

Cycle C

Eleventh Sunday of Ordinary Time

Lectionary #93

Reading I: 2 Samuel 12: 7-10, 13

This passage from the Second Book of Samuel reveals the sinfulness of King David when he had Uriah the Hittite killed so that he could have Bathsheba as his wife. The prophet Nathan reminds King David that the Lord had looked upon him with great favor and that he should repent for the evil he did. King David becomes fully aware of his sinfulness and proclaims that he has *indeed sinned against the Lord*. This revelation of guilt and willingness to repent results in King David's experience of receiving God's **forgiveness**. The act of **forgiveness** carries with it a realization that what was done was wrong and evil, but that the person can still be **forgiven** by God.

Reading 2: Galatians 2: 16, 19-21

In this passage from Saint Paul's letter to the people of Galatia, we encounter a correction that is being made. Some have taught the Galatians that if they are to be Christian, they must accept and practice the Jewish traditions. Saint Paul is emphatic when he says that the law is not what saves people, but that Jesus Christ and belief in him brings reconciliation, salvation, and **forgiveness**. The new law is Christ's law to love, and to be loving requires practicing **forgiveness**.

Gospel: Luke 7: 36 - 8:3

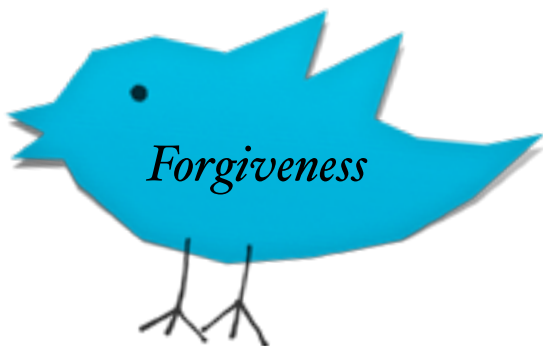
Here we see how a meal shared with others becomes a good setting to discuss the great virtues, such as the importance of hospitality and **forgiveness**. Jesus is at the home of a Pharisee, yet it is not the host who performs rituals of hospitality, but rather a sinful woman. This passage reveals that if we open ourselves up to the depth of God's love by acknowledging our sinfulness, we will receive God's **forgiveness**. In a homily given by Pope Francis, he said *It is not God that tires of extending mercy but rather it is the human being who tires of asking for forgiveness*. The mercy and **forgiveness** of God is inexhaustible, yet our own unwillingness to ask for God's mercy prevents us from receiving **forgiveness** and fulfillment.



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



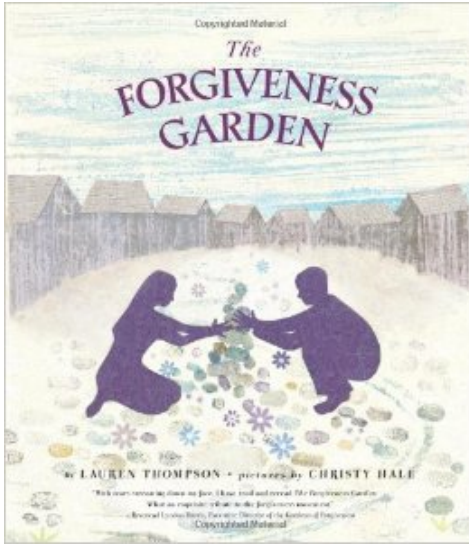
ordinary
time



lectionary
reading



children's
story



The Forgiveness Garden

Written by Lauren Thompson

Illustrated by Christy Hale

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character
education
activity

**To forgive is to set a prisoner
free and discover that the
prisoner was you.**
-Lewis B. Smedes

The Forgiveness Garden

The book *The Forgiveness Garden* is inspired by the original Forgiveness Garden in Beirut, Lebanon, and the movement that has grown up around it. It is a parable for people of all ages and backgrounds and provides the heart-wrenching story of individuals and families who are pitted against one another in an ancient hatred fueled by revenge. In the midst of this story, we encounter a young girl who decides to do something different by moving outside of hatred and towards **forgiveness**. This story reveals the complexities of the way that animosities can grow over time and how **forgiveness** requires a change of mind and heart. **Forgiveness** is a process that requires patience with ourselves and with others.

Balloon Analogy

Material: One deflated balloon

Step One: Ask the students the following: What are some of the things you feel when someone says unkind things to you, or breaks something of yours, or hurts you in some way?

Step Two: Help the students understand that to even begin to enter into **forgiveness**, each person must recognize those feelings and let them occur and pass so that they can move on.

Step Three: Demonstration with the balloon.

Help the students understand that if we hold all those negative things inside and stay sad, angry, or frustrated that we are unable to feel happy and at peace. (Blow some air into the balloon). This air is like anger or sadness that comes into us.

If we let it out each time we feel angry or sad, it is not such a big deal—just a little air comes out and we are back to normal. (Let the air out of the balloon).

But if we keep it inside, and keep adding to it each time we get upset and hold it in (blow into the balloon several more times), then what happens? What is going to happen if air continues entering the balloon?

Watch what happens when all the accumulated air is let out of the balloon (release the balloon and allow it to fly around the room). Things get out of control. This can also happen to us if we hold negative things inside.

Step Four: Call on the Holy Spirit to help us enter into the process of **forgiveness** by first releasing our negative feelings.

**Forgiveness says you
are given another
chance to make a new
beginning.
-Archbishop Desmond
Tutu**



case study

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

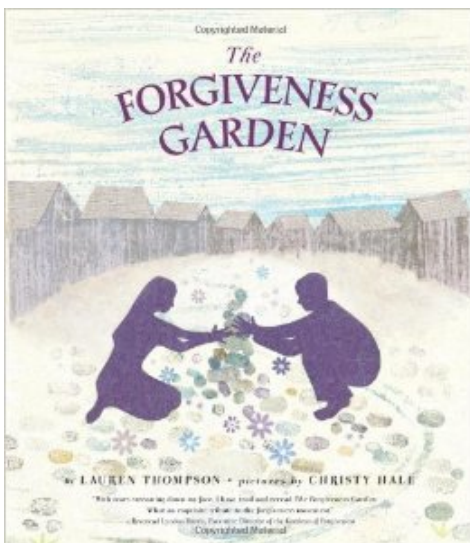
What could you do today?

There is another wonderful story about **forgiveness** called *Under the Lemon Moon* by Edith Hope Fine. Ask your parents if you could visit the library; if you don't have a library card, find out how to get one so that you are able to borrow books from the library to enjoy at home. Once you have checked out and read *Under the Lemon Moon*, ask yourself and others who have heard the story what they learned about **forgiveness**. Maybe you and your family members can talk about a time when you have been **forgiven** or have had the opportunity to **forgive** someone, and what that experience felt like.

Look Feel Know Act

Think about why you wear a swimsuit to go swimming instead of a bulky sweater and jeans. You probably know that heavy clothes do not make swimming enjoyable or easy and would instead burden you.

Sometimes we feel burdened in life because of things that we carry with us, such as resentment and anger that results when we are unwilling to **forgive** others. When you begin to feel overburdened by such things, remember that you have the opportunity to give **forgiveness**, or to seek **forgiveness** for your wrongdoings through the sacrament of Reconciliation. Remember that no matter what your sins are, they will always be **forgiven** by God if you have the courage to ask.



To begin to enter into **forgiveness**, it is important to recognize that **forgiveness** is a process. In the readings chosen for today, we see that this process involves an examination of conscience, and sometimes we need another person to help us with this. In the first reading, King David needed the wisdom and encouragement of the prophet Nathan to recognize the need for **forgiveness** before he asked God to grant it to him.

The Gospel passage selected for today from Saint Luke illustrates the great outpouring of God's love for the woman who seeks **forgiveness**. The perfume that the woman pours over Jesus' feet represents the beauty of what **forgiveness** represents. Just as the beautiful perfume spreads throughout the house, so too can **forgiveness** spread throughout the world and have a noticeable impact. *The Forgiveness Garden* illustrates this point by showing that **forgiveness** allows beauty to enter the world and to conquer animosity and hatred.

The Act of Contrition of the Catholic Church

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against You whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with Your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, My God, have mercy. Amen.



Santa Clara University

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