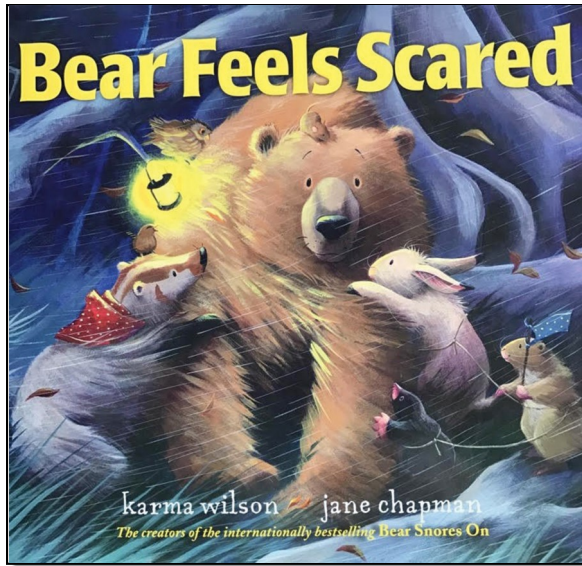


Living Grace

CYCLE A PALM SUNDAY

"DID JESUS GET SCARED?"



In Bear Feels Scared, Bear's friends discover that he is not at home in his lair, so they march out into the woods to find their pal. Friends don't let friends stay lost! Wren, Owl, and Raven take to the skies while Badger, Mole, and Mouse search on the ground. Pretty soon Bear is found, and once he's back in his cave, he feels quite safe with his friends all around. Bear gets another emotional workout, this time a frightening episode in the dark and stormy woods. While Bear is on the trail of a snack, things quickly turn windy and wet, and Bear gets lost. He cries and trembles, curling up amid the gnarled roots of a huge tree until his faithful band of woodland friends come to his aid. A great story to help you conquer your fears and find comfort in friends!

Read-aloud video link: IMG_2315.MOV

<https://1drv.ms/u/s!AisEidPP-elhhTQIRkRfN1PfxVp>

Sunday Gospel

MATTHEW 26:14 to 27:66
*EXCERPT

"Though all may have their faith in you shaken, mine will never be."

Jesus said to him,

"Amen, I say to you,

this very night before the cock crows,

you will deny me three times."

Peter said to him,

"Even though I should have to die with you,

I will not deny you."

And all the disciples spoke likewise.

Then Jesus came with them to a place called

Gethsemane,

and he said to his disciples,

"Sit here while I go over there and pray."

He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee,

and began to feel sorrow and distress.

Then he said to them,

"My soul is sorrowful even to death.

Remain here and keep watch with me."

He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying,

"My Father, if it is possible,

let this cup pass from me;

yet, not as I will, but as you will."

When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep.

He said to Peter,

"So you could not keep watch with me for one hour?"

Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test.

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again,

"My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!"

Then he returned once more and found them asleep,

for they could not keep their eyes open.

He left them and withdrew again and prayed a third time,

saying the same thing again.

Link to daily readings @ usccb.org

<http://usccb.org/bible/readings/040520.cfm>

Art & Faith

EXPLORING THE BEAUTY & TRADITION
OF SACRED ART



THE KISS OF JUDAS

Fresco by Giotto di Bondone ~ 1304 to 1306
Scrovegni Chapel ~ Padua, Italy

EXPLORING THE ART:

DISCOVERING HUMANITY IN THE SACRED

This fresco was painted in the private chapel of the Scrovegni family, who had grown rich from their banking and moneylending businesses. The dramatic scene depicting the betrayal of Christ shows the moment when Judas Iscariot identifies him to the authorities with a kiss of greeting, and as he does so, Christ calmly stares at him without flinching. This fresco painted by Giotto in this chapel are most celebrated for the realistic physical characterization of each and every figure - a technique that had barely existed at anytime before. Giotto humanizes the image of the sacred, making it feel closer, bringing it down to earth. Before this time, artists painted in the conventional Byzantine style with stiff figures in flat one-dimensional space, which made it almost impossible for the viewer to "connect" with the subject matter. Giotto created realistic, three-dimensional figures with individual faces like one might see on the street. His style would become the foundation of the Italian Renaissance, when Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and all the great artists of the Renaissance developed the main principles of Western art, which would change painting forever.

EXPLORING THE HUMANITY AND DIVINITY OF JESUS IN HIS PASSION TO THE CROSS

It is difficult when we read the Passion to be able to imagine what Jesus went through. Did he have any idea the extent of the suffering, betrayal, and abandonment he would experience? Was he scared? Our children's story today helps us look at the emotions Jesus would have gone through. A bear could get scared? A mouse maybe, but not a bear. Bears are the ones who scare everyone else. In the same way, who would ever think that God could get scared?

Jesus was fully human as well as fully God. He felt what we feel, and he was scared. We see Bear choosing to walk on his path, even though he was scared. Jesus also said yes to walk his path in fear, to drink this cup of suffering, and to die for our sins. Like Bear, Jesus chose his own path, but it does not mean that he did not feel the fear, sorrow, and pain on this path any less than we would. Jesus and Bear shake and shiver, Jesus sheds blood. Jesus and Bear both experience self-pity asking, "How can I get out of this?" Jesus asks his Father, "Must I drink this cup?"

The friends of both Bear and Jesus try to display courage by calming their frightened friend and sharing hope and comfort. However, their stamina falls short, and they cannot endure. Both sets of friends sleep on the job of being true friends. Bear eventually finds comfort with the help of his friends, but Jesus continues his path to the cross alone. He goes through the suffering and torture to his death alone. On this path Jesus, shows us the way through death to life - resurrected life.

Jesus conquers death so that when we make this journey, we will not be scared. If we do all we can this Holy Week to stay awake, we will find the way of Jesus to live every day in the glory of "Christ is risen"! Let us Stay Awake, and in doing so, be not afraid, and be able to be there for others!

Making the Connections

FOR CHILDREN

YOUR STORY: When do you get scared? Does it help to have friends around you? What helps you feel strong and peaceful? Have you ever seen your parents or your teachers get scared? Is it weird that your parents or teachers would get scared? How does that make you feel? Is getting scared something that makes us human?

THE CHILDRENS' STORY: Is it weird that a Bear got scared? What does Bear do when he is scared? Does he run? Does he fight? How does he find strength and peace?

THE GOSPEL STORY: How does it make you feel knowing that Jesus got scared? How does the response of Jesus and Bear help us to know what to do when we get scared?

We have the choice to run or to fight when we face fear. How do Jesus and Bear teach us to stay in our strengths and our truth? And in doing so, how might we become instruments of bringing heaven to earth like Jesus did?

Family Activities

SHARING THE MISSION AT HOME
AND IN THE WORLD



QUESTION OF THE WEEK: Share as a family together, what makes you scared? What can we learn from the actions of Jesus when he got scared?

CHARACTER QUALITIES: LOYALTY
BEING SINGLE-HEARTED

FAMILY ACTIVITIES: Talk about how you might choose to support each other in difficult times. What does it mean to be present to someone on their cross? Decide to make a commitment as a family to visit a person on a regular basis in a nursing home or hospital. How can you as a family help them deal with their fears and feelings of abandonment? What kind of difference can you and your family make for someone who is afraid or alone?

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING: Palm Sunday's events happen all around Jerusalem. It would be great to get a map of the old city out and try to follow the path of Jesus. Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey would have been down the Mount of Olives entering the city through Lions Gate, close to the closed Golden Gate. The site of the crucifixion would have been outside the city walls. Today, the site is right in the heart of the old city enclosed within a church that holds what is believed to be the cave site of the burial place, thus the site of the Resurrection of Jesus as well.

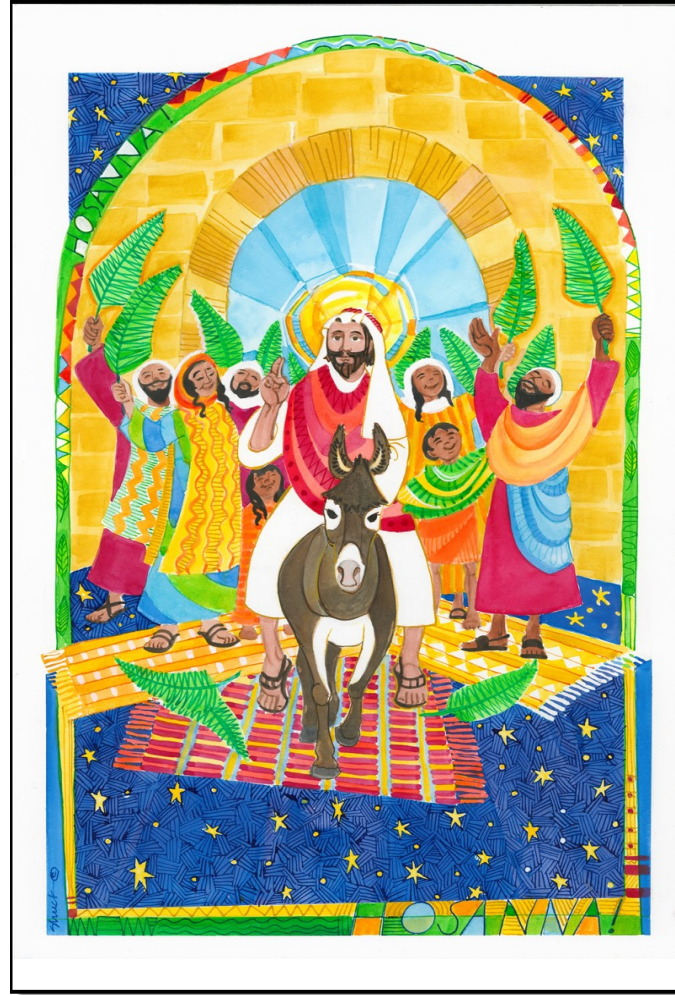
TERMS: *Suffering* Our cultural view of suffering is much different than that of the first century Mediterranean world, so we tend to miss the point of the Passion of Jesus. In our culture, where suffering is a nuisance that can readily be avoided by cleverness or medicine, it is difficult to understand. Jesus suffers silently. He is like a sheep before the shearers. The sheep does not bleat, does not cry out even as something as violent as a shearing is taking place. The fact that Jesus suffered without crying out brings him honor. To cry out in despair would bring shame upon the victim.

CULTURAL INSIGHT: Jesus had died a shameful death, one reserved for the worst of criminals. The public spectacle of crucifixion was intended to heap shame on the person being tortured, to break them and reduce them to despair, so that they would curse God and beg to die. Those standing nearby must have wondered how Jesus could be subjected to such shameful treatment. Why would God allow this to happen to his Son? But God turned this human way of thinking completely upside down. The Resurrection washed away Jesus' shame. Throughout the Passion narrative we see that Jesus knows that he is in the right, and he knows that God will vindicate (bring him honor) on the day of the resurrection.

INSIGHT INTO MEANING: What is happening when Jesus cries out from the cross, "My God why have you forsaken me?" Did Jesus lose hope at that critical moment before his death? How could that be possible? Take a moment to find Psalm 22 in your Bible, and read the opening line. It is identical to what Jesus says on the cross. Jesus cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me." The Jewish people memorized all of their scriptures since there were no books at the time. Therefore, Jesus was letting the Jewish onlookers know what he had come to fulfill. He was the fulfillment the Psalm speaks of. By quoting the first words of the Psalm, Jesus is encouraging his mother, the Apostle John, and everyone else to recall the message of the Psalm 22 which was written by David when he faced his greatest trial. He had been deposed from the throne by his eldest son Absalom. He was on the run; fearing for his life. Yet even in this moment of despair, at a time when David felt that God had abandoned him, the King knew in his heart of hearts that he would return to Jerusalem and sit once again on the throne. These words of Jesus were intended to console those who are watching him die. David said that he would return, and he did. Jesus uses the first words of Psalm 22 to convey that same assurance to those he loved most in the world.

Gospel Illustration

"PALM SUNDAY" BY VICKI SHUCK



The Palm Sunday Gospel story shows us the way through these difficult days. Jesus chooses to ride into his suffering and death keeping his heart wide open.

He rides into Jerusalem trusting in the redeeming Love of his heavenly Father. He chooses the hero's journey.

May we too grow hero's hearts for these days, trusting in God's transforming grace to give us the strength and courage of Jesus.

We must ride forward, but never alone.