

Cycle A

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Lectionary 49

Reading I: Acts 2:14A, 36-41

There are two very remarkable occurrences in this part of the Acts of the Apostles. The first is the boldness of Saint Peter, who had previously been unwilling to admit to even knowing Jesus, becoming emboldened through the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim his faith in Jesus Christ. Saint Peter has survived a crisis of faith and finds unexpected strength with which to deal with the challenge of evangelizing the faith. The second remarkable event is how Saint Peter's listeners are responding to his preaching. He bravely calls his listeners to repentance. He calls them to leave the corruption they have known and to be baptized into Christ. The **bravery** of Saint Peter's preaching and his conviction on that single occasion draws 3,000 to be baptized.

Reading 2: 1Peter 2: 20B- 25

Saint Peter calls the readers of his letter to recognize the **bravery** of Christ. We are each called to be **brave** individuals if we are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. It takes a person of **bravery** to not return insult for insult, to suffer at the hands of another and not threaten. The **brave** one is a person of integrity and will not allow the degradation perpetrated by others to change them. Suffering is a fact of life, especially when we commit ourselves to living a virtuous life. We allow virtues to guide us despite the challenge placed before us.

Gospel: John 10: 1-10

The bravery of the true and good shepherd shines through in this passage. Bravery also defines the one who does according to virtue. The person without virtue follows no guidelines but does whatever he or she wants.

The brave shepherd does whatever is needed and required to guide and protect the sheep because a true shepherd cares for his sheep. In this passage, Jesus not only refers to himself as the shepherd but also the sheep-gate. This title is of literal meaning, for after gathering the sheep into the corral, the shepherd would lie across the entryway to protect the sheep from straying outside the corral and to prevent any harmful things from entering. This **bravery** forms its roots in genuine concern and love for those under one's care. This is a role given to each person as a follower of Christ and certainly in the varying role of offices and ministries within the Church.



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



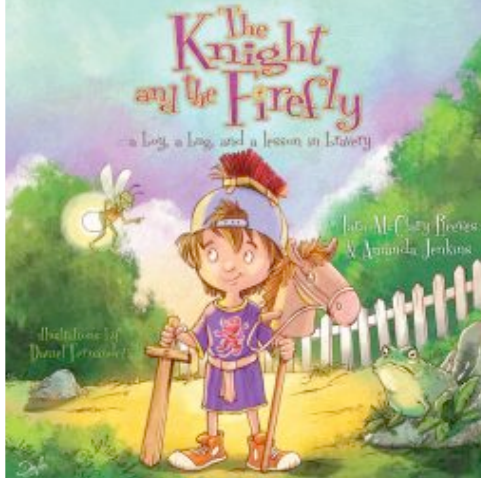
easter



lectionary
reading



children's
story



The Knight and the Firefly: a boy, a bug, and a lesson in bravery

Written by Tara McClary

Illustrated by Amanda Jenkins

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Bravery is defined as courageous behavior or character. Remember that courage is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Knight and the Firefly: a boy, a bug, and a lesson in bravery

This children's book is based on Psalm 91:1-2, "That whomever lives in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty. This I declare about the Lord: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; He is my God and I trust Him,". However, it also speaks well to the virtue of bravery contained within all three lessons for the Fourth Sunday of Easter Cycle A.

Oliver, the very brave knight by day has an issue when night falls. He is terrified by the dark of night until a wise old firefly helps him understand that God's word is our light.

In the scripture adventure, the students join Oliver as he hides under an eagle's wings, is hoisted onto the shoulders of a strong angel, tramples poisonous snakes, and even rides on the back of the furious lion. God's love for us becomes the source of all bravery and courage. Through it all "Sir" Oliver learns to trust that God always protects his children and that we are never alone, not even when it is dark outside.

Activity

Step one: Create a bravery imaginary play situation with a focus on bravery, one such example could be a hospital setting. Include a first aid kit, bandages, scarves that can be used as slings, pillows, blankets, a stethoscope and pretend to give shots in an area of the classroom designated as the hospital.

Step Two: Have the children take turns role-playing the ones who are injured or hurt, and the doctors and nurses that will help them. Encourage the children to use language that inspires brave behavior, such as positive reinforcements. The children can then take turns with the different roles.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Have faith in God, and faith in me—Jesus in John 14.



case study

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

What could you do today?

Enter into conversation with your parents about something that they remember you were afraid of at an earlier age. It might have been being afraid of the dark. Try to recall how you eventually got over the fear and became brave by facing the fear.

Talk with your parents about a fear you have presently. In talking about it, you are learning the reason for the fear. You can make steps towards lessening the fear little by little. Each person has some type of fear no matter who they are. Making small steps can help you become more brave.

Look Feel Know Act

Fear can be a very powerful emotion and it can cause a type of paralysis, or an inability to do something. Fear can destroy possibilities in our lives. For instance, the fear of failing may cause us to not want to do something new, different or challenging. Often times, when we feel fearful it is accompanied with a sense of being alone. It is most important for us to remember that within us lies God's Holy Spirit and that because of this, we are never alone. An invisible friend that dwells within us may be called upon at any time to strengthen us and help us to move beyond our fear. Knowing this, we can, call up the holy spirit of God to pull us through and make us brave at any time, at any place, and in any situation. Each of the Saints find their bravery in relying on God.

In the story of the “Knight and the Firefly” we encounter someone who has a fear of the dark. Interestingly enough, it is a firefly. During this Easter season and at all times, Christ is forever the light of the world. This light is there to remove all sense of gloom and foreboding and invites to be brave and courageous for He is at our side. Always!



**closing
tool**

Pray that you will always turn to the spirit of God that dwells within you, most especially when you are fearful. And pray that God’s presence will make you brave. Amen



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