



ordinary
time



lectionary
reading

Cycle B

Twenty-Seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time

Lectionary #140

Reading I: Genesis 2:18-24

This passage from the Book of Genesis is known as the "second account of creation." In this passage, we meet a God who does not want us to be alone and isolated, but rather wishes for us to be in relationships that show **oneness** or **unity**. This is not to be mistaken for uniformity, but rather as a way that those who are joined together complement one another. This **unity** also refers to people being one with and caretakers of all creation. Most recently, this is the emphasis of Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudate Si, Care for Our Common Home*.

Reading 2: Hebrews 2:9-11

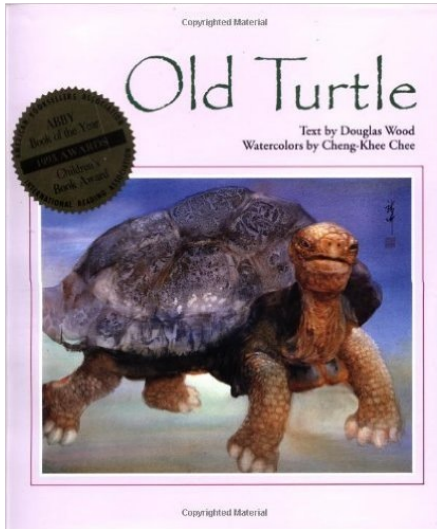
The writer of this Letter to the Hebrews admits that Jesus was, for a time, less than the angels, and explains why this was. Jesus chose to be inferior to the angels in order to establish **oneness** and **unity** with people on Earth. This meant that, like all of humanity, Jesus had to suffer and experience death. This letter asserts that through the person of Jesus, God became one with humanity to be a brother and helper to us.

Gospel: Mark 10:2-16

In this scene, we find the Pharisees trying to trap Jesus in legal troubles. The rabbis had consistently debated the legitimacy of divorce. However, when Jesus is posed with this question from the Pharisees, he answers with a question of his own. Jesus roots his fundamental response not in Moses, as the Pharisees did, but reaches back to the creation story heard in today's first reading. The focus is the **oneness** and **unity** of those who have been joined together in something sacred. Jesus regards both individuals in a marriage to be equal partners because both are images of God, for God *created the male and female in his image*. This indicates that the essence of marriage is for the two partners to create **oneness** so that they become an unbreakable unit.



children's
story



Old Turtle

Written by Douglas Wood

Illustrated by Cheng-Khee Chee

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character
education
activity

**Bear with each other and
forgive whatever grievances
you may have against one
another. Forgive as the Lord
forgave you. And over all
these virtues put on love,
which binds them together in
perfect unity.
-Colossians 3:13-14**

Old Turtle

This beautiful book is one of the best stories for helping children understand how all of God's creation is interconnected. The story begins with an argument between the mountains and the rivers, the ants and the stars, the lions and the bears—all regarding the nature of God. A terrible noise of quarreling voices rings out until wise Old Turtle quiets the argument, explaining that *God is all that we dream of, and all that we seek...all that we come from and all that we can find*. This silences the creatures of the world, except for humans. The disagreement is heard again when people raise their voices and their fists and harm each other and the natural order given to them by God. The story makes the plea for **unity** and **oneness** clear for humans and for all of creation.

Working Together and As One

Step One: This activity is physical in nature and will most likely need to be shown to the students, so you may want to enlist the help of some older students to demonstrate this activity.

Step Two: Pair the students up and have them sit on the floor with their backs against each other. Have them link arms with their partner and invite them to stand up together. The only way that they will be able to accomplish this is by working together and exerting enough force on each other's backs to stand together.

This may take a few tries as the students will need to figure out how to be **one** with each other so that they are able to stand. The fact that it takes time, energy, coordination, and focus to accomplish this activity can illustrate that being **one** and doing something in a **unified** manner takes effort.

Step Three: To extend the idea of **unity**, you might invite three and then four students to try this activity together.

One of the main tasks
of theology is to find
words that do not
divide but unite, that
do not create conflict
but unity, that do not
hurt but heal.
-Henri Nouwen



case study

Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.

What could you do today?

If you belong to a sport's team or a club that requires participants to work together, think about how well things would go if everyone gave all their effort and worked together to accomplish a goal. Then, imagine what an event or task would look like if you were on your own and not part of a team or group. For example, could you be a soccer team of one person, or a volleyball team of one person? What if you had to put on an event without the help of other people? How might being alone present challenges? Coordinating efforts and utilizing the talents of others can bring about great successes, but for this to be accomplished, there must be a **unified** effort.

Look Feel Know Act

Recall the story of creation in the book of Genesis (Genesis 1:1-31). Remember that God created everything in the world to live together in harmony and to be of assistance to one another. All things were made by God, and so that makes all parts of creation holy. People were created as the *crown of creation*, which means that we have been called to watch over God's creation and God's creatures in a very special way. We are called to enjoy God's creation, but to care for it as well.

It is important to live your life as if all things were created for you. As the *crown of creation*, not only are you made in God's image, but you are also called to act as God would. Because all things were created as good, all of creation should be held as sacred and special.

The story of *Old Turtle* illustrates the importance of **oneness** and **unity**, which reflects the themes that are in the readings selected for this Sunday. Cooperation and collaboration are key words that show the process of acting and being **one** in order for beautiful things to happen. Divisions among people and between people and the environment cause great harm to our common home and is not the life that God intends for his creation. To be reflective of the image of God in which we are made, we are compelled to live in **union** with one another.



closing
tool

One of the most beautiful prayers that reflects our connectedness is Saint Francis of Assisi's Canticle of the Sun. Here is an excerpt of that prayer:

MOST HIGH, ALL POWERFUL, ALL GOOD LORD!
ALL PRAISE IS YOURS, ALL GLORY, ALL HONOR, AND
ALL BLESSING.
TO YOU, ALONE, MOST HIGH, DO THEY BELONG

BE PRAISED, MY LORD, THROUGH ALL YOUR
CREATURES,
ESPECIALLY THROUGH MY LORD, BROTHER SUN,
WHO BRINGS THE DAY; AND YOU GIVE LIGHT
THROUGH HIM.
AND HE IS BEAUTIFUL AND RADIANT IN ALL HIS
SPLENDOR!
OF YOU, MOST HIGH, HE BEARS THE LIKENESS.



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