



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



Cycle B

Twenty-Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Lectionary # 134

Reading I: Wisdom 2: 12, 17-20

In this segment of the Book of Wisdom, we encounter people who think of those with **integrity** as a threat. In fact, they are so threatened by these people that they want to go to any lengths to try to make their lives more difficult. Sadly, this is how some people are, and this can make living a life of **integrity** a challenge. Someone with **integrity** must always trust that God is with them in the midst of any and all adversity.

Reading 2: James 3:16-4:3

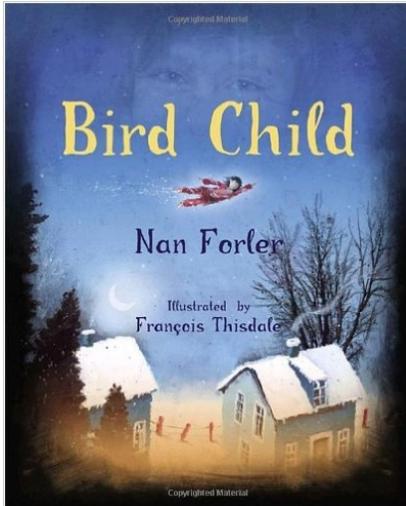
Saint James addresses the need for **integrity** by identifying exactly what happens when there is a division among a group or within an individual, both of which often result in unethical behavior. **Integrity** calls for congruency between what is felt within and the behaviors that come from those feelings. In this letter, Saint James calls us to attend to the *wisdom from above* and to be immersed in the virtues that will lead us to a life of **integrity**.

Gospel: Mark 9: 30-37

While Jesus speaks of his impending suffering and death, the apostles seem to not hear, or wish to not hear, what is being said. Instead, they get involved in a rigorous conversation about who among them is the greatest. Jesus is the absolute model of **integrity** and is clearly dedicated to being the Messiah that God has called him to be. We, along with the apostles, must not miss this message: to understand Jesus, we must accept him in the poverty and lack of status of a servant—but as the servant of God.



children's
story



Bird Child

Written by Nan Forler

Illustrated by François Thisdale

Publication: 2009, Tundra Books

ISBN-10: 0887768946

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character
education
activity

Integrity is the pursuit and adherence to moral and ethical principles; a soundness of moral character; honesty.

Book Title

Bully and the ability to rise above it is at the heart of this book, *Bird Child*. Often, children feel powerless in the face of bullying. However, this is not the case for Eliza. Her mother has given her “wings to fly” and the ability to see all possibilities lying before her. So, when bullies pick on the new student, Lainey, and gradually rob her of her smile and her ability to paint beautiful pictures, Eliza wants to help. She does this by finding a way to show Lainey all that she can be. Then, in the schoolyard, Eliza shows **integrity** when she stands up to the bullies. This story is a wonderful resource for talking about **integrity** during difficult situations.

Developing a Classroom Covenant

Step One: Invite the students to brainstorm positive words that would promote a safe and welcoming atmosphere in the classroom and on the playground.

Step Two: Once all the students have had an opportunity to participate in brainstorming, the teacher will then use the brainstormed words to write a “covenant statement” that will be the law of the classroom and playground.

Step Three: The “classroom covenant” should then be enlarged and signed by all members of the class, including the teacher. This enlarged and signed covenant will direct the **integrity** of everyone in the classroom, and should be prominently displayed. In addition, a copy of this covenant can be distributed to each student for them to use as a reference.

Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap character. Sow character, reap destiny.
-Peter Kreeft



case study

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

What could you do today?

Look at the various words of **integrity** that make up the “classroom covenant.” Think about which virtues might be challenging for you. Once you have decided on one or two of them, talk with your parents or another adult about things you might do to be better at living out those virtues. You might even involve all the members of your family in this process. Remember that it takes practice and patience to develop and live out your virtues. See if there are some exercises that would help you learn to develop the virtues that seem to be a challenge for you.

Look Feel Know Act

Recall the definition of **integrity** and think about a time when you may not have been honest with yourself about a particular situation, or when you did not exemplify **integrity**. Remember how it felt when you were not true to yourself and think about how you would relive that situation and what the outcome might have been if you could do things differently. Once you have thought about this, think about how you, based on that experience, would define or explain **integrity** to someone who does not know what the virtue means. Remember that Jesus calls each of us to act with **integrity**, which means that we are to be true to our word as a testimony to our faith in Jesus. The more familiar we become with Jesus, the more we will be able to model ourselves in his image, words, and behavior and truly live lives of **integrity**.

In the story of *Bird Child*, the students will have an opportunity to see the concept and virtue of **integrity** in action, especially when there is a real challenge to be a person of **integrity**. In the readings selected for today, everyone is presented with challenges that call them to be true to themselves. The story and the scripture lessons can provide very practical approaches for a child to learn and rely on their inner strengths. Both allow for an opportunity bring real meaning to the work that is involved with being a person of **integrity**.



**closing
tool**

Loving God, you made me in your image and likeness. Help me always to honor you, your Son, and the Holy Spirit by being that image you have called me to be. May my life be an example for others and may I always turn to you in my need to remain true to myself by being your shining image. Amen.



**Santa Clara
University**

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