

Cycle C

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Lectionary #12

Reading I: Micah 5: 1-4a

The prophet Micah announces that the **humble** place of Bethlehem-Ephrathah will be the birth place of the Messiah. Throughout his life, Jesus will often say that the least will be the greatest, and this is the theme for this reading and the other readings for this Sunday. The word **humility** is not often heard in today's society, perhaps because it is easily misunderstood. The word itself comes from the Latin word *humus*, which means to be grounded and to see oneself as fashioned by the Creator. **Humility** is clearly evident in the life, work, and words of Jesus. It is therefore fitting that in this reading we learn that the **humble** place of Bethlehem is chosen as the place where the Messiah will come to the world.

Reading 2: Hebrews 10: 5-10

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews speaks about Jesus as a **humble** offering to God. This offering is made through the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Jesus consistently embodied the virtue and essence of **humility** in both his life and his death. As followers of Jesus, we are called to make **humility** an essential part of the way that we think, speak, and live.

Gospel: Luke 1: 30-45

The two women in today's Gospel are clearly people with great **humility**. Mary travels to visit Elizabeth, who greets her by saying: *and how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?* Elizabeth's words show her **humility** in that she recognizes the roles that she and Mary will play in the history of salvation. These **humble** women will give birth to two of the greatest people to walk the Earth, and will raise them to be people of great **humility**.

build. plant. grow.
the word this week



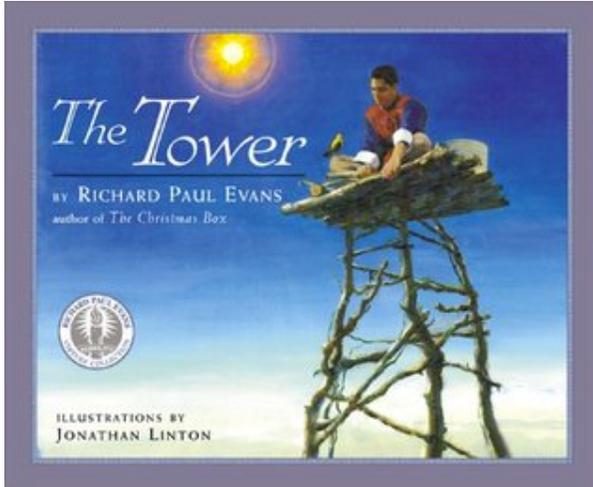
advent



lectionary
reading



children's
story



The Tower: A Story of Humility

Written by Richard Paul Evans
Illustrated by Jonathan Litton
Publication: Nov. 1, 2001: Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing
ISBN-10: 0689834675
ISBN-13: 978-0689834677



character
education
activity

Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.
-C.S. Lewis

The Tower

The Tower is the story of a young man who wishes to be great and who decides that in order to accomplish this, he must be above everyone else. He builds a tall tower, but in living above the rest of his villagers, he finds that he is very isolated. After awhile, he is visited by a bird who tells him about a person even the birds look up to. The young man climbs down from his tower to meet this person, and finds that the person is a small old woman who spends her time feeding the birds. The woman explains to the young man that *to be great is not to be higher than others, but to lift others higher.*

The Fish Bowl of Humility

Step One: In a large fish bowl or large clear bowl, place paper fish cutouts with quotes about **humility** written on them. Below are a few suggestions:

- *A great person is willing to be little.* -Ralph Waldo Emerson
- *Being humble means that we are not on earth to see how important we can become, but to see the difference we can make in the lives of others.* -Gordon B. Hinckley
- *Pride is concerned with WHO is right. Humility is concerned with WHAT is right.* -Ezra Taft
- *True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.* -C.S. Lewis
- *Every person you meet knows something that you don't; learn from them.* -H. Jackson Brown
- *Without humility there can be no humanity.* -John Buchan
- *A true genius admits that he/she knows nothing.* - Albert Einstein
- *None are so empty as those who are full of themselves.* - Benjamin Whichcote

Step Two: Have the students choose a fish from the bowl and ask them to think about what the phrase means and how they can apply it to their own lives.

Step Three: Provide the students with colored paper and have them design and cut out their own fish with a humility phrase. Use these fish to decorate a bulletin board.

The principles of living greatly include the capacity to face trouble with courage, disappointment with cheerfulness, and trial with humility.
-Thomas Merton



case study

Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.

What could you do today?

One of the most important ways to learn and practice **humility** is to be able to apologize when you have done something wrong or said something hurtful. Another way to practice **humility** is to say “thank you”, especially to those who do a lot for you and are not often appreciated for their efforts.

Think about a list of people in your life who do a lot to help you and others, but who are often not seen or appreciated. This might be the custodian at your school who makes sure that the school is clean and safe, your parents and grandparents, your teachers, or your neighbors and friends. Make a list and then make a special effort to try to thank these people as often as possible.

Look Feel Know Act

Think about how you feel when someone recognizes you for doing something kind. After remembering this feeling, look for opportunities to thank others in order to spread the virtue of **humility**.

Additionally, take every opportunity to seek forgiveness—apologize when you have said or done something hurtful, and make a commitment to think before acting and speaking so that you don’t hurt others in the future. Be **humble** in your speech and actions, and be sure to refrain from bragging when you have done an act of kindness for someone.

Throughout the Scriptures, we encounter individuals like Mary, Elizabeth, Jesus, and John the Baptist who consistently model and live out the virtue of **humility**. In *The Tower*, we meet a young man who gradually learns that to be great, it is necessary to first be **humble**. Being a person of **humility** takes practice and is a process that continues throughout a lifetime. Like any other virtue, being **humble** involves looking to be our best in each and every situation. Although we may not be **humble** all the time, it is important not to be discouraged but to see each failure as a learning opportunity.



**closing
tool**

Loving God, you created me in your image. Be with me in each and every step that I take this day and watch over me so that I can see you in everyone around me. Help me, O Lord, to be the person who truly reflects your image to others and help me to do that with great humility. 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