

Fifth Sunday of Lent, Cycle B

Background on the Gospel Reading:

First Reading *Jeremiah 31:31-34*:

Jeremiah tells the people that the Lord will make a new covenant with them, planting the law within their hearts.

Responsorial Psalm *Psalm 51:3-4,12-13,14-15*

A prayer for God's mercy and forgiveness

Second Reading *Hebrews 5:7-9*

Through his sufferings, Jesus gained salvation for all who obey him.

Gospel Reading *John 12:20-33*

Jesus teaches his disciples about the way in which he will be glorified by God, and a voice from heaven is heard to affirm this teaching.

Background on the Gospel Reading: Today's Gospel reading is taken from the **Gospel of John**.

We are reading much further into **John's Gospel** than we have for the past two weeks. Chapter 12 of John's Gospel is a **preparation for the beginning of the passion narrative to follow**.

Jesus has just raised Lazarus from the dead—an important sign in **John's Gospel, which inspired many people to believe in Jesus**. This event also marks the turning point in Jesus' conflict with the Jewish authorities. **John's Gospel tells us that the Sanhedrin met after this event and made plans to kill Jesus**. In the 12th chapter of John's Gospel, Jesus is anointed at Bethany and enters Jerusalem in triumph. We again see evidence of the significance of the raising of Lazarus to this event; John reports that the **crowds also gathered to see Lazarus**.

Following his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Jesus predicted his suffering, death, and Resurrection and prepared his disciples to believe in the salvation that his death would accomplish. **Using the metaphor of the grain of wheat, Jesus presented the idea that his dying would be beneficial**. He also taught that those who would be his disciples must follow his example of sacrifice. This theme will be repeated in John's account of the Last Supper, when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples as an example of how they must serve one another.

The final section of today's Gospel might be read as John's parallel to the agony in the garden. **Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of John does not record Jesus' anguished prayer in the garden of Gethsemane before his arrest**.

Although comparable words are found in today's reading, Jesus gives a confident response to the question he raises when asking God to save him from his impending death. After announcing his conviction **that it is for this purpose that he came, a voice from heaven speaks**, as if in answer to Jesus' prayer. This voice, like the one heard at Jesus' baptism and at Jesus' Transfiguration—events reported in the Synoptic Gospels but not in John's Gospel—**affirms that God welcomes the sacrifice that Jesus will make on behalf of others**. In John's Gospel, Jesus teaches that this voice was sent for the sake of those who would believe in him.

In today's Gospel, we also hear Jesus speak about the cosmic framework against which we are to understand his passion, death, and Resurrection. Through his death and Resurrection, Jesus conquered Satan, the ruler of this world. In this way the world is judged, but the judgment is not condemnation. **Instead, through Jesus' dying and rising, salvation is brought to the world**.

Unless a grain of wheat

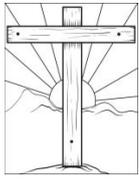


falls into the earth
and dies, it remains
just a single grain;
but if it dies,
it bears much fruit.

John 12:24

Doctrinal Content: CCC 615

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous." By his obedience unto death, Jesus accomplished the substitution of the suffering Servant, who "makes himself an offering for sin", when "he bore the sin of many", and who "shall make many to be accounted righteous", for "he shall bear their iniquities". Jesus atoned for our faults and made satisfaction for our sins to the Father.



Fifth Sunday of Lent, Cycle B Making the Connection (Grades 1, 2, and 3)

Gospel Reading John 12:20-33

Jesus teaches his disciples about the way in which he will be glorified by God, and a voice from heaven is heard to affirm this teaching.



Giving up something, even when it is to get something else, can be particularly difficult for young children to understand. Through today's Gospel, we can begin to teach the Christian way of sacrificing for others.

Materials Needed : Pictures for a matching game, such as a tree and a wooden table, a lamb and a sweater, a flower and a perfume bottle, a caterpillar and a butterfly.

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

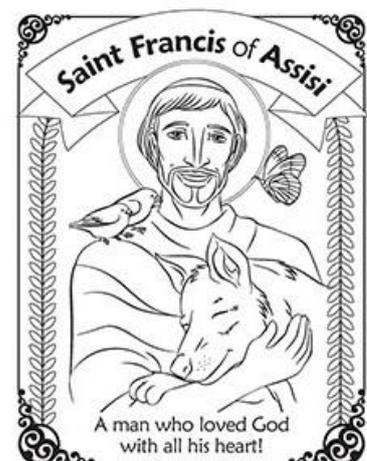
1. Play a matching game with the children. Set out the pictures and see how many the group can match up. Explain that sometimes we must lose something in order to gain something else. For example, we must lose a tree in order to have a wooden table.
2. Explain that similarly, we feel good when we help someone in need, but it might require us to give up some of our time or money. Discuss some ways children can be helpful to others and what they might have to invest of themselves in the process.
3. Say: ***Jesus lost his life so that our sins would be forgiven. Let's listen carefully to what Jesus says about this in today's Gospel.***
4. Read aloud today's Gospel, **John 12:20-33 (or this shorter form, John 12:24-26).**
5. ***What happens when we plant a seed in the ground?*** (The seed grows into a plant; if we plant the right seeds, we can eat the fruit that grow from the seed.)
How is this like what Jesus is teaching his disciples in today's Gospel? (Accept all reasonable answers.)
Jesus teaches his disciples that we cannot hold on too tightly to the things of this world if we want the happiness of following him. Sometimes this means that we have to give up things in order to help others. When we do this, we show ourselves to be good disciples of Jesus.
6. Conclude in prayer together asking Jesus to help us follow his teaching, letting go of things so that we can help others. Pray together the **Peace Prayer of Saint Francis**.

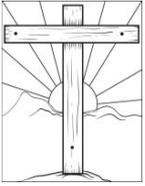
Peace Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.





Fifth Sunday of Lent, Cycle B Making the Connection (Grades 4, 5, and 6)



Gospel Reading: [John 12:20-33](#)

Jesus teaches his disciples about the way in which he will be glorified by God, and a voice from heaven is heard to affirm this teaching.

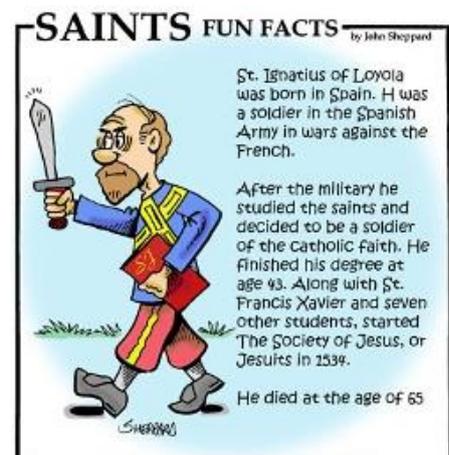
Young people hear the Gospel against the backdrop of many competing cultural messages. In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches his **disciples the way of service and self-sacrifice**, a way that sharply contrasts with contemporary societal messages that too often lead us to ask, **"What's in it for me?"**

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

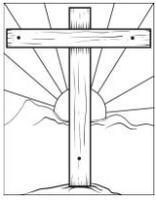
1. ***There is a question that we sometimes hear people ask, "What's in it for me?" Have you ever heard someone ask that question, or have you ever asked that question yourself? What are some of the situations in which you have heard this question? What does it mean?*** (Offer examples if the group is unable to provide examples on their own.)
2. Say: ***"What's in it for me?" is a common question in our society. Let's keep this question in mind as we listen to today's Gospel.***
3. Invite one or more volunteers to read aloud today's **Gospel, John 12:20-33.**
4. Ask: ***Having heard this Gospel, what do you think Jesus might say about the question?*** (Accept all reasonable answers.)
5. Say: ***"What's in it for me?" is the wrong question for followers of Jesus. Jesus certainly didn't ask this question as he journeyed to the cross. What does today's Gospel tell us Jesus was thinking about when he thought about his death on the cross?*** (his Father, God; all sinners; the entire world)
Jesus teaches his disciples that those who want to follow him must serve others, thinking about others' needs before their own.
6. Say: ***We are approaching the end of Lent. What might you do between now and Easter to show your willingness to follow Jesus in this way?*** Allow the group time to think about this quietly.
7. Conclude in prayer together, asking God to help you honour your commitment to follow Jesus by putting others' needs before your own. Pray together the Prayer of Saint Ignatius of Loyola.

Prayer for Generosity - St. Ignatius of Loyola

Eternal Word, only begotten Son of God,
Teach me true generosity.
Teach me to serve you as you deserve.
To give without counting the cost,
To fight heedless of wounds,
To labour without seeking rest,
To sacrifice myself without thought of any reward
Save the knowledge that I have done your will.
Amen.



During Holy Week, which commences on Palm Sunday, the children are given faith work – i.e., material is given for use at home with families in preparation for Easter. Please see website for Age-appropriate material.



Fifth Sunday of Lent, Cycle B Making the Connection (Grades 7, 8 and 9)



Gospel Reading [John 12:20-33](#)

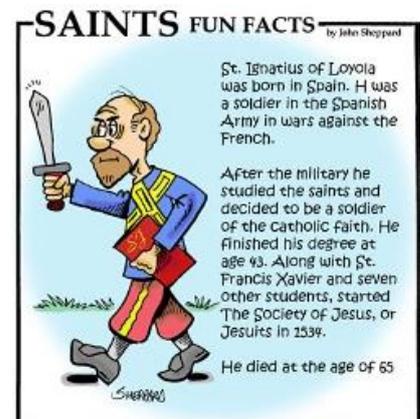
Jesus teaches his disciples about the way in which he will be glorified by God, and a voice from heaven is heard to affirm this teaching.

As the hour of his death drew near, Jesus focused on his purpose and prayed that he would give glory to God by accepting suffering and death for our salvation. When we follow Jesus' example by putting the needs of others before our own, we also give glory to God.

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Name examples of situations where it is important for **people to focus on their** purpose at the moment. (Accept all reasonable answers, for example, **rescue workers at the scene** of an accident, athletes competing at a sporting event, **students taking an important exam**.)
2. ***During Lent, we focus more intently on what it means to live faithfully as a follower of Jesus. We are approaching the end of Lent, and this Sunday's Gospel helps us to understand what it means to follow Jesus all the way to his sacrifice on the cross. As we listen to this Sunday's Gospel, notice what Jesus tells his disciples about his prayer as the hour of his death draws near.***
3. Invite one or more volunteers to read aloud this **Sunday's Gospel, John 12:20–33**.
4. ***What words does Jesus choose not to pray?*** ("Father, save me from this hour.")
Why? (This hour is the purpose for which he came.)
What prayer does Jesus make instead? ("Father, glorify your name.")
What does this tell us about what Jesus was thinking when he thought about his death on the cross? (his Father, God; all sinners; the whole world)
5. ***This Sunday's Gospel prepares us to journey with Christ during Holy Week, reminding us that Jesus stayed focused on his purpose and gave glory to God by accepting suffering and death for our salvation.***
Jesus teaches his disciples and us that those who want to follow him must serve others by thinking about others' needs before their own. When we do this, we, too, give glory to God.
6. ***What might you do between now and Easter to show your willingness to follow Jesus by serving others? Allow the group some time to think about this quietly.***
7. Conclude in prayer together, asking God to help you honour your commitment to follow Jesus by putting others' needs before your own. Pray together the [Prayer for Generosity](#) by Saint Ignatius of Loyola.

Prayer for Generosity - St. Ignatius of Loyola
Eternal Word, only begotten Son of God,
Teach me true generosity.
Teach me to serve you as you deserve.
To give without counting the cost,
To fight heedless of wounds,
To labour without seeking rest,
To sacrifice myself without thought of any reward
Save the knowledge that I have done your will.
Amen.



Fifth Sunday of Lent, Cycle B Family Connection

Gospel Reading John 12:20-33

Jesus teaches his disciples about the way in which he will be glorified by God, and a voice from heaven is heard to affirm this teaching.

Family Connection

Family life is often a balancing act in which we prioritize and attend to a variety of competing needs. We learn the **value of putting others' needs ahead of our own**. In family life we also learn that when we make personal sacrifices to serve others, we gain so much more than we may have lost.

As you gather as a family, talk about **how important it is to your family life to gladly serve one another**.

Ask each person to consider the last time that another family member asked for help.

What was your response?

Did you cheerfully try to honour the request, or did you ask "Why me?"

Read today's Gospel, John 12:20-33.

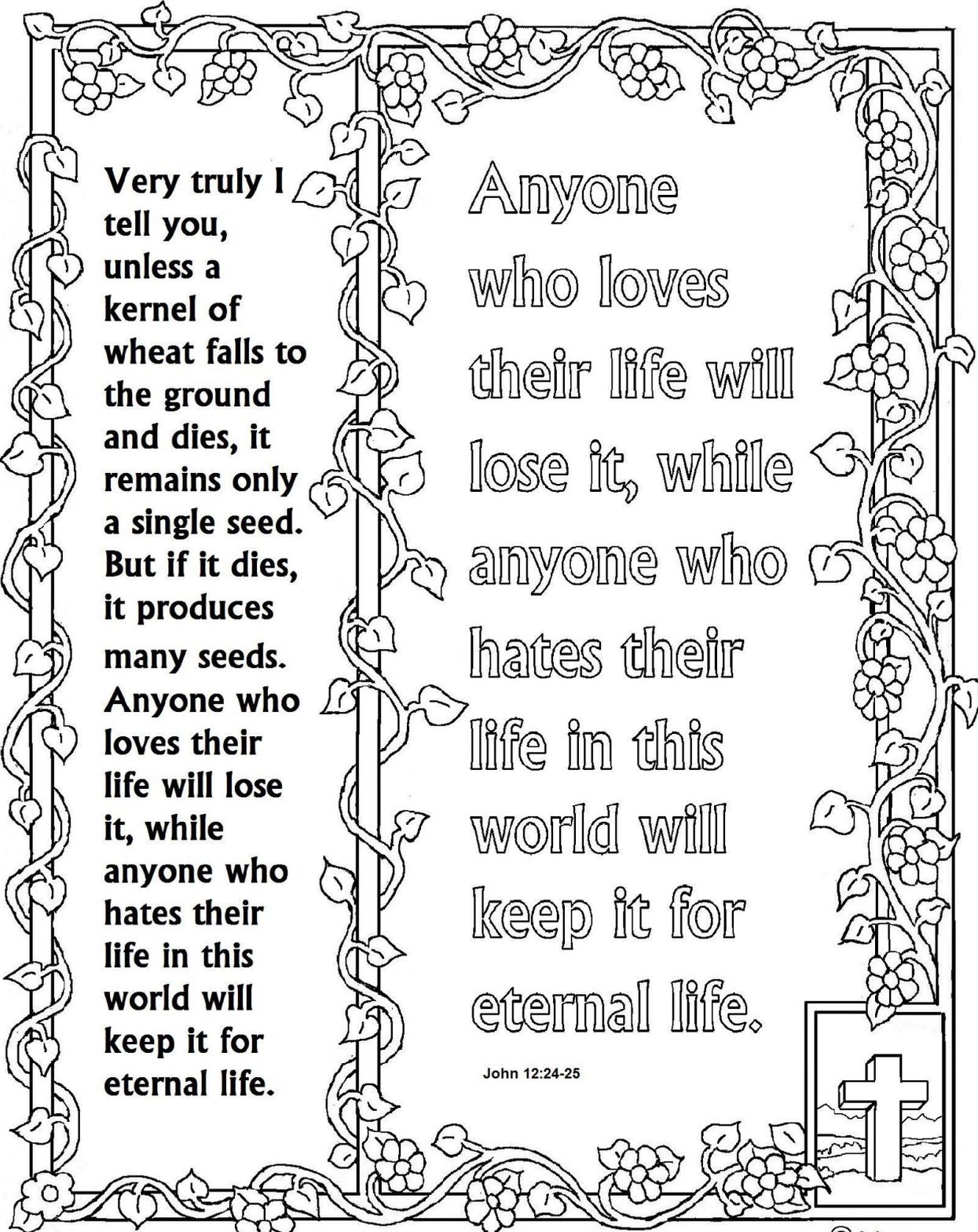
How do you think Jesus would want us to respond when someone in our family asks for help?

Invite each family member to make a commitment for the next week to try to respond cheerfully to requests for help.

Pray together, asking God's help with this commitment.

Pray the Prayer of Saint Ignatius of Loyola.

Prayer for Generosity - St. Ignatius of Loyola
Eternal Word, only begotten Son of God,
Teach me true generosity.
Teach me to serve you as you deserve.
To give without counting the cost,
To fight heedless of wounds,
To labour without seeking rest,
To sacrifice myself without thought of any reward
Save the knowledge that I have done your will.
Amen.



Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

John 12:24-25

