



easter



lectionary
reading

Cycle C

4th Sunday of Easter

Lectionary #51

Reading I: Acts of the Apostles 13: 14, 43-52

In today's reading from the Acts of the Apostles, we see the zeal for the Risen Christ in the preachings of Paul and Barnabas. As the preaching moves from the Jewish community to the Gentile communities, we see the theme of **inclusiveness** emerge. The Word of God cannot be contained or limited to one people because God invites all to be **included**.

Reading 2: Revelations 7:9, 14b-17

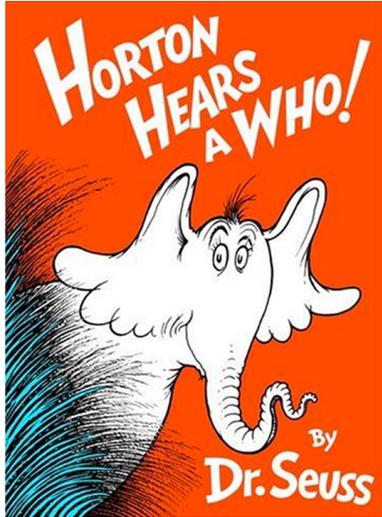
In this passage from the Book of Revelations, we see and hear of the vast **inclusivity** of the community of Heaven: *I, John, had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue.* These are words of comfort that came at a time when members of the church were being persecuted, yet that did not stop the membership of the church from growing.

Gospel: John 10: 27-30

In this brief passage from the Gospel of Saint John, we are presented with the image of Jesus as the shepherd who seeks out the sheep. This passage reveals that all are called by the voice of Jesus. Jesus speaks of an **inclusiveness** that is the desire of God for all people. Jesus says time and time again that nothing separates him from the Father. Therefore, the sheep that Jesus speaks of cannot be snatched from him because they have been given to him by the Father.



children's story



Horton Hears a Who!

Written by Dr. Seuss

Illustrated by Dr. Seuss

Publication: 1962: Random House
Children's Books

ISBN-13: 978-0394900780



character
education
activity

**He drew a circle that shut me
out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But love and I had wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him
in.
-Edwin Markham**

Horton Hears a Who!

The theme of **inclusiveness** can be heard in the ongoing phrase from *Horton Hears a Who*: “a person’s a person no matter how small.” In this story, the friendly elephant Horton returns as a defender of the weak. The story challenges all of us to be **inclusive** and to defend those who are weaker than us, not just when it is convenient or easy.

Drawing a Circle that Includes

Step One: Talk with the students about “put-downs” and where they are heard in the classroom. Rather than using put-downs, what would the classroom be like if “put-ups” were used instead?

Step Two: Explain to the students that when we use put-downs, we draw a circle that places some people outside the group. Then, discuss how when we use put-ups, kind and affirming messages, we draw a circle that **includes** everyone.

Step Three: Place a large circle on a wall or bulletin board and place the students’ individual photos or 3x5 notecards with pictures that the students have drawn of themselves with their names attached.

Step Four: Place all the pictures or photos on the outside of the circle and have the students take turns saying one kind thing (a put-up) for another student in the class. As they make their statements, have them move the picture or photo of that person from the outside of the circle to the inside of the circle. Once everyone has been **included** in the circle, talk about how important it is for each person to feel **included**.

Step Five: To reaffirm this practice of using put-ups, guide the students in periodically doing this activity throughout the year.

**There is neither Jew
nor Greek, there is
neither slave or free,
there is no male or
female, for you are all
one in Christ Jesus.
-Galatians 3:28**



case study

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

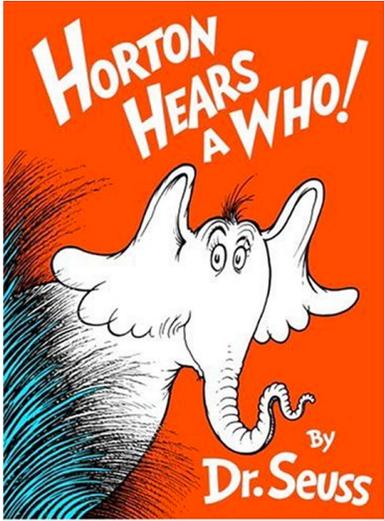
What could you do today?

Make a practice at home and outside your classroom to say kind and loving things about people and to them directly. Imagine a circle that belongs to you getting larger and larger as it **includes** more and more people. Recognize how that circle becomes smaller when you say something negative to or about someone else.

Look Feel Know Act

Take some time to look through newspapers and magazines and, with your parent's permission, cut out pictures of those who look like they are on being excluded from society, such as refugees, the poor, and people who are in need. Make a collage of these pictures and place it somewhere you will see it every day. Think about what it would be like to be without a home, without food, and without the basic needs of life. What would it be like to be excluded?

After reflecting on these images, you might think about what you can do to bring these people into the circle of inclusion. You could pray for their well-being, and you could talk to your family members about small things you can do to help those individuals and families.



This Fourth Sunday of Easter is about welcoming and being **inclusive** to all people. The readings speak about a oneness and a love that will welcome us all to Christ. This theme of caring for and **including** everyone, especially those who are small and weak, is paralleled in the story of *Horton Hears a Who!* The familiar phrase that is echoed over and over again in the story could also be seen as a mantra of Jesus that is heard in the Gospels: *a person's a person no matter how small*. This indicates that all are called to be **included** if we are to be followers of Christ.



closing
tool

Lord God, give me the eyes to see and the ears to hear so that my heart and mind will be welcoming and open to all you send my way. Help me to be a person of welcome and hospitality, especially to those who are outside the circle of inclusion. Allow me, O Lord, to be your welcoming presence in the world. Amen.



**Santa Clara
University**

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