



Cycle A

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Lectionary # 55

Reading I: Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

In this section of the Acts of the Apostles, Philip is going into the hostile territory of Samaria. Remember that Philip is a Jew and that historically the Jews and the Samaritans are at odds with one another over issues of faith. Philip, **empowered** by the Holy Spirit, confidently enters Samaria and preaches Jesus Christ to them. He then performs healing and exorcisms in the name of Jesus Christ. This action causes great joy among the Samaritans and opens them up to experiencing the next step of receiving the holy Spirit. The **empowerment** experienced here becomes the beginning of a series of both word and example of **empowering** others throughout the ages.

Reading 2: 1 Peter 3:15-18

Saint Peter encourages all to be ready to give explanation for their hope and their joy in Jesus Christ. He speaks also of the fact that good conduct will eloquently proclaim the message of the Lord. Example is always a powerful tool of communicating a virtuous life. People will always look to see a congruency between a person's words and their actions. **Empowering** others occurs when they see and experience this congruency between word and action. Throughout the Gospels we see Jesus as the complete example of congruency of word and action. In modern day language it would be the concept of *walking the talk*.

Gospel: John 14 : 15 - 21

This passage from John's gospel is a continuation of what is known as Jesus' Farewell Discourse. It is no surprise that the word *love* would be part of his farewell discourse to his friends. No less than fifty-seven times does Jesus use the verb *love* (*agapo* and *phileo*). John ensures all that love is the dominant theme of Jesus. This theme of love is the basis of our faith and is evidenced by the doctrine of the Trinity, which invites us into love. This relationship of love among the three persons of the Trinity becomes the model for our life and our love.



children's
story



Toad Cather's Creek

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character
education
activity

Empowerment is the act of inspiring an individual, through word and example to believe in themselves and their capabilities.

Toad Catcher's Creek

In this story we find a young boy named Chris who decides to take on the legendary monkey bars. On his first attempt, he falls to the ground. In that process Chris loses his self-confidence and is embarrassed because this happened in front of his friends. Enter Chris' father who tells a story within the story. He tells Chris the story of a Macaw by the name of Screech who was afraid to fly. Screech allowed fear to dominate his existence. Until one day, his friend Tracker falls from a high branch in the rainforest. As Screech watches his friend plummet toward the ground, he gathers all of his strength and courage and recalls the magic words his mother taught him... I CAN DO IT. Armed with this, Screech takes off and catches his friend Tracker and returns him to safety. Screech, now the hero, realizes that he did have the power to overcome his fear and succeeded where he had faltered in the past. This story becomes the encouragement and **empowerment** for Chris to give the intrepid monkey bars another try!

Activity

Preamble: For a child to be empowered, we presume they must also have a good sense of self-esteem. Hence, this activity will focus on building self-esteem.

Step One:

Provide the students with paper or poster board. Tell them to write their name in the middle of the paper. Provide the students with magazines so that they can cut out images of things that represent them and form a collage of these things around their name.

Step Two:

After the students have their collage of pictures around their name, provide them with a glue stick to secure the pictures in place. Ideally there should be no white spaces but the pictures overlapping.

Step Three:

Have the students take turns explaining their collage and why they chose the various pictures. Ideally, it would be good to make a collective display of all of them on a classroom wall.

Jesus empowered his disciples through word and example and they in turn have empowered people through every age to do the same. Now it is our turn!



case study

Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.

What could you do today?

It is really important for a person to believe in themselves and to have the assistance of someone to help with planning and accomplishing goals. With the help of a parent or another adult (mentor), the student would learn how to make a “backward plan.” In a backward planning you decide on a final goal and decide on the steps that would have to be taken and a timeline for those steps in order to achieve the final goal. Think about something you want to learn or achieve and ask someone to help you make a plan and a timeline for the goal. For example, think about what you would have to do to become proficient at swimming. You would mark a date on the calendar that would allow you enough time to become good at swimming and all the steps from the beginning date to the end date.

Look Feel Know Act

When we look around at the people in history we find that many of them, almost all of them failed in their initial attempts at some goal. We will also notice that their failures did not deter them from moving forward in achieving their goals.

For example, President Abraham Lincoln, probably by far the greatest president in our country’s history, lost many elections to various offices along his way to the White House. He was determined and was **empowered** by his commitment to a virtuous life and being an ethical leader by always striving to be a person of integrity.

Learn to trust yourself and see any failure as an opportunity to learn, grow and develop into the person God has called you to be. Trust in God and believe that God will guide you and lead you to your greatest good. Make your mantra this: *never be fearful of an unknown future with a known God.*



closing
tool

In *Toad Catcher's Creek*, we encounter a young boy who finds that a failure causes him to doubt himself and become despondent until he hears the story of how fears can be conquered when push comes to shove. The scriptures are filled with stories of those who failed but learned, who were fearful and yet overcame their fears. God is constantly offering us opportunities to grow and change and often that calls us to conquer our fears, always with God's help and encouragement. One of the first steps of becoming **empowered** is to overcome our fears.

Pray that you will call upon and remember the bravery of men and women facing their fears, always trusting in God as their true strength. It truly is God that empowers us and we are called to be instruments through God to empower others. Let it be so, Almighty God, let it be so. Amen



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