



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



advent



lectionary
 reading

Cycle B

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Lectionary #11

Reading I: 2 Sam 7:1-5, 8B-12, 14A,16

In this reading, King David wishes to build a house for the Lord in thanksgiving for the palace that he himself lives in and for having been able to rest from conflicts with his enemies. The Lord speaks through the prophet Nathan and reminds King David of his place and that the Lord has no need of a house, for the Lord dwells not in a building but with people, for God wishes his home to be something living and moving such as a community of people. God is calling David and his prophet Nathan, and all of us to be persons of **faith**, to trust that God's presence is always within us, individually and collectively.

Reading 2: Romans 16: 25-27

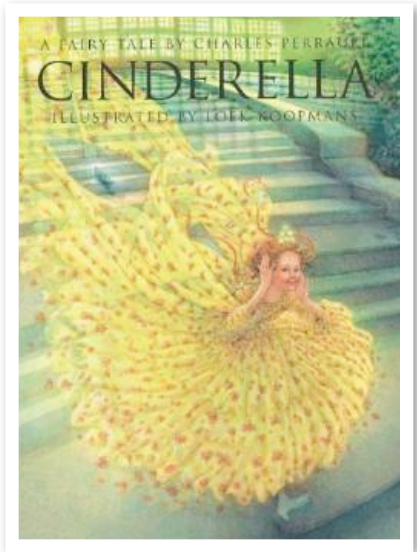
In these few short lines from Saint Paul's letter to the Romans, we hear words of encouragement from Saint Paul. He is encouraging the people to remain steadfast in their **faith**. This will be a reoccurring theme for the letters written to the Roman Christians because the persecution of Christians is a daily reality. In the midst of persecution and difficulties, that is when we need to tap into the gift of **faith** that we have received from God.

Gospel: Luke 1: 26-38

This story is referred to as the Annunciation, for we see that God the Father announces to Mary through the angel Gabriel that she will be the mother of God's son Jesus and that this will happen through the power of the Holy Spirit. We see the great courage and **faith** of Mary in this call from God. She is at first confused and frightened by the message of the angel but her response is solidly a statement of faith in what has been referred to as her *fiat*. We hear these words of faith for as the angel departs Mary says *May it be done to me according to your word*.



children's story



Cinderella

Written by Charles Perrault
Illustrated by Loek Koopmans
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character
education
activity

Faith is a gift from God and as is true with any gift it must be opened, nurtured and cared for.

Cinderella

This is one of the best re-tellings of an age old story. The illustrations themselves help to convey a story of inner beauty and not something that is solely on the exterior of a person. It is clearly a story of believing, of having hope and **faith**, even in the midst of dire circumstances and immense odds. This story might well be used in conjunction with the fairy tale unit which is often part of the literature program for early readers. Although it would be a story well known to most children, it allows the opportunity to take a piece of well known literature and put into a **faith** perspective.

Activity

Step One: Ask the students if they can see any similarities between Cinderella and the story of Mary and the Annunciation. They could say a number of things, they might see Gabriel as the fairy godmother or see similarities between Mary and Cinderella as being marginalized in the society that they lived in. There may be more things, such as the challenges a young girl faces in life and the **faith** that is necessary to move forward in hope.

Step Two: After this discussion, provide the students with various images of the Annunciation and ask them to draw their own image of the event. Using painters tape, design a Christmas tree figure on the wall of the classroom to display the various scenes of the Annunciation. Save these after the Christmas season and pull them out again on March 25th, the Feast of the Annunciation so that the students may be reminded of this great event that heard about for the Fourth Sunday of Advent.

**Now faith is confidence
in what we hope for
and assurance about
what we do not see.**

Hebrews 11:1

What could you do today?

You most likely have **faith** that your parents will feed you, clothe and watch out for you. When you say the Our Father you are praying a prayer of trust and faith that God will provide you with what you need. It is a very important lesson for all people to learn that God, like any good parent, does not always give us what we want but will always strive to give us what we need. As an experiment, take a piece of binder paper and divide it into two columns. On the left side make a heading of NEEDS and on the right column make a heading of WANTS. After you have made these lists ask your parents to look at them and see if you have the needs and wants in the right columns.



case study

**Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.**

Look Feel Know Act

Faith is a gift. Coupled with the gift of **faith** is also hope and love. They all actually work very much together. With faith, we can move forward in life with hope. It is love that compels us to share our **faith** with others. Can you recall a time when you really had to trust and believe that something good was going to happen? When we remember these times and share these stories, they are in fact stories of **faith**. Take some time and ask your family members, especially older ones, if they can share some of their stories of when they experienced time of faith. The Bible is filled with these kinds of stories. Stories where individuals trusted in God, most especially during difficult or challenging time.

In the book *Cinderella* we have the opportunity to see that a young girl, in what seems to be a dreadfully hopeless situation, has **faith** that things will turn around for her. As Mary brought Jesus Christ into the world, we can see that her faith in God made a huge difference, not only in her life but also in the lives of others. This becomes a great opportunity to explain to the children that there is a huge difference between fairy tales (*Cinderella*) and the wonderful workings of God in history, most especially God becoming one of us.



**closing
tool**

Pray the Hail Mary. Place great emphasis on the words spoken by the Angel Gabriel. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus.

Pray also with great faith and trust in the segment of the Our Father...Give us this day our daily bread. Amen.



**Santa Clara
University**

Character Education at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics
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