



ordinary
time



lectionary
reading

Cycle A

The Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 82

Reading I: Isaiah 49:14-15

Contained within these few short sentences is one of the most touching expressions of God's love for each and every human being. In this passage, God's love is linked to one of the most powerful images and experiences of love, which is that of a mother for her child. The parallel here is that the nation of Israel should feel the security of their relationship with God, just as a vulnerable child would feel secure in the arms of their mother. God's **commitment** of love to the crown of creation, men and women, is unquestionable.

Reading 2: 1 Corinthians 4: 1-5

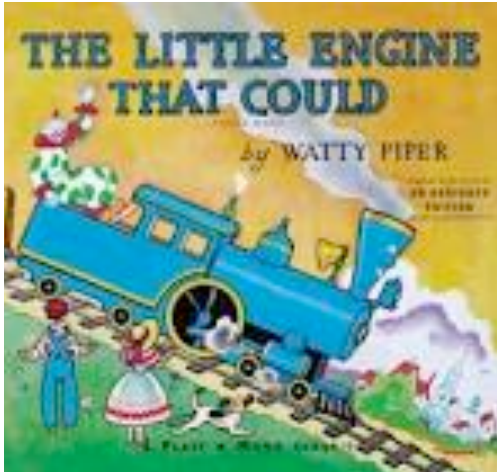
Saint Paul speaks positively of God's judgement and speaks to the fact that all movements on the part of humans to judge others must be avoided. Saint Paul recognizes that there are many petty differences occurring in the community at Corinth. Sadly, petty differences continue to plague Christian communities and have done so in each age whenever we move our gaze from Christ Jesus. It is our **commitment** to Christ that will be the principle that will guide us to unity. Prayer for unity among Christians will be a reoccurring theme of both Saint Paul and Jesus.

Gospel: Matthew 6: 24-34

This passage engages the listener to laugh at themselves and especially how constant worry consumes a person yet changes nothing. Jesus speaks to the fact that God's **commitment** is ever-present and that our focus should be on those things that really matter. The Kingdom of God and God's righteousness are worthy of our **commitment** and concern. Ultimately Jesus is trying to get us to take perpetual worries that seem to plague human beings more lightly and to use the energy that worry consumes elsewhere.



children's story



The Little Engine That Could

Written by Watty Piper

Illustrated by Loren Long

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character
education
activity

Commitment is being dedicated or loyal to something or someone. God is always committed to loving us and we, in turn, are to remain committed to loving God and others.

The Little Engine That Could

This story (originally written in 1957) speaks of many great positive attributes, such as the power of positive thinking and **commitment**. It is a well-loved classic that tells the story of a little train carrying lots of toys to all good boys and girls that is confronted by a towering, seemingly impassable mountain. Other larger and stronger trains are asked to do the deed but they are caught up in their own importance and refuse the request of the toys. Thus the toys prevail upon the Little Blue Engine to do the job. The mantra of the Little Blue Engine of *I think I can, I think I can*, becomes a motto for those who hear the story and make it part of their motivation for trying and remaining **committed** to something. Living the Christian life is a **commitment**, and this story may be a model for children to see themselves as The Little Engine That Could in terms of following Jesus.

Activity

Step One: Divide the students into groups of three or four. Give each team a small puzzle (possibly of The Little Engine That Could). Divide the puzzle pieces among the members of the group.

Step Two: Remove one member with their puzzle pieces from the team.

Step Three: Explain to the students that making a **commitment** to someone or a project makes them an essential part of the "puzzle". If someone is removed and does not offer their **commitment**, things can remain undone or unfinished.

Step Four: Once the students understand this concept then the student and their particular pieces can return to the group to finish the project of putting together the puzzle.

Commitment in relationships is the most important commitment we can make. Commitment to God and to others is the act of giving of yourself.



case study

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

What could you do today?

Today ask the people you live with, most especially your mom or dad, if there is some chore that you could do to help the family move more smoothly. You might want to ask if there are some options of chores to choose from because you are more likely to be able to make a **commitment** to something you see as meaningful. Once you and your family members have agreed to a particular chore, place a chart on the refrigerator or another convenient place where you can plot and see your **commitment** to accomplishing what you have made a decision to do.

Look Feel Know Act

Look around and see the number of people that are **committed** to you. In fact name them and also the various things that they provide you because of a **commitment** they have entered into through their relationship with you. Once you have been able to identify all these individuals and what they do for you, make a **commitment** to thanking them both personally and also in your prayers to God for giving these people to you. Recognize that as you grow in wisdom and age, it will be your turn to take on more and more responsibility and **commitment** to others in your life, such as your family members, friends, and even people that you don't know but are in need of help. There will be many opportunities for you to remain committed to helping others through your school, church, and other social organizations such as Brownies, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts.

In **The Little Engine That Could** the reader may see that there are differences that exist in the world. The stronger bigger trains seem to be too involved with themselves to want to be of any assistance, but the Little Engine was bound and determined to be of help. This determination and the attitude of *I think I can, I think I can*, on the part of the Little Engine propelled the Little Engine into a way of thinking that led to making a **commitment**. The mind, the heart, and the will of each person can propel them to do things well beyond what they might think they are capable of doing.

Pray to God that God will provide you with the strength to remain faithful to your commitments to loving God and loving your neighbor above all things. Amen



**closing
tool**



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