



SUNDAY SCRIPTURE ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES

BY SR. KAREN BERRY, OSF

1 SEPTEMBER 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS: Sirach 3:17-18, 20, 28-29; Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24a; Luke 14:1, 7-14

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled.” (LUKE 14:11A)

Arrogance is not rewarded.

Primary:

1. Distribute paper and pencils and tell the students to respond “yes” or “no” honestly to the questions you are going to ask. Assure them that no one will see their answers. Then ask:

- Did you ever jump in front of someone else when you wanted to be first?
- Did you ever try to make someone feel less important than you by calling them names or criticizing them?

2. Read or tell Sunday’s Gospel story. Make respect a classroom policy for the school year, so that no child will act as if they are better than anyone else.

Intermediate:

1. Ask students to define *arrogance*. Then read Sunday’s Gospel and ask how Jesus’ parable is a lesson about arrogance. Write out Luke 14:11 on the board, telling students to think of examples of how *exalting* and *humbling* might be experienced in their classroom this year. How can they treat each other this year in a

way that recognizes we are all equally valuable in God’s eyes?

2. Let the class create a rules poster based on Luke 14:11. In small groups, brainstorm examples of how to treat classmates as honored equals in specific situations. List the examples on a chart.

Secondary:

1. After assuring students that their answers will not be shared, tell them to respond in writing to these questions:

- When have you acted arrogantly? Give two or three examples.
- Did you ever put someone else down to make yourself feel superior? Explain.

2. Direct a student to read Sunday’s Gospel. Repeat Jesus’ pronouncement in Luke 14:11. Tell students to look again at what they wrote about their own arrogance. Allow quiet moments as students write personal resolutions about treating others as equals for this school year. How will they plan to show respect and humility to their classmates?

8 SEPTEMBER 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS: Wisdom 9:13-18b; Philemon 9-10, 12-17; Luke 14:25-33

“Who can conceive what the Lord intends?” (WISDOM 9:13B)

Mary was born to a very special role she would grow to understand.



Primary:

1. Set up a place of honor for a statue or picture of Mary. Tell the children that we celebrate Mary's birthday on September 8, then ask what they know about the Blessed Mother. Supplement their sharing with your knowledge about Mary, emphasizing how Mary is our mother too. Direct the children to create birthday cards for Mary. Teach them a song about Mary.

2. Have a birthday party with decorations and treats. Let children place their cards around Mary's statue or picture, sing the song in her honor, and enjoy a birthday snack.

Intermediate:

1. Divide the class into groups of three or four students. Tell each group to write a list of four things they know about Mary, then ask representatives of each group to list items on the board. Explain that the Church celebrates Mary's birthday on September 8. Ask the students how they would like to honor Mary.

2. Follow through on the students' suggestions (if necessary, supplement their ideas with making cards, singing a hymn, praying the Rosary, or doing good work for others). Set up a statue or picture of Mary in a place of honor during this celebration.

Secondary:

1. The Church celebrates Mary's birthday on September 8 because that is nine months after the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception (December 8). The Church teaches that we are all born with original sin, entering a world tainted by the sins of those who came before us. But Mary was conceived without sin in order to be a worthy vessel for carrying God's Son. We honor her as



mother of us all because Jesus has shared her with us.

2. Read Wisdom 9:13-18. Scheduled as a reading for the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, it coincides with Mary's birthday this year. As students follow along in their Bibles, tell them to pick out phrases that appropriately fit Mary and her role in God's plan. Point out that Luke's Gospel tells us how Mary pondered the things that happened to her. She also received the "Holy Spirit from on high" and grew in wisdom. Discuss how Mary is a role model for us.

15 SEPTEMBER
24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS: Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-32

"Rejoice with me because I have found the coin that I lost."

(LUKE 15:9B)

What we need determines what we value.

Primary:

1. Ask the children if they ever lost any money. How would they feel if that happened? Why? If someone had lots of money and lost a few small coins, would they care? If someone had only a little money and lost it, would they want to find it?

Read the story from Luke's Gospel about the woman who lost one of her 10 coins. Explain that Jesus told this story to show how God feels about losing even one person who turns to sin. God works really hard to bring sinners back.

2. Tell the children to imagine someone committing a serious sin such as stealing, killing, or lying. How would God bring that person back to goodness? Does God work through other people to help sinners? Do the children have people in their lives who help them set things right when they stray?

Intermediate:

1. Divide the class into groups of three or four students. Tell the groups to make two columns on a sheet of paper. In the first column, list things that members of the group have lost that were really important to them. In the second column, list items they lost that didn't matter very much. Bringing the class together, ask students to explain why the items in the first column were so valuable.

2. Read Luke 15:1-10. Ask why the coin was important to the woman and why she searched for it so diligently. Direct students to review their group's list and find something in the first column that was valued because it was really needed. Share this with the class. Discuss these questions:

- Does God need us?
- Why would God search for us if we get lost?
- Why are we important to God?

Secondary:

1. Write on the board, "If I need ____, I value ____." Read Luke 15:1-10.



Discuss why the woman in the story searched so diligently for her lost coin. Tell students to make a list in their notebooks, filling in the blanks for the statement on the board. Example: If I need esteem, I value praise.

2. Invite students to share of their examples with the class. Then tell them to write “God” on the second blank. What words would they fill in on the first blank? Again, invite sharing of a few examples. Then turn this around, telling students to imagine God writing “people” on the second blank. How would God fill in the first blank? God values us. Discuss how we are called to be Christ’s hands and heart through our lives.

22 SEPTEMBER
25th Sunday in Ordinary Time
READINGS: Amos 8:4-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-8; Luke 16:1-13

“I ask that supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be offered for everyone, for kings and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life.” (1 TIMOTHY 2:1-2)

Praying for our leaders benefits all of us.

Primary:

1. Brainstorm with the children to make a list of people for whom they are thankful and the reasons why.

Make a litany from this list and have the children respond, “We thank you, God” to each line of the litany. (Example: Because our parents love us ... We thank you, God.)

2. After praying the litany, talk about the value of developing a grateful heart. If we pray in thanksgiving for everyone and everything in our lives, how can that make our lives better? Do parents, teachers, and others need our prayers? Can we pray for them in other ways, as well?

Intermediate:

1. Read 1 Timothy 2:1-8. Note that Timothy suggests that when we pray for people in authority, we are making our own lives better. With the children, list examples of authority figures and describe how life goes better for those under their authority when these people are good leaders (parents, teachers, government leaders, law enforcers, and so on).

2. Give each student a partner and ask them to write several prayers of petition for people in authority. Collect the prayer sheets, placing them in a basket on the classroom prayer table. Each day draw out a paper from the basket and invite a student to read the petitions.

Secondary:

1. Prior to this class session, divide the class into four groups and assign one of the following to each group:

- Gather names, pictures, and facts about the people running for or currently in local, state, and national offices.
- Write prayers of petition for our government leaders.
- Find several appropriate Scripture readings (in addition to 1 Timothy 2:1-2) that could be used in a prayer service for government leaders.
- Choose two songs the class knows — or could easily learn — that would be suitable for a prayer service for government officials.

2. Let each group choose one representative to help design the prayer service, deciding how each of the groups’ contributions will be used and in what order. Meanwhile, the rest of the class can plan the classroom arrangement for the prayer experience, decorate to create an atmosphere for prayer, and rehearse the songs. Follow up with a discussion of the importance of good leadership in government.

When we pray for people in authority, we are making our own lives better.

29 SEPTEMBER
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time
READINGS: Amos 6:1a, 4-7; 1 Timothy 6:11-16; Luke 16:19-31

“My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime.” (LUKE 16:25)

God will hold us accountable for how we shared what we received.

Primary:

- Using a children's Bible, tell the story of the poor man Lazarus and the rich man. Explain that the rich man wasn't punished for having wealth but for not sharing it with someone in need. Jesus told this story as part of his message that we must all be brothers and sisters to each other, caring for everyone as members of God's family.
- Ask students to share examples of ways they can help other people in need in their school or community. Make a list on the board. Identify one or two activities on this list the class could do as a group.

Intermediate:

- Read Luke 16:19-31. Discuss what Jesus is teaching the Pharisees through this story. Explain that the Pharisees were teachers of the Law and Jesus sometimes had disagreements with them (see Matthew 15 and 16). Divide the class into five groups, giving each group a copy of this Gospel story and a poster board. Assign each group to illustrate one segment of this story:
 - Luke 16:19-20
 - Luke 16:21
 - Luke 16:22-23
 - Luke 16:24-26
 - Luke 16:27-31
- After each group describes their part of the story, hang the posters around the classroom in story sequence. Ask the students how effective this story might have been in teaching the Pharisees about mercy and the right use of wealth.

Secondary:

- Help the students become familiar with Jesus' conflict with the

Pharisees by looking at chapters 15 and 16 of Luke, leading up to this Sunday's Gospel. Explain that the Pharisees strictly observed Jewish law, often adding burdens to people who would have benefitted from mercy and lenience.

- Ask a student to read Luke 15:1-2. After you summarize the story of the lost sheep, ask the student to read Luke 15:7.
 - Summarize the story of the lost coin. Ask a student to read Luke 15:10.
 - Summarize the story of the Prodigal Son. Ask a student to read Luke 15:23-24.
 - Move on to the theme of money and ask a student to read Luke 16:9-15.
- Explain that after rebuking the Pharisees in that last passage, Jesus told a parable aimed at their avarice. Slowly read Luke 16:19-31. Tell students to picture the elements of the story, focusing on the details that stand out the most for them. What was Jesus teaching? How was his message received?

6 OCTOBER 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS: Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4; 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14; Luke 17:5-10

"The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.'" (LUKE 17:5)

In what areas of our lives do we want more faith?


Primary:

- Prepare a series of picture cards representing things children like: food treats, toys, parties, holiday celebrations, and so on. Other pictures should represent things children don't like: time-outs, fighting, floods, fires, and the like. Mix up the flash cards and hold them up one at a time. Tell the children to say, "I want more" when they see something they like and to say nothing when they see something they don't like. Place flash cards in separate piles according to the children's responses.
- Display all the flash cards from the "like" pile together and let the children talk about why they want more of these things. Tell them that Jesus' apostles asked Jesus for more faith. What could more faith help them to do? Can faith help us, too?



Handing out blank flash cards, tell the children to draw a picture about faith. When all are finished, let each child hold up and explain their picture. Have the class respond, “We want more!”

Intermediate:

1. Ask students to give examples of when they believed in someone or something, or when they wanted to believe but had a hard time. Tell them that the apostles asked Jesus for more faith, and he encouraged them to trust that anything was possible when people believed in something good.
2. In the classroom prayer area, invite the children to close their eyes and imagine God side by side with them. Then ask them to picture a tiny seed representing faith. Imagine that seed beginning to grow slowly. As it continues to grow, it becomes a beautiful, graceful vine wrapping itself gently around God and the child to create a warm embrace that remains forever. Close the meditation by singing a song of faith, such as “Open Our Eyes This Day” from Landry and Kinghorn’s *A Wonderful Song of Joy* album.  OCP.org

Secondary:

1. Read Luke 17:5-6, then invite students to journal about these questions:

- How is having faith like having our eyes opened if faith is about believing what can’t be seen?
- Is there a kind of seeing that isn’t physical? Have you ever experienced this kind of seeing?
- In what areas of your life would you like to have clearer vision?

2. Divide the class into groups of three or four and give poster-making materials to each group. In groups, discuss with what kind of faith each person would like to have, then create a poster titled “Increase our Faith.” Their poster should express their longing and their own prayer, like the apostles, that Jesus will increase their faith. Let the groups present what they have created. Hang the posters around the room.

13 OCTOBER
28th Sunday | Ordinary Time

READINGS: 2 Kings 5:14-17; 2 Timothy 2:8-13; Luke 17:11-19

“As Jesus was entering a village, ten lepers met him.” (LUKE 17:12)

Each day we never know who we might encounter or what might be asked of us.

Primary:

1. Today’s Gospel story is often used as an example of giving thanks. Ten lepers were cleansed, but only one of them thanked Jesus. What Jesus seems to be emphasizing, though, is that it was the foreigner who came back to say thank you. Jews didn’t like Samaritans, but Jesus healed one and also found the Samaritan to be the most grateful. Elicit four examples of types of people in each of these groups:

- People they know very well;
- People they don’t know very well, but think they might like; and
- People they are a little afraid of.

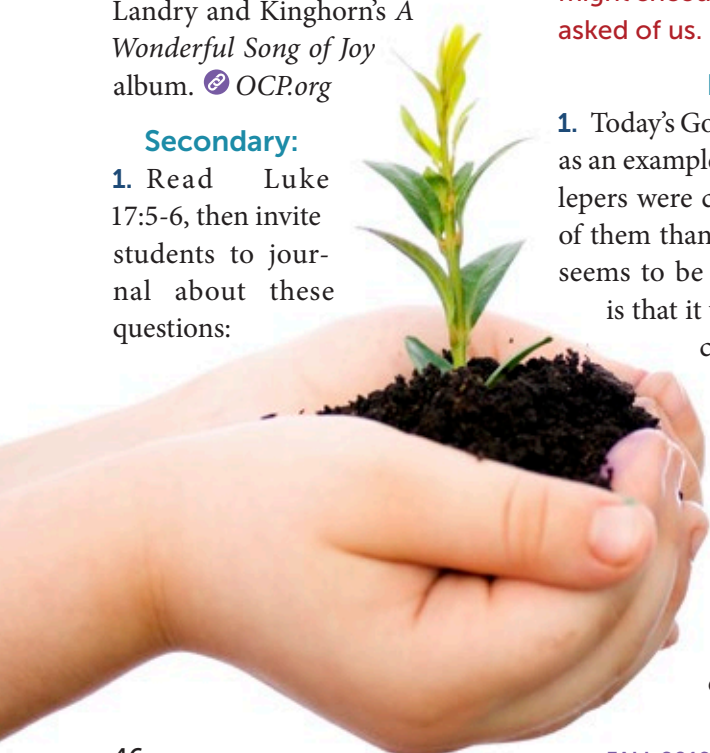
2. Ask the children which people they would be most ready to help. Which ones would probably thank them? Whom would they not feel comfortable helping? Who probably wouldn’t thank them? If you detect prejudices in the children’s answers, focus on the least likable example and remind the children that Jesus healed lepers when other people were very afraid of lepers. The leper who thanked Jesus was a foreigner whom many people didn’t like. Encourage the children to notice who might need their kindness this week.

Intermediate:

1. Read the Gospel together and talk about who lepers and Samaritans were. Discuss the fears and prejudices of Jesus’ time, comparing them to the fears and prejudices of our time. Divide students into pairs and assign each pair to write a story about themselves as helpers, someone who is looked down upon in our society today and who needs help, how the help is given, and how the person responds.
2. Invite children to read their stories to the class. Comment on any similarities to the Gospel. If any children missed the point, suggest adjustments to their story. Conclude with a prayer, asking God to bless all people and help the children see good in everyone, especially those who need their care.

Secondary:

1. Direct students to compare the first reading and the Gospel. Point out to them that Naaman and the





Samaritan were not considered “chosen” by the people for whom these stories were written. Jesus and the prophets before him did not limit their service only to the people of Israel. Their willingness to help anyone in need showed that God chooses everyone. The responses of Naaman and the Samaritan were most gracious. Invite your students to journal about their encounters during this past week. Did they reach out to, or shun, anyone in particular? What might God be calling them to do in those instances?

2. Note that in the second reading, St. Paul refers to “those who are chosen” and to Jesus as a descendant of David. Paul, himself a Jew, reached out to the Gentiles. He understood that the “chosen” of God included more than Jews. Ask students to share ways they could be more open to people outside their usual circles.

20 OCTOBER
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS: Exodus 17:8-13; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2;
Luke 18:1-8

“I will be standing on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.”
(EXODUS 17:9B)

Moses tirelessly prayed for his people.

Primary:

1. Distribute pictures of Moses for the children to color. Tell how Moses led his people to freedom, gave them laws from God, and encouraged them as they made their way through desert regions. Moses was a visible presence during his people’s struggles, reminding them that God was always with them. Coloring pages:

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2. Ask the children to list the people who stand up for them when they are having a hard time. Who teaches them that God is always with them? Who prays for them when they need help? Ask volunteers to bring their Moses pictures, stand in front of the class, and say who is like Moses for them. Then ask volunteers to bring their pictures forward and describe someone for whom they can be like Moses. Pray together for people who need support.

Intermediate:

1. Tell the children to raise their hands in the air and continue to hold them up as long as they can

while you tell them stories about Moses’ life and leadership. They can add to the challenge by holding a heavy object while they do this. As you tell the stories, invite participation by asking the students to fill in the details they know about Moses as a child, a Pharaoh-confronter, a leader of ex-slaves, and a lawgiver. Tell the students they may drop their arms when they get tired but encourage them to keep them raised as long as possible.

2. Afterward, explain the lesson in Exodus 17:8-13. The Israelites battled enemies during their desert journey, but Moses wanted to show them that he and God were always with them. He wanted to be a visible reminder of this throughout the battle. Ask children how tired Moses must have felt and how relieved he would have been when friends held his arms up for him. Let children discuss what they would be willing to do to help or protect people, no matter how tiring or difficult it became.

Secondary:

1. Distribute copies of Sunday’s Old Testament and Gospel readings, and ask students to answer the following questions in their journals:

- Why was it important to Moses to hold up his staff throughout the battle?
- Why did the Israelites need to see him?
- Do you think Moses was praying during this time? Explain.
- Old Testament and Gospel readings are chosen for each Sunday

God chooses everyone.

based on their connection to each other. What is the common theme in these two?

2. After students finish writing, discuss the theme they discovered. Why is it important to pray without ceasing? Who benefits from that? For what are students willing to pray endlessly even if it gets discouraging? Why?

27 OCTOBER 27
30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS: Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18; Luke 18:9-14

“Two people went up to the temple area to pray.” (LUKE 18:10)

Only God can judge what is in a person’s heart.

Primary:

1. Tell the children that today they will hear a story Jesus told, but first you want to explain the characters. A Pharisee was someone who kept all the rules and laws very well — and made sure everyone else did too! A tax collector worked for the Roman government to collect taxes from the Jews. Sometimes tax collectors cheated people, so they weren’t very well liked. Then read today’s Gospel story from a children’s Bible. Explain that the Pharisee was thanking God for making him a good person, but at the same time he looked down on someone he thought wasn’t as good as he was. Meanwhile, the tax collector was asking God’s forgiveness for the wrong things he had done. God

Moses was a visible presence during his people’s struggles.

was more pleased with the tax collector’s prayer.

2. Ask a pair of volunteers to act out the story as you reread it. Then ask the students to think about whether there is anyone they look down on. Do they think someone else is not as good as they are? Explain that they can’t really know what is in that person’s heart. Only God knows, and God loves everyone. Have the children draw a picture of themselves praying in church.

Intermediate:

1. Read today’s Gospel. Explain who Pharisees were and why tax collectors were despised. Discuss the startling lesson that God was more pleased with the sinner’s prayer. What does that teach us about our judgments of people?

2. Lead the children in a prayer that combines the best from the Pharisee and the tax collector. Invite children to thank God for the good things about themselves. Real humility is recognizing that God has given us many good qualities. Then invite children to express sorrow to God for a time when they weren’t so good. God is always ready to forgive.

Secondary:

1. Make two columns on the board. In the first column, have students



list characters from books or movies they consider to be good, virtuous, and law-abiding. In the second column have them list characters they or others might look down on, fear, or make judgments about. Ask the students to imagine God looking at these lists, recalling that God loves everyone in both lists. In their journals, have the students write something lovable that God sees in each person in the second list.

2. After everyone finishes, invite students to share what they wrote. Explain the roles of the Pharisees and tax collectors in the time of Jesus. Ask a student to read the Gospel. Then pray together to be able to see goodness in everyone and not pass judgment.

3 NOVEMBER 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS: Wisdom 11:22-12:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-2:2; Luke 19:1-10

“But you spare all things because they are yours, O Lord and lover of souls.” (WISDOM 11:26)

Nothing God created is too small for God to love.

Primary:

1. Display pictures of small living things (flowers, baby animals, children) in various spots around the classroom. Explain what wisdom is, then tell the children there is a Book of Wisdom in the Bible and a reading from that book was heard on Sunday. That reading tells us that God’s spirit is in all things; God created all and so loves it all; and nothing in the universe, no matter how small, is unimportant to God.

2. In pairs, invite the children to choose one of the pictures you have placed around the room. Ask the partners to decide what they want to say about this small thing that God loves. Is it important? What will help it grow? Who loves this besides God? What does this little thing show us about God the creator? Let each team talk to the class about their picture.

Intermediate:

1. Tell the students to close their eyes and picture the entire universe: stars, planets, and galaxies beyond anything the eye can see. Imagine it coming into existence as God created it and expanding and growing larger and larger. Then tell them to picture a tiny plant pushing through the soil, a little caterpillar spinning a cocoon, a baby calf running in a pasture, a toddler taking first steps. Tell students to keep their eyes closed, remembering what

they have pictured, while you read Wisdom 11:22, 11:24-25, and 12:1.

2. Tell students to open their eyes. Ask what they most enjoyed seeing in their imaginations. What touched them the most in the Bible quotes? Emphasize that because God made everything, God cares about everything; nothing is too small or insignificant for God to love; and God’s spirit is in everything. Invite students to draw something that meant the most to them from what they heard or thought about today.

God is always ready to forgive.

Secondary:

1. Write on the board: *Nothing God created is too small for God to love.* Ask students to read Sunday’s readings from the Book of Wisdom and the Gospel of Luke. Compare the messages of God’s care and concern and willingness to save, no matter how small a creature or how sinful a person.

2. Provide a variety of art materials and instruct students to choose a creative way to depict the message from these readings. Offer some suggestions: a collage of seemingly insignificant creatures and people; a forgiving hand of God extended toward a variety of offenders; or a collection of phrases from the readings accompanied by illustrations. Invite students to share and explain their finished work, then display it.

10 NOVEMBER 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS: 2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5; Luke 20:27-38

“The Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you.”

(2 THESSALONIANS 3:3)

The evil of war sends us to our knees to pray for guidance.

Primary:

1. Encourage children to describe times when they were afraid. What did they do to overcome the fear? Have they ever been threatened by a frightening person (a bully or a stranger)? Were they ever afraid of someone just because they didn’t know the person? Talk about the kind of fear that leads people and countries to fight with each other. Sometimes really evil things hurt people, and they must fight for their lives. Some people fight because they remember a past hurt and are afraid it will happen again. Some wars are going on in the world now because people are afraid of each other.

2. Talk about who veterans are and why we honor them. What did they fight for and what kind of courage did they need? How is God with us to protect us when we want to stand up for the right thing? How can doing acts of kindness for others also be a protection for ourselves? Emphasize that love leads to more love just as hate leads to more hate. Peace will come to our world when we stop using violence to solve problems. Pray for veterans and peace. Also bring to prayer any fears the children expressed during their sharing.

Intermediate:

1. Talk about the meaning of Veteran’s Day. Use a globe or map to point out areas of conflict all over the world today. Why are these nations, tribes, religious factions, and regions battling each other? Identify the evil practices, misguided beliefs, and greed in each area. If students aren’t familiar with certain conflicts, assign some research.

2. After research and discussion, read 2 Thessalonians 2:16–3:5. Tell the children to imagine as they listen that they are soldiers listening to a military chaplain before they go into battle. How would this reading prepare them to love an enemy, trust in God’s protection, guard against evil, and keep their Christian values while on the front lines? Is it possible to resist evil while waging war? Is it necessary to confront evil by using violence? We honor veterans for doing what they believed was right and for protecting our freedom. Pray with the class for the veterans of all wars and for those who are involved in battles today.

Secondary:

1. On Veteran’s Day we remember those who fought, died, performed heroic deeds, were wounded, won freedom, and believed in a cause. While fighting, they experienced the evil of such conflict. St. Paul’s words to the Thessalonians this Sunday could bring comfort to those who are caught up in today’s conflicts throughout the world. “May Jesus ... encourage your hearts ... may the Lord deliver us from wicked people ... the Lord will guard you from the evil.”

2. Discuss all three Sunday readings from the perspective of evil, war, and killing. While the second reading could provide comfort for those going into battle, the first is about an evil ruler who is murdering his subjects, and the Gospel is about the Sadducees trying to trick and trap Jesus. Life beyond death is the Gospel’s hopeful theme. There is evil in the world, and the Bible acknowledges this. There is also love and heroism and hope. Prepare a prayer service to remember veterans and pray for all those currently

caught up in battles. Include prayer petitions for the perpetrators of evil, that God may convert their hearts; and petitions for world leaders, that they may find ways to promote peace.

17 NOVEMBER
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS: Malachi 3:19-20a; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12; Luke 21:5-19

“The days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone.” (LUKE 21:6)

People bring destruction to the earth and to each other.



Primary:

1. Ask the children to talk about some things they know are going to happen soon that cause them fear or anxiety, such as going to the doctor to get shots or saying goodbye to a friend or relative who will be moving away. How do they feel when they think about these things? Then ask them if they have ever heard anyone talk about the end of the world. Does that sound scary?

2. Lead the children away from fear by teaching them what we could do to avoid catastrophes: take care of the earth, destroy dangerous weapons, make friends with enemies. Tell them God loves us so much that God will make sure our lives continue ... in this world or in a new one.

Intermediate:

1. Our Church year will end next week, so Sunday’s Old Testament and Gospel readings are about end-time predictions. Read Malachi 3:19-20a and ask students if they hear a message of hope. Read Luke 21:5-19. Though these predictions are awful, what message of hope is here? What end-of-the-world predictions have students heard about? What kinds of things could bring an end to our world?

2. Suppose we experience the end of the world as we know it. What would students want to end? What new things, attitudes, ways of living with each other would students want to see emerging to make a new world? Let them draw their ideas and explain them to the class.

Secondary:

1. We are almost at the end of the Church year, so the Scripture readings we hear at this time are related to end-time themes. Ask a student to read Luke 21:5-19. Write the word *eschatological* on the board. Explain the term as referring to Scripture writings that describe the end of the world. Here the writer of the Gospel of Luke depicts Jesus predicting not only the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, but also describing how everything will end. The followers of Jesus were expecting this end in their lifetime. In A.D. 70, the Romans had destroyed the Temple; this Gospel was written

about A.D. 85. Ask another student to read Luke 21:20-22. Explain that the destruction described here had also already happened before the Gospel was written.

2. Have a student read Luke 21:25-28. This was an end-of-the-world vision common in eschatological literature. To this day, we sometimes hear people making predictions about the world coming to an end ... even giving a date. Give students time to research occasions in history when the end of the world was predicted. Let them report on the instances they found. Discuss why people believe them, how best to live in the world while we still have it, and other possible ways to think about how God might conclude the story of our world.

24 NOVEMBER 24 The Feast of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

READINGS: 2 Samuel 5:1-3; Colossians 1:12-20; Luke 23:35-43

“He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.”

(COLOSSIANS 1:13)

We are invited to live where Jesus reigns.

Primary:

1. In fairy tales about kings and queens, what is the job of these rulers? Contrast good rulers and bad rulers by listing characteristics of each and how their people feel about them (loved, betrayed, happy, fearful, and so on). Today we celebrate Christ as King, although he never ruled an earthly kingdom. How is Jesus like a good ruler? How can we show him we are happy to let him rule over our hearts?

2. Help the children create a list of rules for Christ’s kingdom. Tell

them to imagine living in a place where Jesus, the kind and loving ruler, is in charge. Brainstorm ideas on the board. When the children have agreed on the rules, print them on a poster. Declare the classroom a place where Christ is King.

Intermediate:

1. Remind the students of last week’s discussion about the end times and their drawings about a new world vision. Read Colossians 1:12-18a. Here again there is a message of hope. God forgives sin and leads us into his Son’s kingdom. Where is that? Describe today’s feast of Christ the King as a celebration of Christ ruling over us even now as we live in his kingdom through our choices to love, to bring peace, to obey God’s rules, and to keep making our world better.

2. Using a map or a globe, randomly choose places where students can offer ideas about how Christ can be King there. Describe, or elicit from students, what is happening in that place. Then suggest how people could make this place a “kingdom” of God on earth. Pray for the people in that place.

Secondary:

1. At his trial, Jesus told Pilate, “My kingdom does not belong to this world” (John 18:36a). When Jesus taught about the kingdom of God, he wasn’t referring to a place but to a relationship with God. Today’s Feast of Christ the King celebrates our belief that because Jesus brought us into a right relationship with God, Jesus rules over the kingdom that exists in our hearts. When we create the kind of world God wants for us — a world of love, peace, and forgiveness — then Jesus’ dream for the kingdom of God approaches fulfillment.

2. Direct students to reflect on Colossians 1:12-20 and answer the following questions in their notebooks:

- How does the “kingdom” reference here fit with the idea of relationship rather than a physical place?
- Select several phrases from this reading that promote the idea of Jesus being the “king” of this kingdom.
- What are our obligations as citizens of such a kingdom?

Bring students together for a class discussion of these questions. **T**

SR. KAREN BERRY is a Joliet Franciscan, a former high-school religion teacher and director of family programs of Religious Education, and currently a teacher of adult religion classes in several parishes in Tucson, Arizona.

