



easter



lectionary
reading

Cycle B

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord

Lectionary #42

Reading I: Acts of the Apostles 10: 34a, 37-43

In this particular reading from the Acts of the Apostles, we find Saint Peter in the home of Cornelius, who is a Gentile. Throughout the Acts of the Apostles, it takes Saint Peter some time to fully realize the Gentile mission. The visions that he experiences in Acts 10 are the turning points in the mission of the Church. It is within this speech that Saint Peter identifies that *in truth, I see God shows no partiality*. This **testimony** made by Saint Peter illustrates that the mission of the Church should move beyond the boundaries of Judaism and into the whole world.

Reading 2: Colossians 3: 1-4

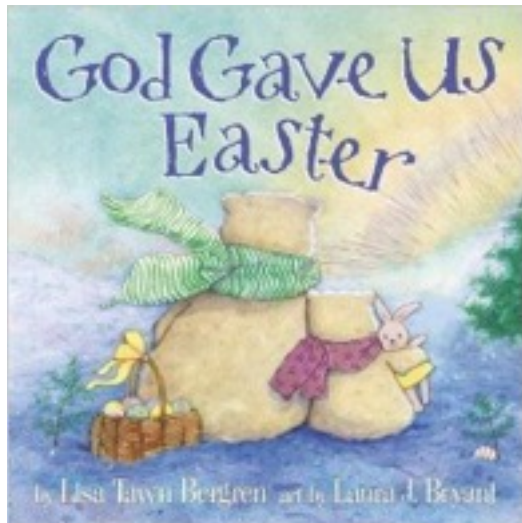
Testimony is a clear part of this letter because, although Paul writes to the Church at Colossae, he did not establish that church. Rather, it was established by the **testimony** of a Christian named Epaphras, who formed the Colossians in their faith. As time goes on, there will be many who will testify about Jesus and to the Good News that he offers to the world. For those of us who are Christians, we must realize that it was through the **testimony** of others that we came to our belief in Jesus Christ. Thus, we are called to continue to spread the Gospel through our own **testimony** and **witness**.

Gospel: John 20: 1-9

In Saint John's Gospel, Mary of Magdala is the first to approach the tomb of Jesus and find it empty. Mary runs to Peter and the Beloved Disciple and **testifies** to the fact that the tomb is empty. They go to see for themselves and, as the Gospel states, they *saw and believed*. The importance of the entire Gospel of Saint John is for a person to believe and give **testimony** and **witness** to that belief.



children's
story



God Gave Us Easter

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character
education
activity

God Gave Us Easter

In *God Gave Us Easter*, from Bergren's "God Gave Us" series, Little Cub is stunned to hear that Easter is even better than Christmas. While on a walk, Papa Bear uses an Easter egg, an uprooted tree, and evidence of new life in a pinecone to tell the Easter story. Covering doctrines like sin, prayer, and heaven in simple language that children can understand, this story helps to begin the lifelong journey of giving **testimony** and **witness** to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Activity: Witnessing Easter as the Most Important Feast Day

Step One: After the students hear the story *God Gave Us Easter*, have them list the reasons that make Easter so important to us. After they have exhausted all the reasons, invite the students to pair up with one another. Ask one student to act as a newspaper reporter and the other to play the role of Little Cub. The newspaper reporter will then ask Little Cub questions on why Easter is so important.

Step Two: Have the students switch roles. After everyone in the class has been each of the roles, invite them to share the way that they felt during this activity and what they learned about being a **witness** to the importance of Easter.

To give witness or testimony involves believing in something so firmly that you are compelled by that belief to share it with others.

Saint John the Baptist is considered the model for being a witness because he always pointed to Christ. We are called to do the same.



case study

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

What could you do today?

Being a follower of Jesus Christ means being able to tell the story of your belief in Jesus. Think about and reflect on why you believe in Jesus and how you would want to share this belief with others. It may be helpful for you to think about it in terms of sharing really good news that someone has shared with you. You might want to start by asking your parents to listen to your good news about Jesus. By doing this, you are being a **witness** to them even though they might already believe. Believers often act as **witnesses** to each other when they share their beliefs. When you **witness** to others who know little or nothing about Jesus, that **witnessing** is called evangelization.

Look Feel Know Act

The faith that we have is a result of others giving **testimony** and **witness** to Jesus and the way that Jesus has been an essential part of their life. Without these **witnesses**, we would not have faith. Once good news has been passed on to us, we are compelled to share that good news with others by giving **testimony**. We are called to be a **witness** to others around us and to future generations. In a way, by being a **witness** to the faith, we are showing gratitude to those previous generations of people who have passed this faith on to us, sometimes under very difficult circumstances. It is our responsibility to learn all that we can about our faith and to deepen our relationship with God. When we do this, we can introduce others to the God who loves everyone and wishes to have a relationship with each person. This truth of God's love is the greatest **witness** or **testimony** that we can give in our lives.



closing
tool

In the story *God Gave Us Easter*, we hear Papa Bear teaching Little Cub about all the wonderful things God has done for us, especially in the gift of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The virtue of being **witness** and giving **testimony** is evident in both the Scripture passages and in the children's story selected for this Easter Sunday. Each of us is called to be a **witness** and to give **testimony** to the great truths that will help others.

Pray that you will always have the courage to tell the story of how God has worked in your life and how your belief in God has helped you. Tell the story to all who will listen. Amen.



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