



The JOY of the GOSPEL

Four Lessons for October 2018

October 7, 2018 – Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 14, 2018 – Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 21, 2018 – Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 28, 2018 – Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Marriage and Divorce (Upper and Middle Elementary)



October 7, 2018 – Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage Jesus is challenged by the Pharisees about marriage and divorce. Jesus' teaching in response shapes and defines the Church's understanding of marital love, the human person, and God. In this lesson, students will reflect on Pope St. John Paul II's thesis for *Theology of the Body*.

Directions

- A. Have students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions. You may have students answer them on their own or you may discuss them together as a class.
 - B. Review and discuss the answers to the focus questions.
 - C. Conduct a class discussion on the main idea of *Theology of the Body* using the **Theology of the Body Discussion Guide**.
 - D. Have your students reflect on the main idea of *Theology of the Body* by answering the questions from **Theology of the Body Reflection**.
- Note: This Gospel refers to sensitive topics to discuss. Many students today come from different family situations that may include divorce and remarriage or single parents. It is important to be compassionate to these situations and affirm the goodness and love that God still brings forth from them. However, this does not minimize God's original plan for humanity and marital love, which Jesus seeks to restore in our hearts.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. Because of the hardness of their hearts.
2. God made humans as male and female, to be joined together as one flesh.
3. What God has joined together, no human being must separate.
4. Anyone, male or female, who divorces and marries another is committing adultery.

5. Jesus' teaching makes sense in the context of His teaching about marriage and divorce because marriage endures while the spouses are living and cannot be dissolved. Therefore, to Jesus, and from God's original plan, there is no such thing as divorce.
6. He says that the Kingdom of God belongs to ones such as them. We must be childlike in our faith in order to enter the Kingdom.

Sunday Readings

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 10:2-16: Marriage and Divorce

The Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, “Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife?” They were testing him. He said to them in reply, “What did Moses command you?” They replied, “Moses permitted a husband to write a bill of divorce and dismiss her.” But Jesus told them, “Because of the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, *God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh.* Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate.” In the house

the disciples again questioned Jesus about this. He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

And people were bringing children to him that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.” Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them.

Focus Questions

1. What reason does Jesus give for why the law under Moses allowed divorce?
2. What was God’s original intention for marriage?
3. What reason does Jesus give for why divorce is not acceptable?
4. What does Jesus teach about adultery?
5. How does Jesus’ teaching about adultery make sense in the context of Jesus’ teaching about marriage and divorce?
6. Why does Jesus allow the children to come to Him?

Theology of the Body Discussion Guide

Directions: Discuss the main idea of *Theology of the Body* with your students using the guide below.

- Explain the following to your students:
 - *Early in his pontificate, Pope St. John Paul II gave a series of talks over a period of five years that reflected upon human nature and marital love. These reflections were rooted deeply in Scripture. They were later collected into one book titled Theology of the Body.*
 - *These writings have shaped the way we think about our **origins** (where we came from and how we are meant to be), our **nature** (how and why we are the way we are), and our **destiny** (where we're going and God's plan for us) as human beings. Specifically, we learn that God made us to make Himself visible in the created world. We learn that we have a fallen nature because of sin, but that with His help we can overcome our tendency to sin. And we learn that we are destined to return to God and live with Him forever in Heaven. The beginning of the pope's reflection begins with an analysis of Jesus' response to the Pharisees in this Gospel (also found in Matthew 19:1-12)*
- Below is Pope St. John Paul II's thesis, or main idea. Write the quote from *Theology of the Body* on the board:
 - "The body, in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it" (*Theology of the Body* 19:4).
- Then, ask your students the following questions:
 - What does Pope St. John Paul II say is capable of making the invisible visible? *The human body.*
 - What does he mean by "invisible"? *The spiritual and divine.*
 - What does he mean by "visible reality"? *The physical, material world around us that we can see and touch and use our senses to know.*
 - What do you think he means by "the mystery hidden from eternity in God"? *The Trinity.*
 - What does the Pope suggest the human body will make visible and signify to the world? *The mystery hidden from eternity in God. In other words, God Himself. The Pope teaches that the love shared by a husband and wife and reflected in and through their bodies is an icon of the Trinity.*

Theology of the Body Reflection

Directions: Reflect on the main idea of *Theology of the Body* by answering the questions below.

“The body, in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it” (*Theology of the Body* 19:4).

1. Our bodies make invisible things visible. For example, happiness: our bodies reveal to others when we are happy through our facial expression, posture, energy level, and so forth. What are three other “invisible” things that are made visible by our bodies?

2. *Theology of the Body* teaches us something important about our **origins** (where we come from), our **nature** (how and why we are the way we are), and our **destiny** (where we are going). Think about your origin, nature, and destiny and answer the questions below.

- Your **origin**: What is one important event or person in your past that helped to make you who you are today? How do you see God present in your life through that event or person?

- Your **nature**: What gifts and talents do you have that are important parts of who you are today? How is God present in your life today?

- You **destiny**: What are two goals that you have for your future? How will God be present in your future?

3. What are three ways that you can make God's love visible to others through your own actions?

The Joy of the Gospel

The Rich Man

(Upper and Middle Elementary)



October 14, 2018 – Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage a rich man asks Jesus what he must do to attain eternal life. Jesus' answer is challenging to us all. In this lesson, students will compare Jesus' teaching to the messages from our current culture about the meaning of life.

Directions

- A. First, have students complete the section labeled "Before reading this week's Gospel" from **The Meaning of Life Activity**.
- B. When finished, have students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions. You may have students answer them on their own or you may discuss them together as a class.
- C. Review and discuss the answers to the focus questions.
- D. Then, conduct a class discussion about the meaning of life using **The Meaning of Life Discussion Guide**.
- E. Conclude by having students answer the remaining reflection questions from **The Meaning of Life Activity**.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. What must I do to inherit eternal life?
2. Follow the commandments.
3. Go, sell all that you have, give to the poor, and come and follow Him.
4. He had many possessions that he did not want to part with.
5. Jesus taught that it is difficult for someone to enter the Kingdom of God, especially those with wealth. He used the analogy that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the Kingdom.
6. By God alone.

Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 10:17-30: The Rich Man

As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus answered him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: *You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother.*” He replied and said to him, “Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth.” Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, “You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of

God!” The disciples were amazed at his words. So Jesus again said to them in reply, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God.” Peter began to say to him, “We have given up everything and followed you.” Jesus said, “Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come.”

Focus Questions

1. What question did the rich man ask of Jesus?
2. What was Jesus’ initial response to the rich man’s question?
3. After the rich man told Jesus that he had observed all of these from his youth, what did Jesus tell him to do?
4. Why did the rich man leave feeling sad?
5. What did Jesus teach about the difficulty of entering into the Kingdom of God?

6. What is the only way for anyone to enter into the Kingdom of God?

The Meaning of Life Activity

Directions: Read about what the Church teaches about the meaning of life. Then answer the questions.

Before reading this week’s Gospel:

Directions: With a partner, create a list of at least three things that popular culture tells us are the most important things in life. Write a brief note about why our culture places such importance on these things.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

After reading this week’s Gospel:

Directions: Read about the Church’s answer to the meaning of life and answer the reflection questions.

In a certain way, the question of the rich man in this week’s Gospel, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” is asking the question all of us ask at some point in our lives, “what is the meaning of life?” The example of Jesus’ life gives us an answer to this question. One of the best summaries of this answer comes from the old Baltimore Catechism.

Baltimore Catechism no. 6.

Q. Why did God make you?

A. God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in heaven.

List the four reasons that God made us:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Jesus told the rich man to go, sell all that he had, and come follow Him. If Jesus were to ask you today to give up the things that most stood in your way of having a deeper relationship with Him, what would those things be? List three things that would be difficult for you to give up. Then, for each, think of and write at least one practical way that you can begin to give that thing back to God. For example, you might list money. One way to give that back to God would be to make regular donations of your money to the poor.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

The Meaning of Life Discussion Guide

Directions: Discuss the meaning of life with your students using the guide below.

- Explain the following to your students:
 - *The rich man's question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" is not so different from the question all of ask throughout our lives: Why am I here? What is my purpose? What is the meaning of life? The rich man at least recognizes that he is made for something else: for God. But he lacked a real understanding of the implications of that truth. The world around us is quick to give an answer to this question: the meaning of life is to work; to make money; to be famous or powerful, and the best at what you do. The world's answer to the question of the meaning of life, however, is very different from Jesus' answer.*
- Ask your students the following questions:
 - *What did Jesus tell the rich man he must do to inherit eternal life? Follow the commandments. Notice that He only lists some of the commandments, all concerning one's responsibilities towards others. The rich man enthusiastically says that he has done all of this from his youth.*
 - *What is Jesus' initial response to the rich man, even before He speaks to him again? Jesus looks at him and loves him. It's clear from this brief exchange that Jesus understands how misguided the rich man is. The rich man believes that he can earn his way into the Kingdom. But this is contrary to everything that Jesus teaches.*
 - *What does Jesus tell the rich man to do? Go, sell all that he has, and come follow Him. Jesus recognizes that what is lacking in the rich man's understanding of salvation is a true faith, a relationship with God. He has been following the commandments out of love for himself, not out of love of God. Therefore, in order to love God, he must remove those things in his life that are preventing him from having a loving relationship with God. For the rich man, it is his wealth and possessions. The same is true today; many people are attached to our wealth and possessions. Being willing to give up all these earthly comforts is what is difficult about entering into the Kingdom of God.*
 - *How is the list you made at the beginning of the lesson of important things in life different from what Jesus said is important in life? Answers will vary but should include some reference to the idea that our current culture tells us that the important things in life are self-centered, while Jesus teaches that the important things in life are focused on God and on our neighbor.*

- *Explain that the Church has always had an answer to the question of the meaning of life. It is a relatively simple answer to say, but infinitely challenging in practice.*
- Write on the board the following quote from Baltimore Catechism question no. 6:
 - Q. Why did God make you?
 - A. God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in heaven.
- *Explain that this quote comes from the old Baltimore Catechism that many of our grandparents and great grandparents learned from. While it's not as widely used today, we can still learn a lot from it.*

Ambition of James and John (Upper and Middle Elementary)



October 21, 2018 – Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage the disciples James and John confront Jesus with their own ambitions of greatness in the Kingdom. Jesus teaches them, and us, that to be His true disciple, we must be willing to serve others, sacrifice, and suffer for His sake. In this lesson, students will explore what the Bible has to say about the conditions of discipleship and what it truly means to follow Jesus.

Directions

- A. Have students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions. You may have students answer them on their own or you may discuss them together as a class.
- B. Review and discuss the answers to the focus questions.
- C. Have students complete **The Meaning of Discipleship** activity. Students may either complete the entire worksheet individually, with a partner, or students may be arranged into groups and each group assigned one or more of the given Scripture passages to study. When finished, have students share their answers.
- D. Conclude by having students write a response to the reflection question.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. To be seated at His right and left in the Kingdom.
2. Jesus' words foreshadow His suffering and death. In order to follow Him, we must be willing to suffer.
3. To be a disciple of Jesus, we must be willing to suffer and to be the least. In the Kingdom, the last will be first and the first will be last.
4. He has come to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

The Meaning of Discipleship

1. 1 John 2:3-4 – A disciple of Jesus must keep His commandments.
2. John 15:20 – A disciple of Jesus will be persecuted because Jesus was persecuted.
3. Matthew 16:24-25 – A disciple of Jesus must deny himself, carry his cross, and follow Jesus. A disciple must also lose his own life for Jesus' sake.
4. 1 Corinthians 11:1-2 – A disciple of Jesus must imitate Jesus and follow the traditions handed on by Jesus to His Church.
5. 1 Peter 1:14-16 – A disciple of Jesus must be holy in conduct.
6. John 6:55-59 – A disciple of Jesus must eat His Body and Blood in order to have eternal life.
7. Acts 2:38-39 – A disciple of Jesus must repent of his sins and be baptized.
8. Luke 18:22 – A disciple of Jesus must give to the poor and follow Him.
9. Matthew 6:9-13 – A disciple of Jesus will pray as Jesus taught us to pray (The Lord's Prayer).
10. Romans 12:1-2 – A disciple of Jesus will offer himself as a sacrifice and not be swayed by the things of current world around us.
11. John 13:14-15 – A disciple of Jesus will serve others as Jesus served us.

Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 10:35-45: Ambition of James and John

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” He replied, “What do you wish me to do for you?” They answered him, “Grant that in your glory we may sit one at your right and the other at your left.” Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” They said to him, “We can.” Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink, you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right or at my left

is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared.” When the ten heard this, they became indignant at James and John. Jesus summoned them and said to them, “You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Focus Questions

1. What did James and John request of Jesus?
2. What did Jesus mean when He asked them “Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”
3. What does Jesus teach about ambition to become the greatest?
4. Why does Jesus say that He has come?

The Meaning of Discipleship

Directions: Look up each verse in the Bible and write in your own words what it tells us about being a disciple of Christ.

1. 1 John 2:3-4

2. John 15:20

3. Matthew 16:24-25

4. 1 Corinthians 11:1-2

5. 1 Peter 1:14-16

6. John 6:55-59

7. Acts 2:38-39

8. Luke 18:22

The Blind Bartimaeus (Upper and Middle Elementary)



October 28, 2018 – Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage Jesus heals a beggar of his blindness because of his faith in Jesus and willingness to "take courage" and stand out from the crowd. In this lesson, students will reflect on sacred art and consider ways in which they too can be courageous in the world around them.

Directions

- A. Have students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions. You may have students answer them on their own or you may discuss them together as a class.
- B. Review and discuss the answers to the focus questions.
- C. Then, arrange your students into groups of three or four and have discuss the questions about the painting *The Healing of the Blind Man* by Carl Bloch.
- D. Conclude by having students respond the reflection question on the **Take Courage** handout.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. He called out to Jesus "Son of David, have pity on me."
2. They thought he was causing a disturbance, or they might have been annoyed with him. Also, maybe some thought that Jesus was too important to be bothered with the needs of a blind beggar man.
3. Jesus asked the blind beggar, "What do you want me to do for you?"
4. Jesus healed the bling beggar of his blindness by telling him that his faith had saved him.
5. Jesus tells the blind man, "go your way." From the moment he was healed, the blind man followed Jesus. This teaches us that Jesus never forces anyone to follow Him. He may

give signs and miracles, but even then, His love is freely given and not forced upon us. We must, therefore, “take courage” and choose to respond to His invitation to follow Him.

Healing of the Blind Man by Carl Bloch Discussion Questions:

1. Accept reasoned answers.
2. Accept reasoned answers.
3. Accept reasoned answers.
4. This painting depicts the healing of the blind beggar, Bartimaeus, from this Sunday’s Gospel. Jesus and the blind beggar are in the center of the painting and Jesus is reaching his hand towards the blind beggar, whose arms open to receive the miraculous gift of healing from Jesus in faith. The crowd is concerned and taken aback by the scene.
5. The blind beggar had lived in darkness because of his blindness. Jesus healed him and brought him into the light. In the painting, the light is overtaking the darkness and, one could imagine, in the next few seconds, the light will have moved onto the blind beggar himself, indicating that he has been healed.
6. In the Gospel reading from October 7th, Jesus told the people to let the children come to him because the Kingdom of God belonged to ones such as them. He teaches that we must have a childlike faith to enter the Kingdom, trusting in God as a child trusts his or her parents. The man in the painting is holding the child back from Jesus, in complete contrast to Jesus’ teaching. It is clear that for many, they may hear Jesus’ words and teachings, but have not been affected by them. Sometimes it takes a different sort of encounter with Jesus to see the light. The blind man, on the other hand, had a simple faith. He believed that Jesus could heal him, and Jesus did.
7. Accept reasoned answers.

Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 10:46-52: The Blind Bartimaeus

As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus, sat by the roadside begging. On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, son of David, have pity on me.” And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he kept calling out all the more, “Son of David, have pity on me.” Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called

the blind man, saying to him, “Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you. “He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus. Jesus said to him in reply, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man replied to him, “Master, I want to see.” Jesus told him, “Go your way; your faith has saved you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.

Focus Questions

1. What did the blind man, Bartimaeus, do to get Jesus’ attention?
2. Why do you think the crowd rebuked the blind man?
3. How did Jesus respond to the blind man?
4. What miracle did Jesus perform and how did it occur?
5. What does Jesus invite the blind man to do at the end of this story? What does he actually do?

Healing of the Blind Man by Carl Bloch

Directions: Take a moment to view the painting *Healing of the Blind Man* by Carl Bloch. Then, with a partner, discuss the questions that go along with the painting.



Discussion Questions

1. What do you first notice about this work of art?
2. What do you like about this work of art?
3. How does this work of art make you feel?
4. How does this painting illustrate the Gospel story of Jesus healing the blind beggar Bartimaeus?
5. What parts of the scene look dark? Which look bright? What does the artist's use of dark and light in the painting suggest about this miracle?
6. Notice the man and child near the center of the painting. Then re-read the Gospel from October 7th: Mark 10:2-16.
 - What did Jesus teach about children?
 - What does the posture of the child in the painting suggest about what he wants to do?
 - How is the father responding to his child's desire?
 - What do the man and child suggest about the people's response to Jesus' teaching?
 - How is the faith of the blind beggar in contrast to this response?
7. Imagine that this painting were a movie. What do you think would happen in the next moment?

Take Courage

Directions: What are 3 ways that you can “take courage” and stand up for what is right in the world around you, even though the world might say differently. Then, explain how this can be an invitation to follow Christ. *For example, our culture tells us that making a lot of money is one of the most important things we can do in life. We can “take courage” and stand up for what is right by instead living simply and giving regularly to the poor. This is an invitation to follow Christ because we are answering Jesus’ call to give to the poor and follow Him.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

