



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



ordinary
time



lectionary
reading

Cycle A

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary 109

Reading 1: I Kings 3: 5, 7-12

In today's reading from the Book of Kings we see Solomon choosing **wisdom** over riches and power. Solomon is a mere youth who is overwhelmed by his responsibilities and keenly aware of his deficiencies. Yet he desires nothing more than to serve God and the people entrusted to his care well. He seeks to have an understanding heart. God commends and instructs Solomon. In essence God said to him *You could have asked for futile and empty treasures, but instead you've requested the ability to do what is right!* The capability of knowing what is right and then doing the right, is also the gift we should seek in our own lives.

Reading 2: Romans 8: 28-30

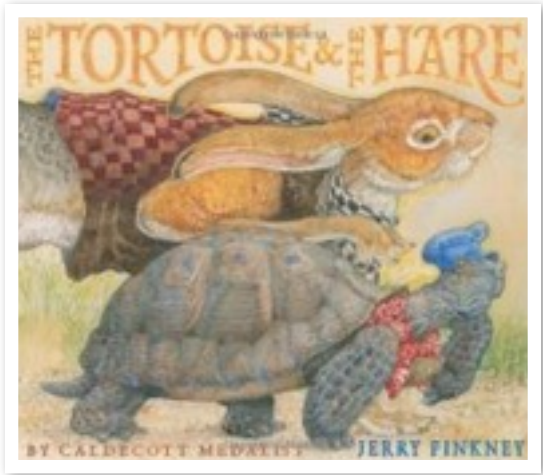
Saint Paul speaks words of comfort and healing. However, his message is counterintuitive unless heard with the ears of faith. It is here that true **wisdom** enters into our lives if we are open to it. It is through **wisdom** that we can see the long view of pain, sorrow, disappointment and disillusion as they gradually yield new life and grace. **Wisdom** comes in many forms. Our past experiences, especially the painful ones, can inform us of those things that are truly important in life.

Gospel: Matthew 13: 44-52

The parables presented in today's gospel selection speak of the reign of heaven and those seeking it. Those on this quest are ultimately being guided by **wisdom**. Each of the parables issues a call and stress the rewards of sacrificing everything for God's reign. In the parable of the dragnet we see that the truly **wise** understand that good and evil coexist in the kingdom and only in the end will evil be excluded. Finally, Jesus teaches that the true seeker of **wisdom** will find treasure in both the "old" Law of the prophets and the "new" Law of Jesus.



children's
story



The Tortoise & the Hare.

Written by Jerry Pinkney

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character
education
activity

**Wisdom is faith in its
perfection for it penetrates
and goes beyond an
understanding of faith but
enters the very heart of God.**

The Tortoise & the Hare

This retelling of Aesop's fable of the Tortoise and the Hare is wonderful journey to help young people understand the virtue of **wisdom**.

The fable is set in the American Southwest in this instance and it plays out as expected with the author alternating the action between the tortoise's diligence and the hare's overconfidence. To mark the tortoise's progress, the author unveils the moral of the story cumulatively, beginning with just the word *slow* and adding another word to the phrase at each milestone. At the contest's end, the entire phrase *slow and steady wins the race* celebrates the tortoise's victory. This is an ancient story that will captivate the children and allow them to understand that **wisdom** takes its time just like the slow old tortoise.

Activity

Step One: Provide the students with a wooden letter of the first letter of their name. The wooden letters should be 4 to 6 inches square as it is intended to hang on their bedroom wall. In addition, provide the students with photocopied **wisdom** sayings from the Bible, scissors and Mod Podge (a product that will secure the Bible sayings to the wooden letters).

Step Two: Invite the students to select and cut out the various **wisdom** sayings they wish to affix to their wooden initial. Have the students write their names on the back of the letter so that they can easily find their letter after the project is complete. After they have placed the wisdom sayings on the letter with some overlapping then they may move onto Step Three.

Step Three: With the use of the Mod Podge and foam brushes have students apply the saying to their wooden letter. Once the letter is completely covered, allow them to dry.

Step Four: **Reserved only for the teacher and adult aides:** Turn the letter over with the sayings face down and trim around the edges to finish off the letter.

Step Five: Display on the letters on the wall or bulletin board of the classroom and then invite the students to take them home to put them on their bedroom wall so that they are reminded to always be in search of **wisdom!**

Wisdom has been traditionally held as the first of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.



case study

Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.

What could you do today?

Using a search engine, investigate people throughout history that have been known to be endowed with **wisdom** or have sought out wisdom. Once you have determined the person that is most interesting to you, read more about them and see the events in their lives that led them to live **wisely**. The Holy Spirit, which dwells within each person is waiting for us to seek help in living our lives **wisely** and lovingly. The source of **wisdom** dwells within us. All we need do is pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and we will grow in the Spirit's **wisdom**.

Look Feel Know Act

Take a closer look at the reading from the Book of Kings selected for this Sunday (1 Kings 3: 5, 7-12) and rewrite the conversation between Solomon and God, replacing the name of Solomon with your own name. What would you ask God for if God gave you the choice of any possible gift? Would you ask for **wisdom** or would you ask for some other virtue? Notice that Solomon does not ask for power or wealth.

What would the world look like if the leaders of countries, businesses, churches, other institutions and families were to seek **wisdom** as the primary gift they would seek from God?

In every encounter in life there is something to be learned from each situation and person. True wisdom requires us to respond to situations and people rather than simply reacting. Make a commitment to seek the **wisdom** of the Holy Spirit in all that you say and do.

In this ancient tale of *The Tortoise and the Hare* we see that while the hare has great abilities and endowment, he does not make the best use of those abilities and thus is very unwise. The Tortoise, on the other hand, expends a great deal of effort to remain focused on the journey. The parallel here is that living a life informed and guided by **wisdom** requires effort and patience. Every aspect of life has much to offer us but we must take the time to let things sink in and reflect on each day. In the spirituality of Saint Ignatius and the Society of Jesus this would be known as *The Examen*, a practice whereby one looks at the events and conversations of the day to see if they were positive or negative in terms of our spiritual growth.



closing
tool

Pray that you will always turn to God before making any decision in your life, for you may not know at the time whether the decision you are about to make is major or not. Pray that wisdom will accompany all your words, thoughts and actions. Amen.



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