



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



ordinary  
time



lectionary  
reading

## Cycle A

### Thirteenth Sunday In Ordinary Time

Lectionary #97

#### Reading I: Kings 4:8-11, 14-16a

The Shumenite woman that Elisha encounters is a person of great wealth and influence. As the story begins, we see the woman wooing hospitality. As her encounter with the prophet Elisha continues, she reaches a spiritual insight and recognizes that she is in the presence of a prophet. Elisha is moved by the efforts the woman has shown to **include** him and wishes to do some kindness for her. When he hears from his servant that the woman's husband is aging and that she has no son, Elisha promises the woman that she will have a son when he next visits her. In this kindness, the lavishness and **inclusivity** of God is made known to the woman.

#### Reading 2: Romans 6: 3-4, 8-11

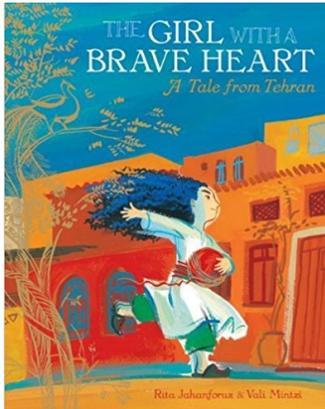
The Scriptures have much to say about baptism and what occurs when a person is baptized. In this portion of Saint Paul's letter to the Romans, he gives the strongest interpretation possible, stating that those who are baptized are **included** into the totality of Christ in as much as we are *baptized into his death that we too might be raised to newness of life.*

#### Gospel: Matthew 10: 37-42

In Saint Matthew's Gospel passage, there is a surprising statement made by Jesus. Jesus expands the idea of what it means to be family by saying that family goes beyond bloodlines, especially when recognized God as father and thus see that we are all brothers and sisters. **Inclusiveness** is critical to living a life rooted in Christ Jesus. God draws a circle that includes others while in our human weakness, we may draw circles that exclude others.



children's  
story



### *The Girl with a Brave Heart*

Written by Rita Jahanforuz

Illustrated by Vali Mintzi

Copyright: Barefoot Books, March 2013

ISBN-10: 184689315

ISBN-13: 978-1846869310



character  
education  
activity

**He drew a circle that shut me  
out—heretic, rebel, a thing to  
flout. But love and I had the  
wit to win: we drew a circle  
that took him in.  
-Edwin Markham**

## *The Girl with a Brave Heart*

This beautifully illustrated story is reminiscent of one of the Grimm Fairytales and discusses how we exclude others based on our fear of things that are different. The primary character of the story is a young girl named Shiraz who is treated badly by her stepmother and stepsister. One day, Shiraz encounters an old woman who has been isolated from the world by her own choosing. Through the graciousness and kindness of Shiraz, the woman grants Shiraz some wonderful gifts that change her life. Shiraz's **inclusion** of the old woman allows life to change for the both of them.

### **Activity: Getting to Know You!**

Step One: Provide all the students in the class with a sheet of paper number 1-15. Ask the students to answer the questions below. Then collect the sheets.

Step Two: See through a show of hands how many others had the same answer to the question. The emphasis is for students to see and learn more about one another. The following are very "safe" questions for this exercise, although you might choose to ask other questions that may be more fitting for your particular classroom.

1. If you could have an endless supply of food, what would it be?
2. If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
3. What would you like to be when you grow up?
4. Who is your favorite superhero?
5. Who is a real hero in your life?
6. What is your favorite thing to do in the summer?
7. If you were an ice cream flavor, which would you be?
8. What is your favorite cartoon character?
9. If you could visit any place, where would you go?
10. If you could meet anyone in the world, who would it be?
11. Are you a morning or night person?
12. What is the weirdest food you've ever eaten?
13. If you could be anyone besides yourself, who would you be?
14. If you could have any animal for a pet, what would it be?
15. If you had to describe yourself in three words, what would they be?

**When everyone is included, everyone wins!**  
**-Jesse Jackson**



**case study**

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

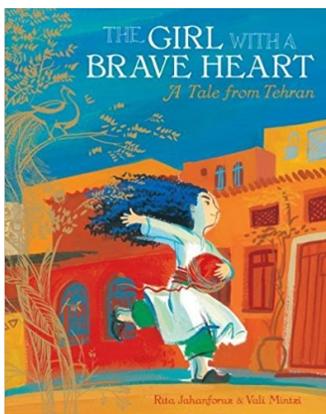
## **What could you do today?**

It is always good to learn something new about different people, cultures, and religions. Ask your parents if there is a new restaurant with foods that you have not tried before and see if they would be willing to take you there. Have your parents help you do research on the various items that might be on the menu so that you have some advanced understanding for an appreciation of where you are going and experiencing.

## **Look Feel Know Act**

We all need some time alone; when we choose this time, it is known as a time of solitude. When we are forced to be alone and separated from the group, that is known as isolation. Choosing to have some time alone with God is good. When we are forced to be an outsider, we do not often feel good.

Welcoming an individual into a group is something good and wonderful and is one of the marks of being a follower of Jesus. When we know that **including** someone makes them feel valued, then we are being like Jesus. Make a commitment to be a welcoming person, someone who **includes** others and makes them feel welcomed.



In *The Girl with a Brave Heart*, we encounter a young girl who takes a risk in developing a new friendship with someone who is unknown to her. There was no guarantee that she would be accepted by this old woman. Both individuals took a risk to allow the other to enter their lives. The Scriptures selected for this Sunday also reflect the importance of taking a risk and **including** people in our lives. When people learn to appreciate others and the uniqueness that they bring, something wonderful happens: friendship.



closing  
tool

Pray that you will always be a person of welcome and that in whatever circle of people you are with, you make certain that the circle is wide enough to include anyone on the outside. Amen.



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