

## Cycle C

### Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Lectionary #72

#### Reading I: Jeremiah 1: 4-5, 17-19

In this passage from the prophet Jeremiah, we see that our God creates us in **love** and calls us to be in **relationship** with him. Before God gives Jeremiah any title or task, God was already in a **relationship** with him, **loving** him and calling him even before Jeremiah was born. God is in **loving relationship** with his prophets even when they suffer greatly at the hands of the people they are trying to serve. Even though many prophets are reluctant to take up this role because of the danger involved, they realize they have been chosen to be in a special **relationship** with God.

#### Reading 2: 1 Corinthians 12: 31— 13:13

The virtue of **love** is the dominant theme of today's reading from Saint Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. He begins by calling the Corinthians to *seek the greatest spiritual gifts*, not just the extraordinary gifts that have caused division among the people. Saint Paul clearly states that all gifts must be rooted in **love** and that living in **relationship** with God and one another gives life meaning. Without **loving relationships**, life is empty and gifts are meaningless. Saint Paul concludes by saying that *So faith, hope, and love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love*. Of the three great virtues, he singles out **love** as the only enduring virtue because faith and hope are only paths to God, while God is **love**.

#### Gospel: Luke 4: 21-30

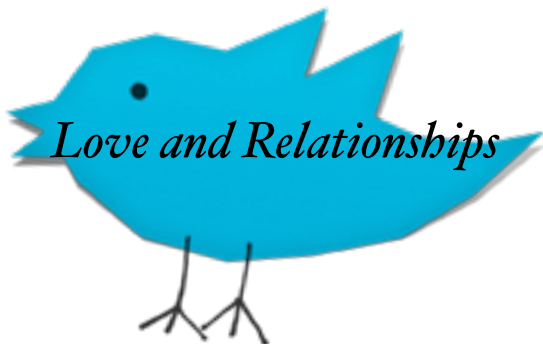
At the beginning of today's Gospel, we see that the people in Jesus' hometown think of him very highly. But then, all of a sudden, they become enraged with him. Jesus' intent is to carry on with his ministry of making the **love** of God known and inviting everyone to enter into a close **relationship** with God. Jesus proclaims good news to the people who desperately needed words of hope, compassion, and **love**. This Gospel parallels the first reading in that even though prophets speaking of God's **love** are often misunderstood, God's message must still be made known to all people.



build. plant. grow.  
*the word this week*



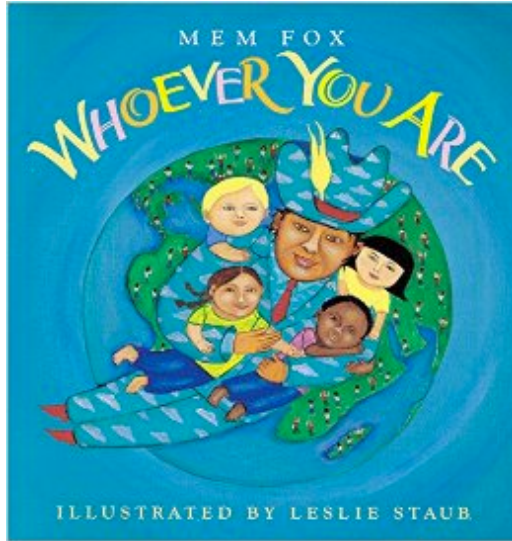
ordinary  
time



lectionary  
reading



children's  
story



### *Whoever You Are*

Written by Mem Fox

Illustrated by Leslie Straub

Publication: HMH Books for Young Readers, (September 1, 2006).

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character  
education  
activity

**A new command I give you:  
love one another. As I have  
loved you, so must you love  
another.  
-Jesus Christ**

## Whoever You Are

*Little one,  
whoever you are,  
wherever you are,  
there are little ones  
just like you  
all over the world.*

So begins Mem Fox's joyful picture book, *Whoever You Are*, a celebration of the world's diverse cultures and our similarities and differences. This book highlights the importance of recognizing what is always present in the hearts of all people and their experiences: *Joy is the same, / love is the same. / Pain is the same, / and blood is the same.* Regardless of where or how people live, each person is truly a precious child **loved** by God. It is clear that living in **relationship** with God and others is essential to having a full life.

## Different Words for Love

Step One: Write the following four Greek words on the whiteboard:

*Philia*

*Storge*

*Eros*

*Agape*

These are the four Greek words for **love** and they each address a particular kind of **relationship**.

*Philia* is the **love** that exists between friends. Ask the students if they have heard of the City of Brotherly Love: Philadelphia.

*Storge* is the **loving relationship** that exists between parents and children

*Eros* is the romantic **love** in relationships such as between husband and wife.

*Agape* is the **loving relationship** that each Christian is called to be in with others: to want for others what we want for ourselves.

Step Two: Discuss some scenarios and stories about the four different kinds of **love** and ask the students to identify what type of **love** is being demonstrated in each story or scenario.

Step Three: Ask the students to develop a story or two as an example of different **loving relationships** that they have.

**The beginning of love is to let those we love be perfectly themselves, and not to twist them to fit our own image. Otherwise we love only the reflection of ourselves we find in them.**  
-Thomas Merton



**case study**

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

## **What could you do today?**

The word **love** is used so often that sometimes it seems to lose its meaning. **Love** has everything to do with **relationships**, and so it is not correct to say that you **love** a material possession since that possession cannot **love** you back. Try to notice how you might be using the word **love** to describe how you feel about things other than people or God. Learn to have a greater appreciation for the word **love** and strive to use it only when speaking about your **relationships**.

## **Look Feel Know Act**

Try and take note of how advertising, whether on the television, radio, or in print, makes use of the word **love**. Notice how often that word is used to talk about inanimate objects. How does it make you feel to know that the most powerful virtue that exists is so frequently used to describe a person's connection with things that cannot return **love**? Once you are aware of this, it will help you understand the true value of the word **love** and the importance of using it appropriately.

Throughout the Christian Scriptures, we are presented with the uniquely Christian **love** known as *agape*. This is the **love** that strives to seek the good of others by wanting for them what we would want for ourselves. The readings for this weekend also speak about this **love** that God intends for all people. The book by Mem Fox, *Whoever You Are*, talks about the virtue of seeing others in the way that we see ourselves in order to appreciate and **love** those who we do not know yet. Even if we do not know others, we can understand our connection to them and **love** them by knowing that we are all children of the same God.



## closing tool

**God, you are love. Help me, God of love, to strengthen my relationships with You and others in my life. I ask this, O Lord, in the name of Jesus, who is my brother and in union with you, Heavenly Father, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**



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