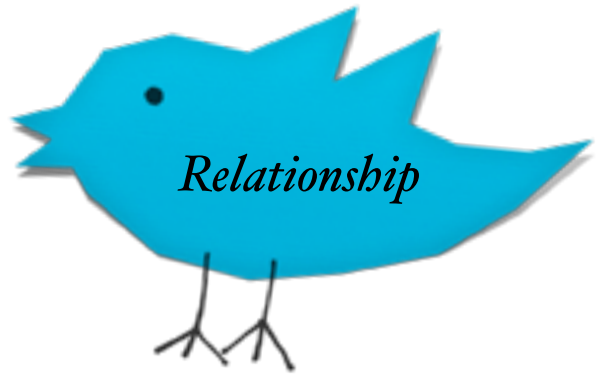




build. plant. grow.
the word this week



lent



lectionary
reading

Cycle B

Third Sunday of Lent

Lectionary #29

Reading I: Exodus 20: 1-17

The receiving of the Law at Mount Sinai was one of the most defining moments within Israel's collective and historic **relationship** with God. These commandments are essential to our **relationship** with God, for they provide us with the guidance we need to live healthy and loving relationships with both God and others. Notice that the first three commandments all have to do with our **relationship** with God while the remaining seven have to do with our **relationships** with others. Although they are seen as distinct from one another, they are absolutely interconnected, for we cannot possibly love God without loving our neighbor and loving our neighbor is a manifestation of loving God.

Reading 2: 1 Corinthians 1: 22-25

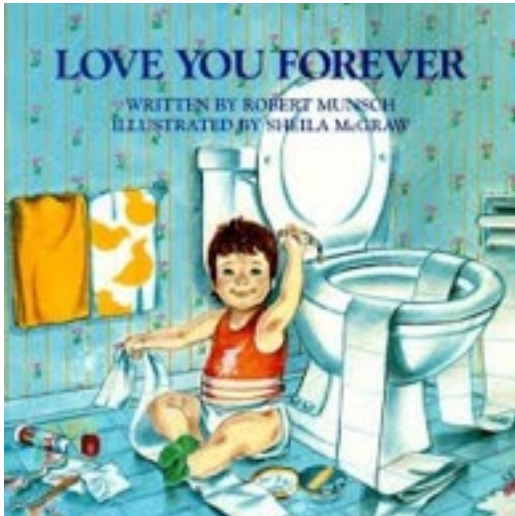
Saint Paul writes to the Church at Corinth about an overriding concern: the divisions that exist in the community. He and other leaders throughout church history are concerned about fostering and maintaining healthy **relationships** among members of the community, even when they are in disagreement. Today's reading highlights one of the sources of the tensions: the confusion of human wisdom with divine wisdom. Saint Paul will address time and again the importance of the unity and **relationship** of the Christian community. It is important to understand that unity does not always mean uniformity.

Gospel: John 2: 13-25

The Gospel reading from John is about the cleansing of the Temple, one of the few instances where we see Jesus expressing anger. He is angered by the fact that the Temple is being used inappropriately. Jesus was well aware of the fact that the money changers and the Temple authorities were working together to take advantage of those arriving at the Temple to make their Passover offering. There was indeed a violation of good and honorable **relationships**.



children's
story



Love You Forever

Written by Robert Munsch

Illustrated by Sheila McGraw

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character
education
activity

**Relationships are all about
our connection with others
and the efforts that are put
forth to build and maintain a
healthy connection with
others.**

Love You Forever

Love You Forever is an inspirational book about the **relationship** between a mother and her son from his birth to his adult years and how their **relationship** evolves. It is an absolutely beautiful story about love and **relationships** and how the nature of duties in **relationships** change as individuals mature and age. The steadfast bond between parent and child and their **relationship** is the focus of the story. The story follows the love of the mother for her infant through the troublesome twos, the lazy years, and the difficult teen years. Things change, but her love never diminishes and the mother is always present in the **relationship**, no matter the response, or lack of response, from her son. This story is a perfect parallel of some of our moments of **relationship** with our God as the ever faithful parent and us as the not always grateful child.

Activity:

Relationships are Important

Step One: Brainstorm with the students all the words that they would use to identify a good friend or attributes of a good relationship.

Step Two: After the students have compiled a list of the words that they would use as descriptors of a good friend or good relationship, ask them to create stories around those words. Make a slip of all the words that the students mentioned and have each student pick a slip of paper out of a container and then pair them up so that they can work on a story having to do with each of the words. After this part of the activity, they may move on to Step Three.

Step Three: Have each pair of students present their words and the stories that they developed regarding that word.

Love is an absolute necessity for relationships, and as Mother Teresa of Calcutta once said, "authentic love does not measure, it just gives."



case study

Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.

What could you do today?

Each and every person is involved in many types of relationships, and they all involve an investment of time and energy. Make a list of all the individuals you are in a relationship with: family members, friends, teammates, classmates, etc. Just opposite the names of those individuals, make some notes as to how you might improve your relationship with that person. For example, across from your teacher's name you might write down the idea of being more attentive in class, and across from a friend's name you might indicate that you want to be better about sharing more readily with them. It is very important for us to remember that we can only improve ourselves and not try to change someone else.

Look Feel Know Act

Being isolated or separated from others can cause us a great deal of loneliness and discomfort. As human beings, we were created by God to be in **relationship** with one another, and there are times when our **relationships** suffer because of misunderstandings and carelessness. These are the times where we might find ourselves outside of relationships and we must try to reenter the relationship by being forgiving or by asking for forgiveness.

In all **relationships**, there is a distinct kind of love that is appropriate to each unique **relationship**. However, the love that is part of every relationship is what is known as agape. Agape is the Greek word for Christian love, and it is defined as a love that always seeks the good of the other based on our **relationship** with them.

In *Love You Forever*, we encounter a story of parental love that goes to all ends to reveal that love. Throughout the Scriptures, we hear of God as a loving Father always seeking to be in **relationship** with us. The fact shines through in *Love You Forever* that God's love for us is ever present. The words from the children's story could well come from the lips of God as He says *I'll love you forever, I'll love you for always.*



**closing
tool**

Pray that you will always seek to be the best person in any and all of your relationships and ask God to give you the wisdom and strength to do whatever is best for each relationship. Amen.



**Santa Clara
University**

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