



build. plant. grow.  
*the word this week*



ordinary  
time



lectionary  
reading

## Cycle A

### Twelfth Sunday In Ordinary Time

Lectionary #94

#### Reading I: Jeremiah 20: 10-13

The prophet Jeremiah's ministry extends for forty years and was not a great time for the prophet. Like all prophets, Jeremiah had a difficult time getting the nation of Israel to listen to him. Even though the people denounced him for his unpopular prophecy, he remained steadfast and **courageous** in his service to God. It is important to notice that Jeremiah, along with the other prophets, often question God, which speaks to his courage and confidence. This is a great model for us as it shows that we too can speak openly with God. The gift of **courage** is an important part of prayer and communion with God. God seeks our honesty and knows the depths of our hearts; **courage** is very much a part of living a life of integrity.

#### Reading 2: Romans 5: 12-15

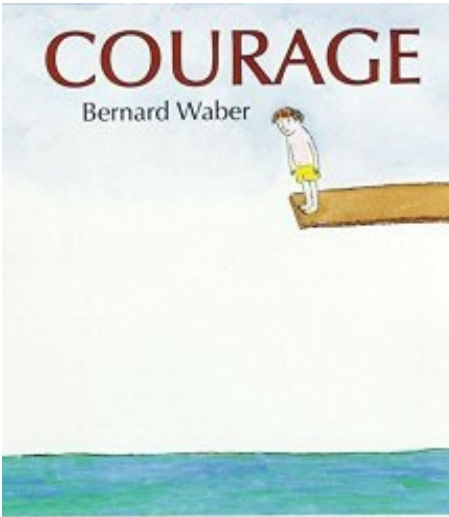
Saint Paul is often writing to a Church that is undergoing persecution, which is true of the letters that he shares with the Church of Rome. Here, the persecution of Christians was the most exacting and severe. Saint Paul does not see Rome as the enemy, but rather sin and death as the ultimate enemy, and he assures the people that Jesus has overcome these enemies. He encourages the people of Rome to be **courageous** in spite of the threats they face because those who follow Jesus will overcome any enemies they may encounter.

#### Gospel: Matthew 10: 26-33

Even the opening lines spoken by Jesus in this segment of Saint Matthew's Gospel reflect **courage**: *Fear no one!* Remember that the Gospel of Saint Matthew is known as *The Teaching Gospel*. Jesus often teaches of the uselessness of fear and shows that trust and **courage** are essential to living a life of faith.



children's  
story



### *Courage*

Written by Bernard Waber

Illustrated by Bernard Waber

Copyright HMH Books for Young Readers

October 28, 2002

ISBN-10: 0618238557

ISBN-13: 978-0618238552



character  
education  
activity

**Courage is not simply one of  
the virtues, but the form of  
every virtue at the testing  
point.  
-C.S. Lewis**

## Courage

The author of *Courage* offers the reader many approaches to the virtue of courage, from the serious (*Courage is being the first to make up after an argument*) to a more lighthearted statement (*courage is tasting the vegetable before making a face*). Throughout the story, the author provides a number of ways in which the trait of courage is defined, and each statement is accompanied by a whimsical watercolor pen and ink illustration. This book offers the reader an opportunity to discuss what courage is and isn't!

## Activity: The Courageous Egg

Materials: Wide mouthed glass or jar, uncooked rice, and an uncooked egg

Step One: Place the egg in the middle of the glass or jar so that it is completely surrounded by rice. Explain that the egg represents someone who is hanging around with a crowd...

One day, the group starts making fun of other people. The egg doesn't like this, so it tells them to stop (tap the egg of the rim; the egg will rise up from the glass with each tap).

Next, the group of friends start excluding other from their games (tap the rim), and they start telling lies. Each time the egg refuses to go along with the others, it stands up for what is right (tap the rim again.)

Continue tapping the rim until the egg has completely risen above the rice.

Share with the students that it takes **courage** to do the right thing when others are not. A **courageous** person will rise to the top and stand out from the rest.

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.  
-Reinhold Neibuhr



case study

Look.  
Feel.  
Know.  
Act.

## What could you do today?

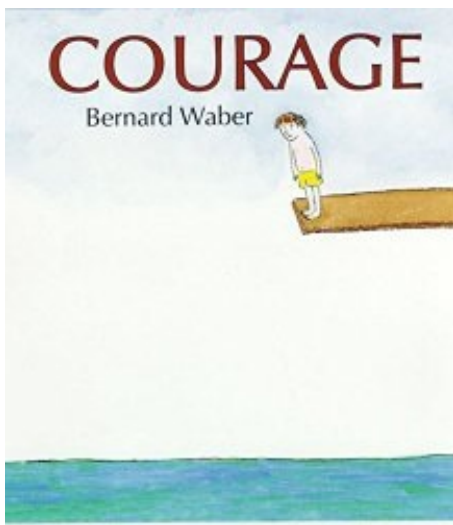
Sometimes we may think that we are the only ones who are afraid of things when, in fact, fear is part of the human condition. Interview some adults and ask them about any fears that they have overcome in their lives. By hearing this, you might be able to see that courage is a process. When you see that other people had fears that they were able to overcome with courage, you realize that you too can find a way to face your fears. Wanting and being willing to face one's fears is the first step to courage. For all of us, we must trust that we never have to face a fear without the help of God.

## Look Feel Know Act

There are many definitions of **courage**. Ultimately, when you look at **courageous** people, they are being true to themselves and their principles. If we look around at the people we know or the people in history who we consider to be **courageous**, they are essentially being true to themselves.

Recall a time when you felt most **courageous** and try to remember what it felt like. Were you responding to a voice within yourself telling you what is right and asking you to speak up and act?

There are many moments like these, and they do not necessarily have to be huge, monumental moments. Most of life is living quietly and confidently knowing that God is with us.



More than 113 times in the New Testament, we hear that there is no benefit to fear and that if we remain in fear, we become paralyzed. The readings for today continue this theme of allowing **courage** to be the operative in our lives instead of fear. *Courage* by Bernard Waber offers us an opportunity to see ways that **courage** can enter our world and our lives. Perhaps a good mantra for all of us would be the words of Jesus when he emphatically states: *fear is useless, what is needed is trust*. Trust in God is indeed the root of **courage**.



closing  
tool

Lord God, I know that you are with me at all times. Help me to remember this when there are times of fear. Help me to hear and repeat your words: *fear is useless, what is needed is trust*. Lord God, increase my trust in you with each passing day. Amen.



**Santa Clara  
University**

Character Education at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics  
ethics programs for communities that learn, live, pray, or work together

[www.scu.edu/character](http://www.scu.edu/character)