

FIRST READING

They assembled the Church
and gave an account of all that God had done with them.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

14:21-27

Paul and Barnabas preached the good news in Derbe
and won some people to the Lord.
Then they went back to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia.
They encouraged the followers and begged them to remain faithful.
They told them,
“We have to suffer a lot before we can get into God’s kingdom.”

Paul and Barnabas chose some of those who had faith in the Lord
to be leaders for each of the churches.
Then they went without eating
and prayed that the Lord would take good care
of these leaders.

Paul and Barnabas went on through Pisidia to Pamphylia,
where they preached in the town of Perga.
Then they went down to Attalia and sailed to Antioch in Syria.
It was there that they had been placed in God’s care
for the work they had now completed.

After arriving in Antioch,
they called the church together.
They told the people what God had helped them do
and how he had made it possible for the Gentiles to believe.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

145:8-9, 10 and 12

R. (see 1) I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God..

or:

R. Alleluia.

You are merciful, Lord!
You are kind and patient

and always loving.
You are good to everyone,
and you take care
of all your creation.

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God..
or:
R. Alleluia.

All creation will thank you,
and your loyal people
will praise you.
Then everyone will know about
the mighty things you do
and your glorious kingdom.

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God..
or:
R. Alleluia.

SECOND READING

God will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

A reading from the book of Revelation

21:1-4

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth.
The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared,
and so had the sea.
Then I saw New Jerusalem, that holy city,
coming down from God in heaven.
It was like a bride dressed in her wedding gown
and ready to meet her husband.

I heard a loud voice shout from the throne:
“God’s home is now with his people.
He will live with them,
and they will be his own.
Yes, God will make his home among his people.
He will wipe all tears from their eyes,
and there will be no more death, suffering, crying, or pain.
These things of the past are gone forever.”

The word of the Lord.

ALLELUIA

John 13:34

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

I give you a new commandment:
love one another as I have loved you.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

I give you a new commandment: love one another.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to John

13:31a, 33-35

After Judas had gone, Jesus said:

“My children, I will be with you for a little while longer.
Then you will look for me,
but you won’t find me.
I tell you just as I told the people,
‘You cannot go where I am going.’

“But I am giving you a new command.

You must love each other,
just as I have loved you.

If you love each other,
everyone will know that you are my disciples.”

The gospel of the Lord.



Fifth Sunday of Easter Cycle C

Prayer:

Loving God, we praise and thank you
For the newness we see all around us in nature:
Trees and grass are green again;
The sun has kissed plants and now flowers are blossoming.
May your Risen Son, Jesus Christ,
Hug our hearts and help us bloom with newness, too. **AMEN.**

Readings

Revelation 21:1-4
John 13:31a, 33-35

Reflection and discussion:

Today's scripture readings talk about something NEW.
In the reading from the book of Revelation, heaven and earth look new to John because he sees things differently. That's what "revelation" means. When something is **revealed**, we see it like we have never seen it before. Can you think of a revelation that you have had?

Examples: Planting a seed, watering the soil, then watching and waiting until you see something green poking its way out of the earth. After making the connection between seeds and plants, we now see that a tiny seed has LOTS of power in it to become something much bigger and more beautiful.

Another example: Ask if they remember when they were born. NO. Then talk about the marvel of seeing a baby and realizing that all of us began as babies. We were really small and helpless, but we have power in us to grow.

John used to think of God and heaven as being far away. But after he knew Jesus and experienced Jesus Christ risen from the dead, John SAW things differently. John realized then that God and heaven are right here among us. "God's home is with God's people." God lives in us and is close by so God can help us when we are suffering and be happy with us when we are glad.

In today's Gospel, Jesus also talks about something new—a new commandment. The people Jesus was talking to knew about the commandment to love God and love their neighbor as they loved themselves. But now that they had met Jesus and experienced how he loved them, Jesus wanted them to remember to try to love others as they knew Jesus loved them. **Let's think about what that means. How did Jesus show he loved people?**

Did Jesus help people when they were sick or sad? **Invite children to recall examples.** Did Jesus forgive people who disappointed him or hurt him? **Remind children that Jesus forgave the disciples who ran away when he was arrested and crucified. When he rose from the dead he went looking for them and let them know that he forgave them and wanted to be with them. He had meals with them. He even cooked for them on the seashore!**

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When we share the good things that we have, when we hug someone who is sad, when we say we are sorry or when we accept another person's apology, we are living reminders to others that GOD'S HOME IS WITH GOD'S PEOPLE and that God uses us to be her/his heart and hands to show God's love just as Jesus did.

Activity

Materials: Fold sheets of paper into three equal panels. 8 ½ x 14 inch legal size would be good if it's handy. Otherwise, use 8 ½ by 11.

Crayons or colored markers.

1. Invite students to "plant"/draw a seed in the ground in the first panel. Tell them to write down on the panel what quality of God/Jesus that they want to grow in their lives.
2. In the second panel invite them to draw a tiny plant growing in the sunlight. Ask them to draw rays of sunlight shining on the plant. Then talk with them about what helps they need from Jesus or other people so the good quality in them will grow. (They may want to write some of the helps in their sun rays.)
3. In the third panel ask them to draw the flower or tree that symbolizes them and how they want to be good for others like Jesus. (Again, they may want to write in the panel to express how they want to be good for others.)

Closing blessing:

Extend your hands and bless the class, saying something like this:

Go now with Jesus, loving as he loves you
And so reminding others that "God's home in now with God's people."