Reading I: Acts 2: 14, 22 - 33
Saint Peter wishes for those in Jerusalem to listen and hear. This is evidenced by the fact that there is great emphasis placed on the fact that he raised his voice. He is heralding the Resurrection of Jesus and the salvation of the world! This certainly is the message that the proclaimers would want to be heard. Saint Peter states emphatically to all within earshot...listen to my words. In this passage it may seem as if there is an indictment by Saint Peter on the listeners regarding the death of Jesus, but rather he wishes them to know that Jesus has overcome death. Saint Peter invites those listening to believe and witness to this Jesus, as the Anointed One of God, who has passed from death to everlasting life.

Reading 2: 1 Peter 1: 17-21
This letter was written during a time of persecution of Christians, both in Jerusalem and in Rome. The admonition is not limited to that time, but is sound advice for all who live the Christian life. Indeed we will often be strangers in a strange land. With parental warmth and care, Saint Peter reminds us to listen and hear that we were ransomed from the futile conduct of our ancestors. In this, Saint Peter is referring to sin and that we are free and must remain free. We were purchased by something more valuable than paltry gold or silver; we were purchased by the blood of the spotless lamb, Jesus Christ. This message is crucial for all people, at all times, and all places to provide hope.

Here we encounter the despondent moods of two disciples who are traveling to Emmaus. It is only in their listening to Jesus, disguised as a stranger, who they meet along the way that they begin to have their spirits lifted. They share their dashed hopes and then Jesus, beginning with Moses, shares with them all that has to do with the Messiah. It is only when they sit to eat and see Jesus in the breaking of the bread that they come to the realization that their hopes have been fulfilled. It was because of their attentive listening that they truly heard and realized that their hearts were on fire as he talked with them along the way. We are also called to a deep listening that moves from merely hearing with our ears to listening with our entire being.
The Worst Day of My Life Ever!

Throughout the harrowing days of RJ, the chief character in the story of *The Worst Day of My Life Ever!*, we encounter mishaps that continuously occur for a young man who consistently will not listen. It is almost as if the idea of listening is completely off his radar. All of a sudden RJ finds that in listening, his worst day ever starts to be transformed into his best day ever. The author presents, in a light-hearted manner, the important life skill of listening to others, following directions and making good choices. The focus of the book is distinctly on helping and assisting children learn how to listen to be successful in school. However, the same methods can be applied to spiritual listening, listening that goes well beyond mere hearing, something that can penetrate the heart and soul as a young person begins their faith journey.

Emphasizing the importance of being attentive to what is being said and being able to convey a statement as clearly and accurately as possible is the intent of the Activity presented below.

**Activity**

Step One: Prepare several note cards with different phrases or messages written on them. Make them simple but wordy enough to make it a challenge to repeat the phrase or message from one person to another.

Step Two: Divide the class into three or four groups and place each of the groups of students in a line. Show the first person in the line the phrase or message on the note card. The first person is then to whisper the phrase or message only once to the person next in line. The phrase or message continues on down the line until it reaches the last person. Once the last person has heard the phrase, they are to speak it aloud.

Step Three: Help the students understand that listening is a skill that must be attended to and there are often things that get in the way of clear listening. Continue so that the students can have a number of experiences to improve this skill.
What could you do today?
Commit yourself to better listening. Look at the Chinese Character, for “to listen” provided and see that listening involves not only the ears but also the eyes, the heart, and an undivided attention. The next time someone wishes to speak with you about something very important make sure that you invite the person to a quiet space without any distractions so that you can listen attentively. Try to use all of your senses to hear what is being said, not only in words, but the tone of voice, the facial expressions and the person’s body language.

In addition you may wish to have your mom or dad read you one of the readings from the Bible in a quiet place and see how the reading may have more meaning when you are listening with your entire being. What did you hear? What was the message?

Look Feel Know Act

Notice that in God’s design of the human body, we are given two ears and one mouth. This in itself indicates clearly that we are to be more about listening than talking. Given this truth, spend time with God and others intentionally listening with undivided attention and see what occurs. Often there is so much noise in our lives that it becomes a barrier to true listening. Praying to God includes not only speaking our praise, thanks, need for forgiveness and petitions to God but also requires us to listen to God’s voice. To listen to God we must have quiet within and outside of our selves. Likewise, when we wish to hear and listen to something important, it would be a good practice to find a quiet environment for that listening to occur.
RJ, in *The Worst Day of My Life Ever*, finds that by *listening*, truly *listening*, his worst day ever is transformed into his best day ever. *Listening* to God’s voice can do the very same thing for each of us. Not only can *listening* to God’s voice change a day in our lives, it can transform all of life for us. Being attentive to God’s voice can bring about wondrous things if we will simply open our ears, our eyes and our hearts. An undivided heart and undivided attention can bring about the dream that God has for all of us. The dream that God has for us is this: to be a loving community established in peace and dedicated to each person becoming fully alive.

**Pray in such a way that your communication with God will involve more listening to the voice of God than of talking to God. Amen.**