgives their own sins. In doing so, Jesus tells His disciples to ask the Father in prayer to not be subject to the final tribulations.

Jesus goes on to teach the disciples the importance of praying without ceasing. Jesus shares an example of a man who knocks on the

door of a neighbor to ask to borrow a loaf of bread for a visiting friend. The neighbor is reluctant to get out of bed as the whole house is asleep, however, should the man continue to knock persistently, eventually the neighbor will get up to lend the man a loaf of bread. Jesus teaches us to pray without ceasing. If you ask, you shall receive. If you look, you will find. If you knock, it will be answered. The Father in heaven will always provide wonderful gifts to His children.

2. CONNECT IT!

Many times in our lives, we have run out of options. Just like the man knocking on the door of his neighbor, we have no one else to turn to. Thus, we come to the Father in desperation with no other alternative. Many times when we pray, we expect things to happen right away - and if they don't we just assume God doesn't want to help us in that way. But it is when we are in true need of God that Jesus tells us to continue to pray.

The same goes when our parents nag us to do our chores. Eventually you will give in and

get your room cleaned or take out the trash. No one likes to nag, and no one likes to be nagged at. Yet Jesus tells us to continue to pray to God the Father for the things we really need. It does not mean you will get everything you've asked but you will get all the things that are meant for you to receive according to God's plans. But Jesus teaches us to be persistent in prayer. Sometimes when we pray, we need to push. P.U.S.H. Pray Until Something Happens! But if it does not happen the way you want, pray to accept God's will.

3. REFLECT IT!

Think of a time when you had no Plan B, when you were out of options and your "Hail Mary" option was literally a Hail Mary. What did you pray for? What did you learn from God answering - or even not answering - that prayer? How long did you have to pray to see God's answer? Being impatient in prayer is being short sighted. God answers prayers in His own time, in His own way, and for His purposes. Although we may not understand His plans, persevering in prayer may lead to unexpected blessings.

4. REMEMBER IT!

**"... ask and you will
receive; seek and you
will find; knock and the
door will be opened
to you."
(Luke 11:9)**

6. PRAY IT!

Let us conclude this week's Gospel lesson by reciting the prayer that Jesus taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. On earth as it is in
Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us
our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against
us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

5. LIVE IT!

[SINCERITY]

Sincerity - truthfulness, honesty, and enthusiasm towards others in word and action.

What does it mean to be sincere? Being sincere means you are genuine in how you present yourself to others - truthful and honest in what you say and what you do, but also in how you say it and what you do. Being honest and enthusiastic are important attributes to being sincere.

This week go out and talk to your friends and allow them to get to know you - be a genuine friend. Talk to a trusted friend, maybe a best friend, about how you're feeling and how you're doing. Do your best with your chores and homework to the best of your ability with enthusiasm. Don't try to be perfect but be authentic in who you are - faults and all.

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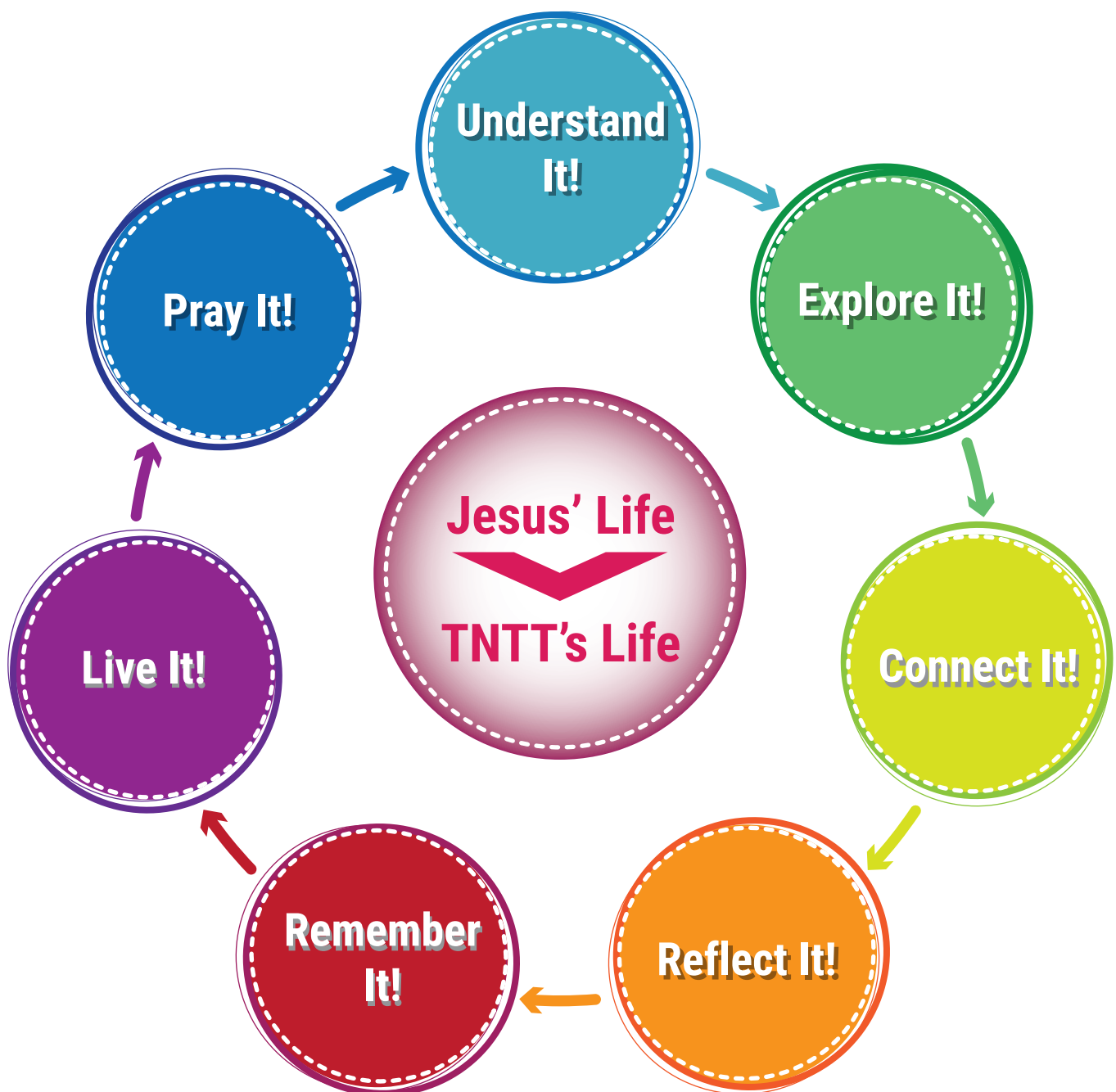
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WEEKLY SCRIPTURE LESSON MOTTO

Imitate Jesus' life through Scripture by learning, practicing, and living the Catholic virtues



“Go and Make
Disciples
of All Nations,”

Mt 28:19

