



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



lent



Grace



lectionary  
 reading

## Cycle A

### First Sunday of Lent

Lectionary # 22

#### Reading I: Genesis 2: 7-9; 3: 1-7

This section of the Book of Genesis continues with God creating the world including human beings, who are commonly referred to as the *crown of creation*. God created everything out of love and God's love is often referred to as **Grace**. The second portion of today's reading from Genesis, (3:1-7) recalls humanity's fall from **Grace**. Each time a person turns away from God's love (**Grace**) the end result is sin, but sin does not have to be the end of the story for anyone. God's **Grace** is always calling us back into relationship with God.

#### Reading 2: Romans 5: 12-19

Saint Paul's letter to the Romans speaks of the gift of God's **Grace** as coming through Jesus Christ. Jesus is often referred to as *the New Adam*. It was through one man, Adam, that sin entered into the world. Through one man, Jesus Christ, forgiveness was extended to the world as an abundance of **Grace** freely given by God the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. As verse 18 says so eloquently, *Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness.*

#### Gospel: Matthew 4: 1-11

This section of Matthew's gospel recalls the temptation of Jesus in the desert. Through various symbols, such as bread, safety, and kingdoms, Jesus is presented with what have been and continue to be the temptations of human beings: pleasure, power and failure to accept responsibility. These particular things can displace the primary position of our relationship with God. Jesus consistently counters each of the devil's temptations with a reliance on the **Grace** of God. Throughout the scriptures we will see Jesus place ultimate trust in the Father's love (**Grace**) and providence.



children's  
story



### The Love That Is True

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character  
education  
activity

**Grace is the Latin word for  
the LOVE of GOD**

## *The Love That Is True*

Rarely is there a book that is so well aligned with all of the lectionary readings chosen for a given Sunday, but this book is a great parallel for the three readings for this First Sunday of Lent in Cycle A. *The Love That Is True* powerfully tells of God's love to children with full page illustration and rhyme. The book takes the reader and the listener on an adventure with God's expression of love in the events of creation. The story continues to reveal that God's love can be lost when choosing to do wrong. The story does not linger there but shows how, through the action of Jesus Christ, the love of God (**Grace**) is restored and made available to those who choose to ask forgiveness. This book also provides a musical score near the back of the book and each verse of the book can be sung to the written melody. It is an ideal story about the **Grace** of God and the availability of returning to God's **Grace** by seeking forgiveness and being truly sorry for having sinned.

## *Activity*

Step One: Have the student create a **LOVE IN ACTION** box for the Lenten season. Divide the students in groups of four or five and provide them with art materials to decorate a their own **LOVE IN ACTION** box. Christian symbols and purple and pink construction paper and tissue paper as well as tape and glue etc. After they have created their container, move to Step Two

Step Two: Have the students brainstorm small acts of kindness that would be written down on slips of paper and placed in the **LOVE IN ACTION** box. Each day, prior to or after morning prayer, have the students choose a slip of paper from the box and encourage them to involve themselves in the act of kindness for the day, either at school, at home or some other extracurricular activity.

**It is through God's love (grace) that the life of the world comes about and it is through this same grace that life is restored to the world after sins enters in.**



**case study**

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

## What could you do today?

**Grace**, the love of God surrounds us. Take some time today to look around at the world that you live in. List the things in nature that God has given to all of humanity. God's love (**Grace**) is made known in all of creation and in the relationships that we have with family and friends. Beginning in the morning make notes in a small notebook that you can carry with you. (For older children they may make the notes on a smart phone if they have one). At the day's end look over all the things you have written down and compose a letter of thanks to God for the many ways you have experienced God's love (**Grace**). If you feel comfortable in doing so, make copies of the thank you letter to God and using a highlighter, highlight segments of the letter to God that include persons that you want to know that they have been a way in which you have experienced God's love (**Grace**).

## Look Feel Know Act

Reflecting on times past, try to name some of the things that may have distracted you from realizing God's love (**Grace**) in your life. After identifying that particular situation and that thing that distracted you from God's **Grace**, try and recall how you felt during that time and what made you realize that it was the wrong way to go. Once you have completed this recollection, make a commitment to see this as a way in which you can avoid similar distractions in the future by applying the past experience to your life ahead. This knowing helps us understand the pitfalls that may be common to us and by knowing this we are better able to avoid them. Once you have come to this understanding, make a commitment to know that these similar things happen in the lives of others and with this knowledge you may be more forgiving and less likely to enter into judging another person.

The scriptures for today and the book *The Love That Is True* speak to the love that God lavishes upon us in so many different ways. In the busyness of life we can easily lose sight of all these ways in which God sends love our way. There are also the *false gods* of material objects, power, and prestige that can obscure our ability to see God's love. Telling stories and recalling events that reveal God's **Grace** is essential to remaining grounded and focused on that which is truly important: loving God and loving our neighbor.

Pray that you will always keep in your mind and heart that God loves you and is always wanting to extend His love to you at every place and at every time in your life. Amen.



closing  
tool



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