

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time September 8, 2019

GOSPEL LUKE 14:25-33

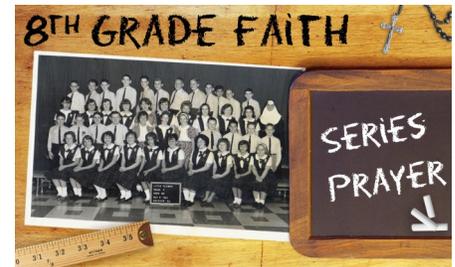
Great crowds were traveling with Jesus,
and he turned and addressed them,

“If anyone comes to me without hating his father
and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters,
and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.
Whoever does not carry his own cross and come
after me cannot be my disciple.

Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not
first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is
enough for its completion? Otherwise, after laying
the foundation and finding himself unable to finish
the work the onlookers should laugh at him and
say, ‘This one began to build but did not have the
resources to finish.’

Or what king marching into battle would not first sit
down and decide whether with ten thousand troops
he can successfully oppose another king advancing
upon him with twenty thousand troops? But if not,
while he is still far away, he will send a delegation
to ask for peace terms.

In the same way, anyone of you who does not
renounce all his possessions cannot be my
disciple.”



Litany of the Way Prayer for the Journey

- As Jesus sought the quiet of the desert, teach us to pray.
- As Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, teach us to love.
- As Jesus promised paradise to the thief on the cross, teach us to hope.
- As Jesus called Peter to walk to him across the water, teach us to believe.
- As the child Jesus sat among the elders in the temple, teach us to seek answers.
- As Jesus in the garden opened his mind and heart to God's will, teach us to listen.
- As Jesus reflected on the Law and the prophets, teach us to learn.
- As Jesus used parables to reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom, teach us to teach.

-from Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers

WEEK ONE - Exploring our own 8th Grade Faith

1. What school did you attend in 8th grade? What memories does it bring up to think about your faith and belief in God in 8th grade?
2. Think about someone you know very well, a friend, spouse or other relative. Where would they say your level of faith is on a scale of 1 to 10 – 1 being very underdeveloped and 10 being fully mature? What would it take to move up one number?
3. Where did you first learn some of the rules or traditions of the Catholic faith? What is one rule or tradition that you appreciate? Why?
4. What rule/tradition has enhanced your relationship with God? What hinders your relationship with God?



Exploring Jesus' lesson on discipleship

In today's Gospel reading, great crowds are going along with Jesus when he gives three conditions for true discipleship.

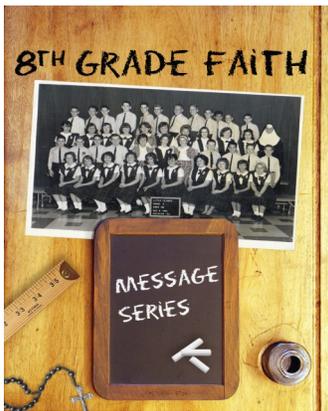
1. Jesus tells us we must “hate” our parents, siblings, other family members in order to truly follow him. Why is this necessary for true discipleship? And as Jesus tells you that you must prefer him above anyone else. Is there anyone in your life that you are placing before God—for your approval, sense of fulfillment, or self worth?
2. Next, Jesus tells you that you must take up your cross and follow him. What cross might he be asking you to bear *now*?
3. Finally, Jesus tells you that you must renounce your possessions. What thing(s) are you holding onto that is holding you back from true discipleship?
4. In the big picture, Jesus speaks to the crowds about understanding the cost of discipleship before beginning the endeavor. What is discipleship costing you right now? What are you gaining by following Jesus?

TAKE A STEP IN FAITH: Luke describes the crowds “traveling with” Jesus when our Lord gives these three conditions for taking the next step of becoming a true disciple. Tell Jesus that you don’t want to just be a traveler. You want to be a disciple. Ask him to show you what you

VIDEO RESOURCES GO DEEPER

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time - Formed.org <https://tinyurl.com/yyc5pq3t>

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY GOING BEYOND 8TH GRADE FAITH? A video reflection by Brian Crook, Church of the Nativity in Baltimore, Rebuilt Parish Association, from message series <https://tinyurl.com/yxepqet>



24th Sunday in Ordinary Time September 15, 2019

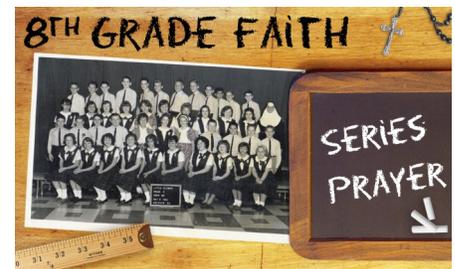
GOSPEL LUKE 15: 1-10

Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

So to them he addressed this parable. "What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it?"

And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.

"Or what woman having ten coins and losing one would not light a lamp and sweep the house, searching carefully until she finds it? And when she does find it, she calls together her friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found the coin that I lost.' In just the same way, I tell you, there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents."



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WEEK TWO - Exploring our own 8th Grade Faith

1. What “childlike” images did you form of God when you were younger? What images of God do you have now?
2. What was your relationship with God the Father then? What is now? What do you want it to be?
3. Discuss your progress in your “take a step” activity since last week.

Exploring God’s relentless love for us

Most of us can relate to the image Jesus is trying to paint. He pursues us when we are lost. And like the widow, sometimes that involves such diligent that we turn the whole house upside down in the process. For some, God has searched us and pursued us with great diligence.

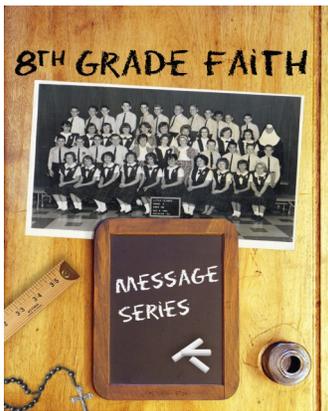


1. In what ways has God pursued you while you were away from him? How has God been like a good shepherd who found you and returned you to the fold?
2. Think about the woman who sweeps her house until she finds her lost coin. Remember a time when you searched for something you had lost. Now consider that God searches for you with that same intensity. How does that make you feel? What can you do to help God “find” you this week?
3. For a disciple, we are not only meant to experience God’s search for us until we are found, we are meant to share his heart for others. How is God inviting you to share his heart in your own life? Have you seen people in your life whom God has given you a desire to see “found”?
4. Focus today on the rejoicing of heaven when a soul that was lost is found. Read Luke 15:7, 10. Notice the repeated statement for emphasis. How does it make you feel that all of heaven rejoices over YOU?

TAKE A STEP IN FAITH: Imagine being a part of the story - going with the good shepherd as he leaves the ninety-nine and goes after the one lost sheep. Reflect on his devotion to just that one sheep that went astray. Imagine that you are with the woman as she sweeps and sweeps her house in an intense search for the one lost coin. Consider her immense desire to find that one small penny.

VIDEO RESOURCE GO DEEPER

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Formed.org <https://tinyurl.com/yxw8l97o>



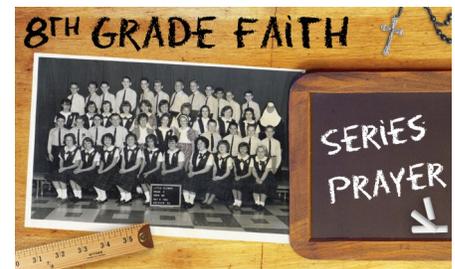
25th Sunday in Ordinary Time September 22, 2019

GOSPEL LUKE 16: 1-13

Jesus said to his disciples,
"A rich man had a steward who was reported to him for squandering his property. He summoned him and said, 'What is this I hear about you? Prepare a full account of your stewardship, because you can no longer be my steward.'

The steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, now that my master is taking the position of steward away from me? I am not strong enough to dig and I am ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do so that, when I am removed from the stewardship, they may welcome me into their homes.' He called in his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, 'How much do you owe my master?' He replied, 'One hundred measures of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Here is your promissory note. Sit down and quickly write one for fifty.' Then to another the steward said, 'And you, how much do you owe?' He replied, 'One hundred kors of wheat.' The steward said to him, 'Here is your promissory note; write one for eighty.'

And the master commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently. "For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones. If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth? If you are not trustworthy with what belongs to another, who will give you what is yours? No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon."



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WEEK THREE - Exploring our own 8th Grade Faith

1. Talk about a time when your faith spurred you to action. When was it? What was happening in your life? Can you recall any from your youth or young adulthood? What resources, talents or gifts were required?
2. When it comes to your faith and relationship with God, where do you tend to want to get away with doing the minimum - or cutting corners, giving it less than your all? What does it say about the activity and what does it say about you?
3. Discuss your progress in your “take a step” activity since last week.



Exploring our life as Stewards of God's gifts

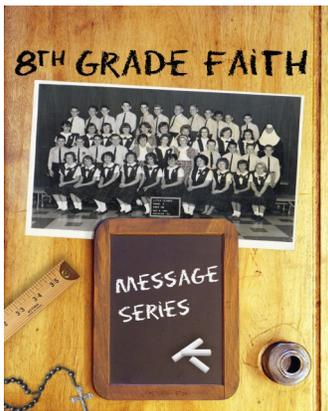
Jesus entrusts a steward with various gifts, resources, and talents. Jesus is looking for something beyond prudence and shrewdness - and he wants to see it from us. On Judgement Day, we must account for what God has entrusted to us: Do we use those gifts wisely and with justice?

1. What two or three gifts God has entrusted to you? Don't limit your thinking - consider intellect, personality, wealth, influence and so on. In your everyday life, how do you put them to use?
2. In what ways do you use your earthly gifts to show honor and glory to the Lord. What are some concrete ways you can use your gifts or “give them away” like the steward this week.

TAKE A STEP IN FAITH: Picture yourself having to come before Jesus, the master of the house, to render an account of how you have used those gifts he has given you. Prayerfully consider whether you are using them in service for God and his people, or hoarding those gifts for yourself alone. What does Jesus say to you as you explain yourself? How do you feel about the way you have used your talents thus far? What will you do this week to use your gifts in a new way?

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25th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Formed.org



26th Sunday in Ordinary Time September 29, 2019

GOSPEL LUKE 16: 19-31

Jesus said to the Pharisees:

"There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham.

The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

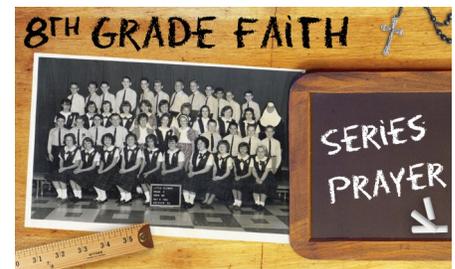
And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.'

Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.'

He said, 'Then I beg you, father, send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.'

But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.' He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

Then Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.'"



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WEEK FOUR - Exploring our own 8th Grade Faith

Talk about a time when your faith became a little more personal to you.
When was it?

Can you recall a time when you were open to sharing your faith? What was happening in your life?

If you could go back and give yourself advice to a younger you, what advice would you give?

Exploring our we compete for the Faith-Together

These are the lessons we have been talking about all month:

We have a choice. We can follow him and live the life of a disciple; we can account wisely for our actions as good stewards; we can love as Jesus wishes. When we do all this, we compete well for the faith and for everlasting life.

1. Imagine for a moment that you are one of the rich man's friends he has invited you to dinner. As you approach the rich man's house, you see Lazarus lying at the gate. What do you feel as you see him? What do you do? Do you step over him, anxious to get inside to the banquet? Do you stop to talk to him?
2. Now imagine that the rich man sees you and begins to gesture to you to hurry up and come in the house. What do you say to the rich man? What, if anything, do you say to Lazarus?
3. If we are regularly competing for the faith, it is difficult to be complacent. The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Discuss: One of the easiest types of sins to commit are sins of omission. What are the challenges — opportunities to do do better to love others through kind actions, works of mercy?

TAKE A STEP: Our parish focus in competing well for the faith is to grow and learn from others who also want to go deeper and live a more active life of discipleship - through fellowship, small groups, ministry. In what ways are you acting as a witness to the faith for others? If you are in a small group, are there any commitments, steps, service, etc. that your group wants to make as a result of this series?



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