



easter



lectionary
reading

Cycle B

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Lectionary #53

Reading I: Acts of the Apostles 9: 26-31

In the story of the Acts of the Apostles, Saint Paul, whose Semitic name was *Saul*, encounters the resurrected Christ on his way into the city of Damascus, where he intended to continue his persecution of the Christians. This event changed Saint Paul's life forever and set him on a road to a new life of **integrity**. It is a direct result of Saint Paul's conversion that Christianity spread to the Gentile community. This was the mission Saint Paul was given by Christ, and he was determined to carry out this divine plan. Given Saint Paul's previous actions against the Christian movement, it is no wonder that the disciples were wary of him in the beginning, but over time, the disciples came to believe and honor him as one who was chosen by Christ.

Reading 2: 1 John 3: 18-24

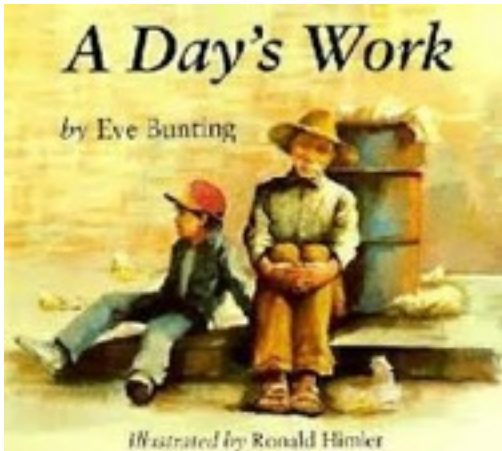
A clear indication of living a life of **integrity** is to ensure that one's words line up with one's actions. The second reading from the first letter of Saint John indicates the great importance of expressing love both in word and deed. Saint John states clearly in the letter that the congregation is to *love...in deed and truth*, which he indicates is the very embodiment of obeying God's commandments. Words alone are insufficient for the level of love demanded for a community of believers. **Integrity** is a key element to living a life of goodness, as we seek to always "walk our talk."

Gospel: John 15 : 1 - 8

Today's Gospel and the Gospel readings for the remaining Sundays of Easter are taken from what is known as Saint John's "farewell discourses" of Jesus. The images of the vine grower and the vine and the branches represents the intimate connection between the Father, the Son, and the disciples. The image of the branches *bearing fruit* expresses the ongoing work of the Father and the Son and are the result of **integrity** that is demanded of those who are connected to the vine and the vine grower. This requires making sure that faith expressed in words is followed through in actions.



children's
story



A Day's Work

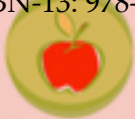
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Illustrated by Ronald Himler

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character
education
activity

Integrity is doing the right thing when no one is watching. Doing the right thing is its own reward for a person of integrity.

A Day's Work

A Day's Work is an excellent story that speaks to the importance of being a person of integrity and the journey that accompanies becoming that person. Francisco is trying to find work for his grandfather (Abuelo), who has just arrived from Mexico and who does not know the English language very well. Francisco acts as the liaison between Abuelo and a gentleman named Ben, who wishes to hire a gardener for a day's work. However, Abuelo is not a gardener, but is a carpenter, so Francisco must lie to get the work for him. As the story continues, we see that the gardening was done incorrectly, and Abuelo learns that Francisco lied so that he could get the job. *We do not lie for work*, Abuelo tells Francisco when he learns what he has done. The next day, they return to fix their mistakes. Abuelo's honesty and **integrity** impress Ben so much that he hires Abuelo for many more jobs.

Activity: A Job Well Done and a Life Well Lived

Step One: Reread page 20 of *A Day's Work* for the students and discuss the benefits of doing a job correctly and with **integrity**. Explain how doing this becomes an example of living one's life correctly and honestly. Ask the students what jobs they have to complete each day, such as getting ready for school by showering, getting dressed, making their bed, organizing their school work, and doing other chores. Discuss how life can move along more smoothly if things are done right the first time. Help the students to see that in life, it is important to act with honesty and **integrity**.

Step Two: Assist the students in creating a chart of the things they have to do. Explain how planning and organizing their time with the chart can help them succeed. After they have developed their chart, help them see how important honesty and **integrity** are to fulfilling their responsibilities.

Integrity is not just knowing the difference between right and wrong. It is choosing to do the right thing, especially when it is difficult.



case study

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

What could you do today?

Look at the **10 Commandments** and see what an important role the virtue of **integrity** plays in following each of the commandments. For example, the First Commandment states *I am the Lord Your God, you shall have no other gods before Me*. Following this commandment would involve honestly placing God first in your life and seeing God as more important than any other person, place, or thing.

Look at each of the **10 Commandments** and think about how **integrity** and honesty will help you to keep the commandments. Commandments two through ten are listed below for your review. Look specifically at commandments 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9.

2. You shall not create false idols.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
4. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
5. Honor your mother and father.
6. You shall not kill.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not lie.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's things.

Look Feel Know Act

Think about some of the people that you see living a life of **integrity**. They can be historical people or individuals that you know personally. List the qualities that they possess that have made them people of **integrity**. Pay special attention to any difficulties that they have had to endure to become people of **integrity**. It is important for you to remember that living a life of **integrity** can be challenging, but that anything that is worthy of our time and energy involves a challenge. You can think of living a life of **integrity** as similar to the process of becoming physically fit, because both involve dedication and perseverance. Taking shortcuts never works in becoming physically fit, and the same is true for becoming strong in **integrity**. Learn and develop a type of *spiritual exercising* that will help you create a routine you can commit to daily as you work to be a person of **integrity**. There will be times when you might fail to be strong in **integrity**, and when these times occur, remember that each day presents you with a new opportunity.

In the story *A Day's Work*, we learn the importance of being the person of **integrity** that God calls us to be. Both the story of Francisco and his abuelo and the Scripture readings speak of the great importance of having our words and actions be in agreement. When we practice **integrity**, the words we speak must be aligned with the way that we live our lives. As mentioned earlier, a person of **integrity** not only knows the right thing to do, but does it whether it will be seen or known by anyone else. The highest form of **integrity** is known as *altruism*, which means doing good simply because it is good.



closing
tool

This prayer is one that was said by President Harry Truman from when he was in high school:

O Almighty and Everlasting God,

Creator of Heaven, Earth, and the Universe:

*Help me to be, to think, to act what is right,
because it is right.*

*Make me truthful, honest, and honorable in all things;
Make me intellectually honest for the sake of right
and honor*

and without the thought of honor to me.

*Give me the ability to be charitable, forgiving, and
patient with others-*

*help me to understand their motives and
their shortcomings-*

as even you understand mine!

Amen, Amen, Amen.



**Santa Clara
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