

## Cycle B

### Sixteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Lectionary #107

#### Reading I: Jeremiah 23: 1-6

In this passage from the prophet Jeremiah, we find that the past kings of Israel are called to be accountable for their lack of **care**. Jeremiah's criticism addresses the kings who have repeatedly failed to **care** for, guide, and nourish God's people. Jeremiah states, in no uncertain terms, that this is one of the primary reasons for Judah's demise. The prophet then speaks of hope for the future, when God will raise up a true shepherd in the line of David who will finally rule as God intends.

#### Reading 2: Ephesians 2: 13-18

Unity is a crucial part of any organization, and Saint Paul addresses this in today's section from his letter to the Church at Ephesus. He emphasizes the work of Christ in creating peace and a sense of **care** that is essential for living a Christian life. True **care** for others will bring about peace and unity in any community. Saint Paul makes it clear that the one who breaks down *the dividing wall of enmity* is Christ Jesus. True care and regard for others is the central part of being a follower of Christ. We are called to commit ourselves to doing our part to **care** for others so that everyone can experience about the unity and peace that God intends for all.

#### Gospel: Mark 6: 30-34

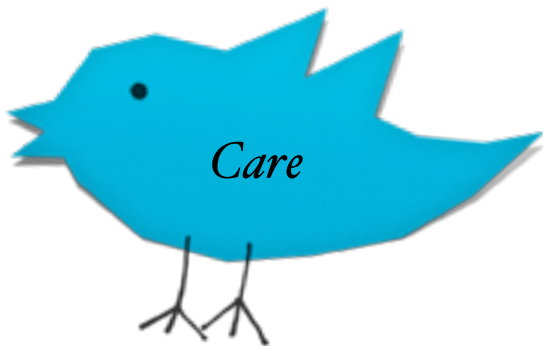
Self-**care** is one element that is essential for living a healthy and balanced life. In this passage from Saint Mark's Gospel, we see Jesus' **care** for his disciples and the crowds. Like the disciples, we need to know and act on the knowledge that there are times for rest and times for responding to the needs of others. Saint Mark and the other Gospel writers clearly illustrate that Jesus took the concept of self-**care** as seriously as he worked to **care** for and meet the needs of others.



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



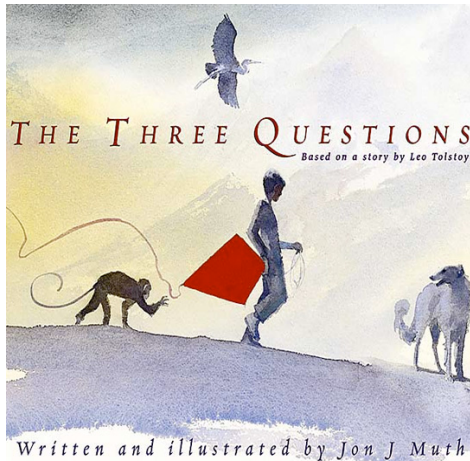
ordinary  
time



lectionary  
reading



children's  
story



Written and illustrated by Jon J. Muth

### The Three Questions

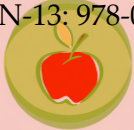
Written by Jon J. Muth (based on a book by Leo Tolstoy)

Illustrated by Jon J. Muth

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character  
education  
activity

**Never doubt that a small  
group of thoughtful,  
committed citizens can  
change the world. Indeed, it is  
the only thing that ever has.  
-Margaret Meade**

## The Three Questions

This fable of Leo Tolstoy is retold by Jon J. Muth, who takes a timeless piece and transforms it into a great ethical tale for readers of any age. Nikolai wishes to be the best person he can be. To help him, he poses three questions to his friends: What is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? And, what is the right thing to do?

When his friends can't answer his questions, Nikolai goes to ask Leo, the wise turtle. When he arrives, the turtle is struggling to dig in his garden. Leo rushes to help, but as they finish working, a violent rain storm rolls in. Nikolai takes the turtle and hurries out of harm's way, but on his way inside, he hears cries for help from an injured panda. Nikolai brings her in from the cold and then rushes back out to rescue her baby as well. Through his actions of **care** and concern for others, Nikolai receives his answers.

### Activity: Recognizing Care

Step One: Invite the students to ask their family members to help them look through magazines and newspapers to find at least two or three stories about **caring** and two or three stories that show uncaring behavior. Alternately, you may wish to have a number of magazines and newspapers available so that the students can find the articles while in class. Have them cut out the articles or bring them in from home to make a collage for the classroom.

Step Two: Divide a bulletin board in half and place the stories that show **caring** on one side and the stories that do not show **caring** on the other side. Frame the caring articles in brightly colored construction paper and frame the stories that do not show **caring** in dark or neutral colors.

Step Three: Explain and discuss with the students how **caring** brings color and beauty into the world while acts that do not show **caring** make the world darker or sad. Share with the students how they are called to bring color and beauty into the world by reflecting God's love and **care**.

Every child should have a caring adult in their lives. And that's not always a parent or family member. It may be a friend or a neighbor. Often times, it is a teacher.  
-Joe Manchin



case study

Look.  
Feel.  
Know.  
Act.

## What could you do today?

Watch a television program with your parents. While you are watching the show, make notes of who the various characters are and whether they are **caring** individuals or individuals who are not **caring**.

Or

Talk with your parents about some community service project that might be available for you all to do as a family. This way, everyone in your family can work to do something good for others.

## Look Feel Know Act

**Caring** is our ability to recognize and respond to the needs and suffering of others. Another word for **caring** is empathy. Empathy is the act of trying to place yourself in another person's situation so that you might be more understanding of what they are going through.

Take some time to really be attentive to the people around you and the signs that they are in need of a **caring** word or action. For example, you know what a sad face looks like, and if you see someone looking sad, it might be good to ask how they are and if there is anything you can do for them. Sometimes people just need to know that they are not alone in their sadness and that someone **cares** about them. Often, people just want to be heard and listened to, and that is the beginning of the process of **caring** for others.

In the story of *The Three Questions*, we encounter a young boy who really wants to be good. This desire is one that most people want. All people have questions about what it takes to be a good and **caring** person. Nikolai is the image of each person seeking to answer these questions, and all of us will find, as do the people in the scriptures, that these questions are best answered by our actions far more than they are by our words. Doing kind and **caring** things and using kind and **caring** words bring about a brighter, more peaceful, and more loving world.



## closing tool

Pray always that you will ask God to help you enter into the shoes of another person so that you can try to feel what they feel when they are sad or troubled. Pray also that God will give you the right words and actions to express his care and love to those in need. Amen.



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