



easter



lectionary
reading

Cycle B

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Lectionary #50

Reading I: Acts of the Apostles 4: 8-12

In this passage from the Acts of the Apostles, both Peter and John are on trial before the Sanhedrin. In earlier readings, they were warned by the Sanhedrin to never speak the name of Jesus. Peter and John not only continue to preach and speak the name of Jesus, but also continue to do the **compassionate** work of Jesus by healing those who are ill or injured. Peter launches into a speech that calls for the religious authorities to take responsibility for the death of Jesus and acknowledges the resurrected Jesus, which further angers the Sanhedrin.

Reading 2: 1 John 3: 1-2

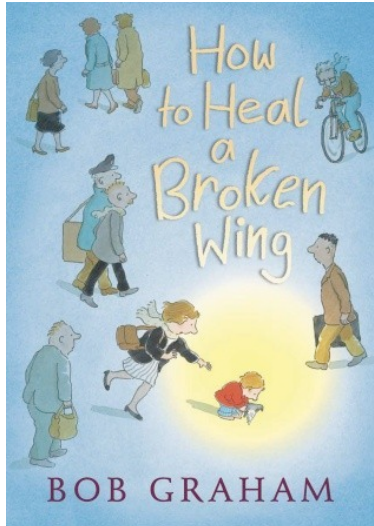
Saint John's letter constantly refers to all who believe in Jesus Christ as the children of God. Saint John speaks of the love that is lavished upon his children, and this love is often shown through **compassion** that reflects the lives of those who proclaim Jesus as Lord. Saint John identifies the way that the followers of Christ stand in opposition to many of the cruelties in the world. He wishes for the community to understand that they will, at times, be held in contempt by a world that does not understand **compassion**.

Gospel: John 10: 11-18

The Gospel chosen for this Fourth Sunday of Easter gives us one of the most vivid and familiar images of **compassion**: the Good Shepherd. Jesus declares that he is the Good Shepherd, the one who has such **compassion** and love for his people that he is willing to lay down his life for them. In this passage, we see Jesus extending his flock to include those beyond the fold of Israel. Thus, we see through Jesus the **compassion** that God wants for all of humanity. Throughout Saint John's Gospel, we hear many "I am" statements, and in this particular passage, we could translate *I am the good shepherd* to *I am compassion*.



children's
story



How to Heal a Broken Wing

Written by Bob Graham

Illustrated by Bob Graham

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character
education
activity

How to Heal a Broken Wing

How to Heal a Broken Wing is a delightful and inspiring book that expresses the virtue of **compassion** in the midst of the chaos of a busy world. In a city full of people rushing about, a young bird is injured and is laying on the ground. It is only noticed by a little boy. With the help of his mother, the boy gently wraps the bird in a cloth and carries it home to be nursed. This story shows what can be possible when **compassion** is the driving force.

Activity: Personal Experiences with Compassion

Step One: Provide the students with a paper heart that has lines on both sides, so that they can write two stories.

Step Two: Invite the students to think about an time when they truly had compassion shown to them. Have them write this story on one side of the heart. After they have written the story, invite them to share the story with another person in the class.

Step Three: Invite the students to recall a time when they expressed compassion towards someone else. Have them write this story on the second side of the heart and share it with another person in the class.

**Compassion is that love that is
aroused in us when we are
confronted with those who
are suffering or are
vulnerable.**

Compassion is
sometimes the fatal
capacity for feeling
what it is to live in
someone else's skin.
-Frederick Buechner



case study

Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.

What could you do today?

Think about the following categories and ask yourself what you might be able to do to show **compassion** to these people or things. During this activity, you might want to ask a parent for assistance.

Your parents

Your siblings

Your grandparents/other family members

Your pets

Your yard

Your classmates

Your teachers

Your teammates

Your neighbors

Look Feel Know Act

There are so many people and things that call for our **compassion** that it might be overwhelming. With the help of your family, think about a person, situation, or cause that you all feel passionate about and make a decision about what you could do to show **compassion**. After you have collectively made this decision, use the idea of *placing yourself in someone else's skin* as a way of understanding **compassion**. Have each person talk about what they might feel like if they were in that person's skin or if they were in that situation. Once you have listened to one another, see if there are similar feelings shared. If so, how would those feelings help you decide what action you would like to take to help that person, situation, or cause? Make a plan and think about the skills each person in your family can bring to the act of **compassion** you would like to carry out.



closing tool

The virtue of compassion is seen in both the story *How to Heal a Broken Wing* and in the Scripture readings for this Sunday. Jesus shows **compassion** in the midst of a world that is so caught up in its business that it does not see those who are in need of **compassion**, care, and healing. *How to Heal a Broken Wing* is an ideal story for children to be able to see that as they grow older, they could easily get caught up in the business of so many things that they might not see a broken wing right in front of them.

Pray that you might be able to see yourself in another person's situation. Think about how you would feel and what you would want someone to do for you if you were in that situation. Using your own words, pray to God to help you be the best you for the person you see in need. Remember that God only asks us to do what we can and will be with us as we try to help those around us.



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