



ordinary
time



lectionary
reading

Cycle B

Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ

Lectionary #168

Reading I: Exodus 24:3-8

In this passage from Exodus, we experience another **covenant** established by God. Unlike the **covenant** God made with Abraham, this **covenant**, or binding relationship, that God makes with Moses is not made solely with an individual. Instead, this **covenant** is with the entire nation of Israel and is centered on the teaching and instruction that Moses received from God on Mount Sinai. The nation of Israel would now be God's people and their relationship would be grounded on a code of conduct that would create a defined national identity for Israel.

Reading 2: Hebrews 9: 11-15

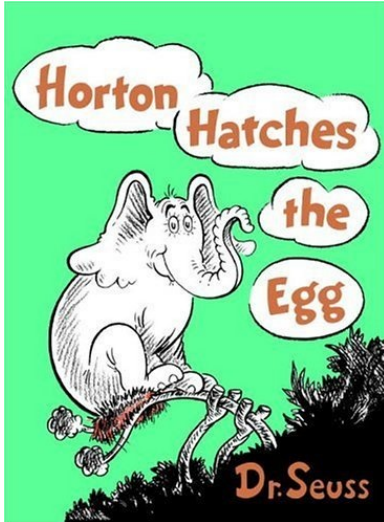
The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews is speaking of a new **covenant** established, not on the blood of sacrificial animals of the old **covenant**, but now on a **covenant** established in the blood of Christ Jesus. This new **covenant** in the blood of Christ has secured eternal redemption. This is the ultimate **covenant** that has permanently secured our relationship with God. It is in the light of the Death and Resurrection of Christ that Jesus is the mediator of the new **covenant**.

Gospel: Mark 14: 12-16, 22-26

This passage from Saint Mark's Gospel recalls the Passover meal, which is observed in honor of the passover event of the nation of Israel as they readied themselves to break away from slavery in Egypt. This Passover meal becomes the foundation for a new **covenant** that celebrates a freedom from a different slavery, the slavery of sin and death. Here, the blood of the **covenant** is established and will be shed and offered the following day on the cross of Good Friday.



children's
story



Horton Hatches the Egg

Written by Dr. Seuss

Illustrated by Dr. Seuss

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character
education
activity

Covenant is a special kind of promise or contract that is established between God and individuals or groups and is based on the fidelity of one to the other.

Horton Hatches the Egg

In this children's book written and illustrated by Dr. Seuss, we encounter Horton the Elephant. Horton is tricked into sitting on an egg while the mother bird, Mayzie, takes a permanent vacation. Horton endures a great number of hardships in order to remain faithful to his promise (**covenant**). Ultimately, the egg hatches and reveals an elephant-bird. This story provides the opportunity to teach children about the importance of making and keeping promises in a way that is both entertaining and impactful.

Activity: Working to Keep Promises

Step One: Provide each student with a colorful plastic Easter egg and several colorful post-it notes on which they can write promises to God.

Step Two: Instruct the students to make a list of five or more things that they would like to improve about themselves and have them write the promises on their slips. Have them place the slips inside their egg and then invite the children to join in a prayer of promise to God over the eggs containing their promises.

Step Three: At the beginning of each week, have the students look at and review the promises they have written on the slips and invite them to evaluate their progress by placing a star next to the promise they have been successful with, a check mark with a + sign to indicate if they made some progress with that promise, and a check mark if they still need to work on that promise.

Step Four: After the evaluation, lead the children in another prayer to ask for God's assistance in helping them to keep their promises.

The covenant or promise that is made between God and humanity is directed by the Ten Commandments. These are guidelines for us to strive towards.



case study

Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.

What could you do today?

Enter into a discussion with your parents about what promises or **covenants** they entered into with God when they brought you into the Church through the sacrament of baptism. When you were presented for baptism, your parents were asked to renew their own baptismal promises. By doing this, they were promising to convey the same faith onto you and to ensure that you would learn of God's unconditional love for you and that you would love God and your neighbor.

The Ten Commandments provide us with ways to live a loving and just life. Review the commandments that apply to you at this time in your life and see how you are doing in keeping those promises. In addition, look at the three roles you were given at baptism: the roles of priest, prophet, and king.

In being a priest, you are called to be a person of prayer and communion with God. How are you doing this?

As a prophet, you are called to be a person of truth and honesty. How are you doing this?

As a king, you are called to reflect the Old Testament ideal of being a servant-king, one who would care for the needs of others. Again, how are you doing in this area?

Make a commitment to do better with each passing day, always being aware that God is patient with you and there to help you in these roles.

Look Feel Know Act

Relationships are based on the trust that people will be honest and truthful in their dealing with one another. This need is fulfilled when promises or **covenants** are made and when individuals remain faithful to those promises.

Has there been a time when you or someone else was unfaithful in keeping a promise? Reflect on how that time felt and what needed to happen to remedy the situation in order for the relationship to move forward. Once you have thought about this situation and how it affected you and the other person, recall how God calls us to forgiveness and repentance. We are called to do our best to heal a relationship that has been harmed by a broken promise. Strive to be a person that remains faithful to the promises you have made to God and others by being the very best person you can be. You can always rely on God to sustain you in remaining faithful; God always wants to be with you.

In this wonderful and ageless work from Dr. Seuss, children find a very entertaining and whimsical way to learn about what it means to enter into a **covenant** and discover the importance of making and keeping promises. Horton is absolutely faithful in his promises as he consistently repeats, even in the midst of adversity, *I meant what I said, and I said what I meant. An elephant is faithful, one hundred percent.*



closing tool

Knowing that God is always and everywhere present to you, do not hesitate to answer into prayer. See God as your best friend and so pray in this way:

Oh God, I know that you love me because you gave me life and made me in your image. I pray that I will be the very best image of you that I can be. I know that you will be with me even in the midst of any mistakes or sins that occur in my life, and that you will bring out only good in the end. I dedicate myself to the covenant and promise that exists between us. Amen.



**Santa Clara
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