



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



ordinary  
time



lectionary  
reading

## Cycle A

### Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary 145

#### Reading I: Isaiah 45: 1, 4-6

Isaiah the prophet announces that Cyrus, a non-jew has been selected as one of God's instruments. The selection of this foreigner to Israel demonstrates how God's purpose in creation is the redemption of all of humankind. This invitation is all inclusive as the Lord states that he has done this, "*That you may know that it is I, the Lord.*" This all encompassing and inclusive love is placed before all of humanity so that we too might strive for an **integrity** that will draw a circle that includes others rather than exclude them.

#### Reading 2: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b

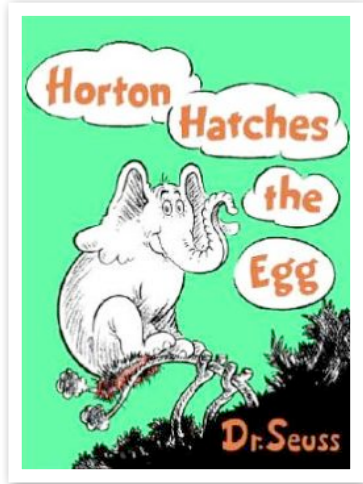
In this letter Saint Paul sends greetings to the Church in Thessalonica not only in his name but in the names of his co-workers, Silvanus and Timothy. They have heard of the growth of the Thessalonian's faith and they want them to know that their reputation has spread far and wide. What is being recognized is how the faith is being **integrated** into their lives and that their faith is shining forth not only in the words they profess but also in the manner in which they are conducting their lives.

#### Gospel: Matthew 22: 15-21

It is said that those who faithfully follow Christ are indeed "in the world but are not of the world." This question about the paying of taxes is a clear illustration of this reality. The collaboration between the Pharisees and their rivals, the Herodians, indicates how difficult a target Jesus was. In his answer to their "trick" question of whether to pay taxes to Casesar or not, Jesus reveals that there are things that are of this world and that they must be responsibly attended through balanced giving. Thus it is important to give to Caesar exactly what he is owed, and to remember that all things belong to God. This balance is yet another example of being an **integrated** human being.



## children's story



### **Horton Hatches the Egg**

Written and Illustrated by Theodor Seuss  
Geisel (Dr. Seuss)  
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character  
education  
activity

**Integrity is the quality of  
being honest and fair in  
thought, word and deed. It is a  
state of being complete and  
whole.**

## Horton Hatches the Egg

This timeless classic from 1940 tells the story of Horton the Elephant, who is tricked into sitting on a bird's egg while its mother, Mayzie, takes a permanent vacation to Pal Beach. Horton endures a number of hardships while carrying out his duties of caring for the egg and he persists, often stating, *"I meant what I said and I said what I meant. An elephant's faithful, one hundred percent."* The story is a classic in illustrating one living with **integrity**, that is remaining true to one's word and principles especially in the face of adversity.

## Activity

Step One: Explain to the students the process of "brainstorming." Invite the students to raise their hands and speak aloud what word(s) they would associate with the word **integrity**. The brainstorming of words would then lead to forming a "classroom covenant" to help remind the students of the behavior they would want from one another to form a good and safe environment for learning and being.

Step Two: Explain the concept of what is meant by a covenant/contract.

Step Three: After explaining the concepts of "brainstorming" and "covenant/contract" write on the board all of the words the children have spoken aloud associated with having an ideal classroom environment.

Step Four: Using as many of the words as possible form a "classroom covenant." Once the covenant is refined, have it typed up and then have each student sign it.

Step Five: Make copies for each student to place in their three-ring binder to remind them of what they signed up for.

Step Six: Enlarge the "Classroom Covenant" signatures and all and place in a prominent place in the classroom to remind each person of the **integrity** they are called to in the classroom.

**Integrity means being true to our very best self. Saint Pope John XXIII said once “no matter what they think of me or say of me, I must be kind..always.”**



**case study**

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

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

Talk with your parents and all the people that you live with and share what you did in developing a “classroom covenant.” Ask the family if they think this kind of exercise would be helpful for life at home. You would direct the brainstorming process and then ask the adults in the family to take all the words listed and form a “family life covenant.” After the covenant has been formulated have each member of the household sign the covenant and then place it on the refrigerator or any other common place where family members will see it and be reminded of the **integrity** each is called to in family life.

## **Look Feel Know Act**

What would it be like if your parents chose not to provide for your needs? How would it affect your life? Part of being a person of **integrity** requires all people to be responsible for their roles and duties in life. It is your parent’s role in life to provide for your various needs, not necessarily your wants. Once you realize, understand and know this, it would be good to ask yourself and your parents what your responsibilities to the family might be as a contributing member of the family. Once these are known and their importance recognized you will be more inclined to see the fulfilling of duties to the family as being one more step to becoming a person of **integrity**.

In *Horton Hatches the Egg*, we experience two characters that are at extreme ends of an **integrity** scale: Horton the elephant, who remains committed to his words and his beliefs and Mayzie, who is completely irresponsible in life. This story is an illustration of how Jesus is steadfast in his beliefs in the midst of adversity. Throughout the gospels we experience Jesus as a person solidly grounded in his **integrity** and his integrity has everything with doing the will of the Father.



**closing  
tool**

**Pray that you will choose to speak honestly and act with fairness and integrity, most especially in challenging situations. Always pray before making important decisions or speaking words when under pressure. Amen.**



**Santa Clara  
University**

Character Education at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics  
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