



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



ordinary  
time



lectionary  
reading

## Cycle A

### Thirty-First Sunday In Ordinary Time

Lectionary #151

#### Reading I: Malachi 1: 14b- 2: 2b, 8-10

As is true for all the prophets of the Old Testament, Malachi is calling God's people to be faithful and to have **integrity**. He is specifically calling on the priests to be accountable for their lack of faithfulness to the covenant of "life and peace" that God made with the Levitical priesthood in the days of Moses. If the priests had been people of **integrity** and remained faithful in word and deed to the covenant, there would have been great blessings. However, despite their faithlessness, Malachi proclaims that God still loves them, but that God was calling them to be honorable, respectful, and faithful—to be **integrated**.

#### Reading 2: 1 Thessalonians 2: 7b-9, 13

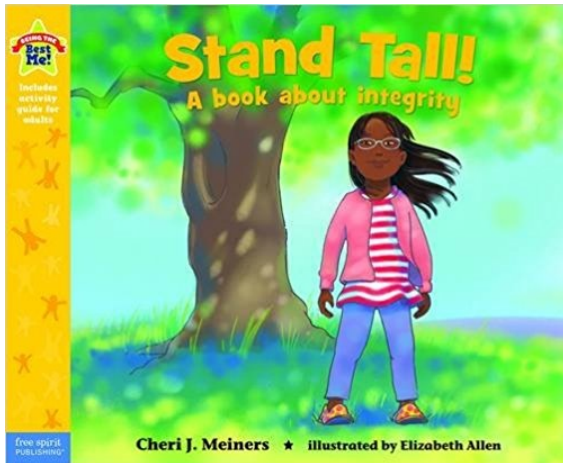
Although **integrity** is not directly spoken of in Saint Paul's First letter to the Thessalonians, he reminds them that he was sent to them as God's messenger and worked for them so they might come to their faith in Jesus Christ. There is a similarity between Saint Paul's words and actions and the idea of what it means to be a person of **integrity**. Saint Paul is pleased to work tirelessly for the Thessalonians and Christ, as his mission is to encourage those who believe in Christ.

#### Gospel: Matthew 23: 1-12

In this section of Saint Matthew's Gospel, we encounter Jesus speaking to the importance of being people of **integrity**. Jesus is saying that we are called to act as we speak and to be accountable to the Law. Living a virtuous life calls each of us to believe to bring the words of the Gospel to life through our words and actions.



children's  
story



### ***Stand Tall: A Book About Integrity***

Written by Cheri J. Meiners & Elizabeth Allen

Digitally Illustrated

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character  
education  
activity

## ***Stand Tall***

*Stand Tall* is told in the first person by a girl who loves to stand tall in many ways. She is proud of her heritage, her ability to learn from others, and how she sets goals and achieves them. Her greatest “stand tall” moments are when she does the right thing and makes good choices. The conclusion of the book provides comprehensive questions and activities to help the reader gain a greater appreciation for an understanding of **integrity**.

## **Activity**

Choose an activity provided in the book *Stand Tall*.

**Integrity is making sure the things you say and the things you do are in alignment.**  
**-C.S. Lewis**

**Integrity (in-teg-ri-tee)- noun-adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty.**



**case study**

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

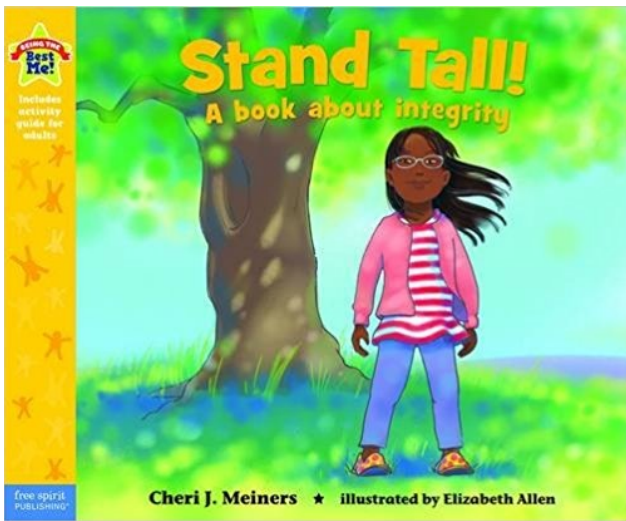
## **What could you do today?**

There is a great Jesuit tradition known as the Examen. At the end of the day, as you crawl into bed, it is a good exercise to review the day and give thanks to God for all the wonderful things that you experienced. In addition, it is good to see if there are any things that you could have said or done differently. You might look at your day and see where you acted with **integrity** and where you can improve tomorrow.

## **Look Feel Know Act**

Take an inventory of all the positive words about yourself and ask one of your parents or an adult you know to come up with words that they think are characteristic of you. Compare the lists and see those that are common. Add characteristics that others saw in your but that you hadn't thought of writing down.

Having a sense of yourself and finding out how other see you helps give you a clear sense of your goodness. Keep that list someplace where you can review it often. Allow it to guide you towards being the best that you can be, and be sure to involve God in that process.



**Integrity** is one of the virtues that is spoken of often in the Bible, if not explicitly, than implicitly. *Being true to yourself* is a phrase that is often used and for any of us wishing to follow Christ, we must see ourselves as *made in the image and likeness of God*. So to be our true and best selves, we are called to be that image of God as consistently as we can, which involves asking God to help us on our journey.

Lord God, help me to strive to be the best version of myself, to be Your image at all places and at all times. Lord, forgive me when, through human weakness, I may not reflect Your image as best as I might have. By being Your image, may I give honor and glory to You, who are Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.



closing  
tool



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