

Cycle A

Twenty-Third Sunday-Ordinary Time

Lectionary 127

Reading I: Ezekiel 33: 7-9

The prophet clearly states that if an individual is called to a leadership role, **responsibility** is a key component of fulfilling the duties of leadership. Ezekiel conveys this message with the image of the “watchman” whose task was to stand on the hilltop to watch for approaching danger and give warning when an enemy was approaching. In like manner, the prophet must recognize and warn of the dangers that lurk in the hearts and actions of the people he is called to serve through his role of prophet. Given the fact that the role of prophet is given to each of us at baptism, every baptized Christian is called to look out for the welfare of one another and to do the difficult task of steering people away from evil. This is not always an easy or welcomed task.

Reading 2: Romans 13: 8-10

Saint Paul speaks of the greatest **responsibility** given to us by Christ himself: to love one another. This law to love one another is expressed by both Saint Paul and Jesus and has its roots in the Old Testament Book of Leviticus 19:18. Saint Paul repeats the commandments that are familiar to all of us and clearly illustrates that in loving we take on the **responsibility** of not only *doing no evil to the neighbor* but also *loving our neighbor as we would want to be loved*.

Gospel: Matthew 18: 15-20

Clearly, one of the most challenging **responsibilities** of living the Christian life is being able to forgive. Jesus, in this passage, endorses repeated efforts to win over a recalcitrant sister or brother. The approach given by Jesus is immensely practical as well as inspired: try to work it out, and if that fails, get help. When that too is unsuccessful, take it to a higher authority. Each step in the process is intended to resolve the problem with the least amount of effort and disruption to the community. The final sentence of this passage reinforces the importance of community over individuality: *for where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them*.



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



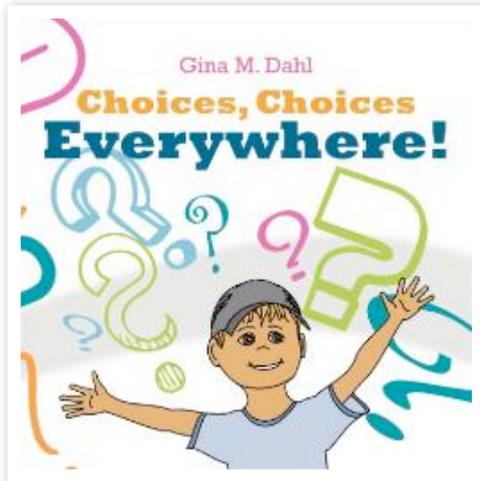
ordinary
time



lectionary
reading



children's
story



Choices, Choices, Everywhere!

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character
education
activity

**Responsibility is the quality
or state of being or doing
something that you should do
because it is the morally
correct thing to do.**

Choices, Choices, Everywhere!

Life is full of choices. With so many things to choose from, how do we know which ones to choose? From the smallest of choices to the most essential choices in life, the right choices start with the right thoughts. This book teaches children the importance of personal **responsibility** when it comes to choosing, how prioritizing matters when making decisions, that there can be consequences or benefits as a result of choices made, and that God always honors a heart that honors Him.

Activity

Purpose: To establish the importance of **responsible** choices made as part of a community and to understand the consequences for *choices made* or *choices not made*.

Step One: Divide the students into groups of 6 or 8 plus a facilitator. Students get in a circle and then reach across and take the hands of two different people standing on the other side of the circle. Tell them that they cannot hold hands with the person next to them (when everyone has grabbed hands you have a human knot). The challenge is to untangle the knot **without** letting go of each others' hands. Remind the students to take their time and work cooperatively to make sure that no one gets their arm twisted in a way that hurts.

Step Two: Once the human knot is untangled the facilitator should ask the following questions:

How did it feel to be in the human knot?

What did you do to untangle the human knot?

How did you make sure that no one got hurt?

Step Three: Now for the application to a real life situation: ask the students if they can think of an **example in real life when everyone depends on each other to do their part?**

What happens if one or more persons feel no responsibility to the group?

**Responsibility to God
and to others is very
much based and rooted
in the command to
love.**



case study

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

What could you do today?

Being a member of a family or of any community requires that there be a give and take on the part of each member of that group. Too often people take the attitude of being recipients and not contributors when being part of any group. Consider each group that you belong to, most especially your family, and ask yourself how you contribute to the good of the family. In what ways do you have a personal responsibility to your family, your school, your sports team, club or organization? Ask those who are in leadership roles of each group how you might better serve the organization, again most especially your family, who provides so many wonderful things for you. Once you have made a commitment to the group, be **responsible** for the things that you make commitments to.

Look Feel Know Act

Look at the various organizations and groups to which you belong and reflect on the ways that they contribute to your life. Take some time to do an inventory (a list) of those things. After looking at the list, offer a prayer to God in thanksgiving for these wonderful things that are part of your life because of the others who comprise the group or organization. Recognize that the older you get, the more that will be expected of you. Being a contributing member is one of the **responsibilities** of living life in community. Belonging to a church means belonging to a community that is centered on and rooted in relationship with God. Recognize the unique gifts God has given to you and strive to use those gifts for the good of others.

Choices, Choices, Everywhere! provides a great learning opportunity for children to learn **responsibility** as a way of responding faithfully to God's will in their life. Throughout the scriptures and in today's gospel selection we hear that we are called to stand as people ready and willing to assist our brothers or sisters by forgiving them their offense and not standing in judgement of them. This is not always an easy task and therefore, we need to recognize that prayer is an essential part of the process of forgiving.



**closing
tool**

Pray that you will increasingly grow in your understanding of what it means to be a responsible person and how that commitment to responsibility will help shape your life as a faithful member of your family, school, church, community and the world. Amen.



**Santa Clara
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