

Cycle B

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary #95

Reading I: Job 38: 1, 8-11

The Book of Job is one of the best known of the Old Testament's "Wisdom Books." In this segment of the Book of Job, God answers Job's question about human suffering when he says, *Where were you when I set to creating the world?* God tells us that we need to trust in the will of God and have **faith** that God knows what he is doing. In this passage, it is clearly seen that there is a vast difference between humanity and divinity. If we cannot control the sea and the wind, how can we comprehend the designs of God? Thus, it is necessary that we have **faith**.

Reading 2: 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

In this second letter to the Church at Corinth, Saint Paul comments on how their **faith** has deteriorated since he wrote the first letter to that community. Saint Paul looks to unify the community by refocusing them and bringing them back to the bedrock of their **faith**. He reminds them that the love of Jesus Christ is at the center of their **faith** and that any deviation from that is inauthentic **faith**. The reading invites us to ask how our experience of the love of God compels us to no longer live for ourselves but to live for Christ. This is the foundation of a lived out and vibrant **faith**.

Gospel: Mark 5: 35-41

Similar to the theme in today's first reading from the Book of Job, the disciples in this Gospel question Jesus about his concern for them in the midst of a storm on the sea. They say, *Do you not care that we are perishing?* They are in danger and are disappointed when God does not act as they wish. Jesus' response to them and to us when we are in the midst of a trial is to ask *Where is your faith?* The readings, in essence, ask us to consider whether we look to God to be our servant and rescuer or to be our teacher and Lord. **Faith** requires a commitment to the belief that God will always see to our greatest good, no matter what the circumstances may be.



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



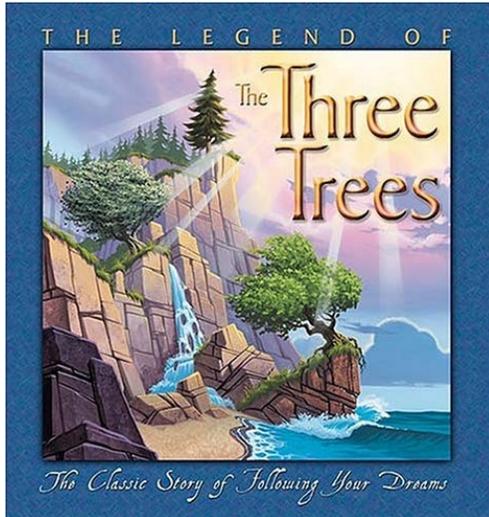
ordinary
time



lectionary
reading



children's
story



The Legend of the Three Trees

Written by Dahl Taylor

Illustrated by Dahl Taylor

Publication: 2008, Thomas Nelson; 4th
print edition

ISBN-10: 1400310830

ISBN-13: 978-1400310838



character
education
activity

**Faith involves both belief and
commitment: belief in God
and commitment to living as
God would want us to live.**

The Legend of the Three Trees

The Legend of the Three Trees is a classic story that teaches us that God has a unique plan for each and every person. The story begins with three young trees who dream, much as children do, of accomplishing big deeds. The olive tree, oak tree, and pine tree have their own dreams about what they want to be; however, they find that God has very different plans for them. The three trees become a manger, a small fishing boat, and a cross—all things well beyond what they thought or imagined for themselves. This story encourages children and adults to trust and have **faith** in God when looking at dreams and to be open to the greater plan that God has for their life.

Activity: Faith Grows

Step One: Investigate with a professional botanist or the Internet to find out what trees are easily grown from seedlings and are natural to your particular climate. Also, research the best containers and growing directions for the growth of that particular tree.

Step Two: Provide the students (either individually or as small groups) with all the necessary items and directions for starting a tree from a seed. Give them instructions and materials to record the growth of the seed over time.

Step Three: Talk with the students about the fact that **faith** grows and develops just as a seed does. Remind them that just as a seed needs nurturing to grow, so does **faith**.

Step Four: If it is possible, plant the seeds as a grove on the school or parish property so that they can stand as a symbol of the students' faith. In this way, students may see the development of the trees over the years they are at the school and the trees could be a symbol of their development at the time of their graduation.

**Faith is taking the first
step even when you
don't see the whole
staircase.**

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.



case study

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

What could you do today?

Ask your family if there is a day when you can all watch the sun rise or set. This would be an opportunity for all of you to realize that you are part of the marvels of God's creation. There is something magnificent about seeing the sun rise or set and realizing that just as the sun is part of God's creation, so too are you and every other human being. If you plan to watch the sun set, you will also be able to experience the eventual darkness of the night, or if you watch the sun rise, you can see that the light eventually comes out again to light up the dark. Remember that, while there are sometimes dark moments in our lives, the light will always come to dispel the darkness. This is a good example of how we are to live in **faith**.

Look Feel Know Act

Ask your parents to show you pictures of when you were born and as you began to grow up. They might be able to show you a picture of you at your baptism and when you first started to walk. As you look at these pictures, realize that just as you grow physically and mentally, you are also growing spiritually. Think about the things that are essential to growing physically, such as good nutrition, sleep, and exercise. There are also essentials to growing spiritually, such as prayer and doing good works. Once you have seen and recognized this, make a commitment to yourself that you will do the things that are necessary to grow in your relationship with God.

In *The Legend of the Three Trees*, we see that each of the trees has a specific idea of what they want to be and what they want to achieve in their lives. However, we find that God has something even better planned for them. This is certainly a great story for all of us living in **faith**. It reminds us that we need to trust that God will do great things in our lives and that those things will be achieved if we trust that God will always see to our greatest good. There is an anonymous saying that speaks to this: *Never be fearful of an unknown future with a known God who loves you!*



closing tool

Pray that you will always turn to God and trust in God with every step that you take in your life. First, give praise to God, then give thanks. Ask God's forgiveness, place your needs before God, and always know that your petition is part of God's will for you. Amen.



**Santa Clara
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