



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



pentecost



lectionary
reading

Cycle A

The Feast of Pentecost

Lectionary 63

Reading I: Acts 2: 1-11

This particular section of the Acts of the Apostles describes for us the realization of the promise of the Holy Spirit descending upon the disciples in a most dramatic fashion. The second paragraph describes the chaotic scene in Jerusalem where a variety of individuals with their unique languages are made to understand one another through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is reminiscent of when the Spirit of God breathed over the waters and created order out of chaos. The chaos which results because of sin can be calmed through the Holy Spirit's power of forgiveness.

Reading 2: I Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13

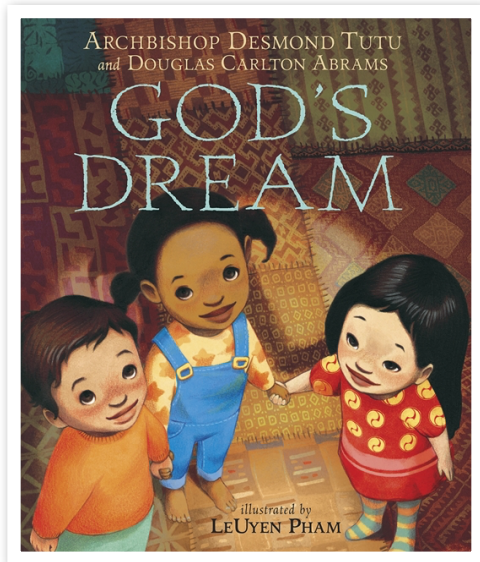
Saint Paul is writing to a divided community. The exact thing that is intended to unify the community was being contorted to cause division. All people in Corinth received different gifts, and instead of rejoicing over the gifts as a community, people began to compare gifts. Division caused a great sadness in the church and exists throughout the ages because of human ego. Unity is essential for a healthy community and yet often people confuse unity for uniformity, which are two entirely different things. There are many gifts and if each person contributes their gifts, all people will be able to celebrate the variety of gifts and use them collaboratively, which could lead to wonderful things. **Forgiveness** and understanding are crucial to the unity and health of any community and it is an absolute mandate by Christ for his church.

Gospel: John 20: 19-23

This is John's account of Jesus post-resurrection appearance to the disciples. Notice the greeting of Jesus to the disciples is one of peace. After all that has occurred, the denials and doubts, Jesus could well have said something different than *peace be with you*. Jesus breathes peace and **forgiveness** upon them and invites them to be elements of **forgiveness** in the world. This passage is evidence that the surest way to reveal and sustain the life with the Holy Spirit is through loving **forgiveness**.



children's story



God's Dream

Written by Archbishop Desmond Tutu
Illustrated by LaUyen Pham
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character education activity

Forgiveness is a process whereby we pray, work, and strive to stop feeling anger towards someone who has wronged us. Since it is a process, it calls for PATIENCE.

God's Dream

With warmth and humor, Archbishop Desmond Tutu distills his philosophy of unity and forgiveness for young children. Archbishop Tutu speaks of the fact that just as human beings have dreams so too does God. God dreams that every person on this earth will see one another as brothers and sisters. It involves people who reach out and hold each other's hands, but sometimes get angry and hurt each other...and eventually say they're sorry and begin the process of **forgiveness**. It speaks to our humanness and our ability to rise above weakness and to see the importance of being the loving people God calls us to be no matter our faith, the size of our nose or the shade of our skin.

Activity

Creating a stained glass window of children's hands

Step One: Distribute pieces of colored cellophane to the children making sure to include all the colors of the rainbow; purple, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. Provide the students with sharpies or a marker so they can trace their handprints on the colored cellophane. They should then cut out their traced handprints.

Step Two: Tape the handprints to the window in the shape of a rainbow. Remind the students that the purple handprints would form the bottom layer of the rainbow followed by blue, green, yellow, orange and red. Explain how the rainbow has become a symbol of forgiveness and new beginnings with the story of Noah and the flood

Suggestion: Playing the music of Lois Armstrong' *What a Wonderful World* and Israel Kamakawi'ole's *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*, while the students are constructing the rainbow window would be great background music for the activity.

When we enter into forgiveness, we do not erase a memory. We simply are choosing to forgive in order to free ourselves from bitterness. Only GOD can forgive and forget.



case study

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

What could you do today?

Make a poster for your bedroom and place on it one of the following four goals or make up others that are more meaningful for where you are right now in terms of being a **forgiving** person:

*It is my hope to be kinder today.

*It is my hope to be better at sharing today.

*It is my hope to get better at saying I am sorry and admitting when I am wrong.

*It is my hope to be a better family member.

Now each day walk to the poster, close your eyes and while praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit place a finger on the poster. Notice where your finger has landed on the poster and make that your goal for that day. Do that each and everyday until you believe you have achieved and moved forward in being better at those things.

Look Feel Know Act

Enter into an exercise where you might imagine a stand-off between people, whether individuals or communities and imagine that neither party will budge or make even the slightest effort towards reconciliation. There are many such occurrences throughout history of such behavior, just in case you can't imagine one. Without a movement on the part by an individual toward reconciling, nothing will happen except for the situation to get worse. Make a commitment to yourself that you will not be one of those who chooses to never budge.

Recall what it felt like in your body, mind and spirit when you felt burdened with something. Realize that you and your attitude are the key to letting go of the burden.

Make a commitment to yourself to rid yourself of negative feelings as soon as they begin to creep in on you. If there is a past hurt, recognize it and let yourself say to it...*you hurt me once but I am free enough not to let you continue to burden me.* Forgiveness is a gift given to who you are forgiving but equally to the one who forgives!

Archbishop Tutu's book, *God's Dream* essentially speaks to the command that Jesus gives to the disciples in John 20:23. **Forgiveness** is a **choice** and in not forgiving we do ourselves immense harm. The harm is this, once the offense has occurred it is certainly sad and regrettable but if we hold fast to it it may well become a burden that we carry that overshadows every other good thing that may come our way. There is a saying of Louise Smith that would be great advice for all of regarding forgiveness.

You can't reach for anything new if your hands are still full of yesterday's junk!



**closing
tool**

Pray the Lord's Prayer paying particular attention to the phrase *forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.*



**Santa Clara
University**

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