

## Cycle C

### First Sunday of Advent

Lectionary #3

#### Reading I: Jeremiah 33:14-16

The Scriptures offer us reminders and instructions on how to be people of **integrity** in all areas of our lives so that we live as images of God. In today's first reading, the prophet Jeremiah speaks of the *days to come*, a time when Israel will be restored to a right relationship with God. The prophet mentions that *the just shoot* will lead the nation in living a life of holiness and **integrity**.

#### Reading 2: Thessalonians 3:12 -4:2

Saint Paul calls people to live a life of **integrity** as he talks to the Thessalonians about how to live in a way that pleases God. **Integrity** calls us to be consistent with what we believe and how we live our lives. In each Liturgy, the penitential rite is when we ask the Lord to have mercy upon us and to help us return to the **integrity** that is essential to our life with Christ and God. Despite our circumstances, we can always benefit from encouragement that challenges us to be our best selves.

#### Gospel: Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

Just as the previous year ended, this new liturgical year begins with visions of the end times. Today's Gospel passage reflects Saint Paul's letter to the Thessalonians as it instructs us not to become relaxed in living a life of goodness and **integrity**. Although the passage is somber, it also includes hope that spurs us into living a life of **integrity**. As we proceed through the Gospel, it becomes more and more obvious that each of the virtues are related to each other.

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



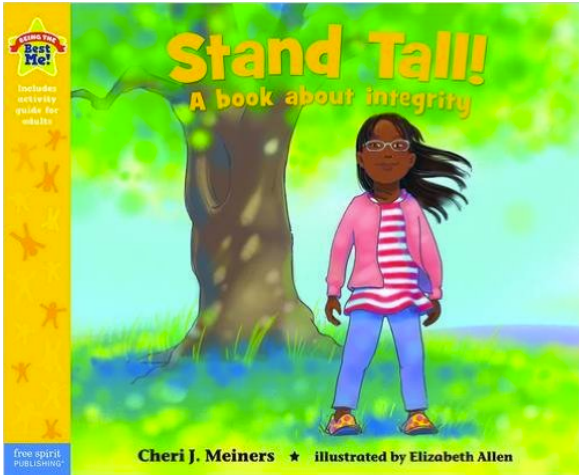
advent



lectionary  
reading



children's  
story



### *Stand Tall!: A Book About Integrity*

Written by Cheri J. Meiners

Illustrated by Elizabeth Allen

Publication: Free Spirit Publishing, 2015

ISBN-10: 1575424866

ISBN-13: 978-1575424866



character  
education  
activity

## Stand Tall

In *Stand Tall*, a little girl tells her story about how important it is to believe in yourself and to believe in being your best self. Throughout the story, children are presented with opportunities to understand the differences between right and wrong, how to make positive decisions, how to keep promises, and how to remain true to themselves. This book also provides discussion questions, games, and activities.

## Doing the Right Thing

Step One: Ask your students why they might do the right thing. Students might talk about getting into trouble for doing the wrong thing, or being rewarded for doing the right thing. Try to see if any of your students mention doing the right thing simply because it is the right thing to do.

Step Two: Ask the students about times when they have had to make a decision. Have them create a flash card for each situation. On the back of the flash card, identify what the positive or negative choice might be in that situation, and what the reward or consequence could be.

Step Three: Help the students understand that there are different levels to doing the right thing, and that the beginning of this journey is doing the right thing to avoid getting into trouble or being rewarded. As the journey goes on, however, we learn that it is important to do the right thing simply because it is the right thing to do.

**Integrity is doing the right  
thing, even when no one is  
watching.  
-C.S. Lewis**

**in-teg-ri-ty: noun. The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.**



**case study**

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

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

Enter a conversation with one of your parents or another adult who has been a positive influence in your life. Ask them if they have any stories about when they have done something just to stay out of trouble, and then see if they have a story about when they did the right thing for a reward. Finally, ask them about a time when they were not concerned with whether they would get in trouble or get a reward, but simply wanted to do good because it was the right thing to do.

These stories show that living a life of **integrity** is a journey, and like any journey, it takes time to reach the destination. While there may be things that delay or stop us, the key is to do the best that we can and to learn along the way.

## **Look Feel Know Act**

Altruism is a big word, and it means that a person does good just because it is the right thing to do. Look around your world and see the many people who are doing good and kind things because they wish to help those around them. Stop and think of a time when you may have done something good for someone else who had no idea that you performed a good deed for them. If you have not had an experience like this yet, think about doing this kind of selfless act and reflect on how it might feel to do something for no reward or recognition.

Know that being a person of **integrity** means you are growing closer and closer to being the image of God. As you become more aware of this, the motivation to do good will be to help others and to be an expression of God's love in the world.

The readings for this First Sunday of Advent and the story *Stand Tall* offer an opportunity for the students to see that being a person of **integrity** is a journey that requires effort. Just as the readings indicate that there will be opportunities to grow in **integrity**, the book *Stand Tall* also reaffirms the many chances we are given to make good and right choices.



**closing  
tool**

**Lord God, I wish to be the person who you intend for me to be. Please help me on this journey so that I may grow in wisdom, age, and grace. Help me, O Lord, to become a person of integrity. Amen.**



**Santa Clara  
University**

Character Education at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics

ethics programs for communities that learn, live, pray, or work together

[www.scu.edu/character](http://www.scu.edu/character)