



build. plant. grow.
the word this week



lent



lectionary
 reading

Cycle A

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Lectionary # 34

Reading I: Ezekiel 37: 12-14

Ezekiel speaks God's words of hope and restoration for the people of Israel. God's **covenant** with the nation of Israel is that they will have life anew. Ezekiel is speaking to a people who have lost hope because of the dire circumstances that have been brought about during their captivity. The Lord consistently remains faithful to His **promise** although the nation of Israel has consistently failed in upholding its part of the **covenant**. God's faithfulness to the **covenant** made with humanity will always be consistent throughout the long history of God's love for humanity.

Reading 2: Romans 8: 8-11

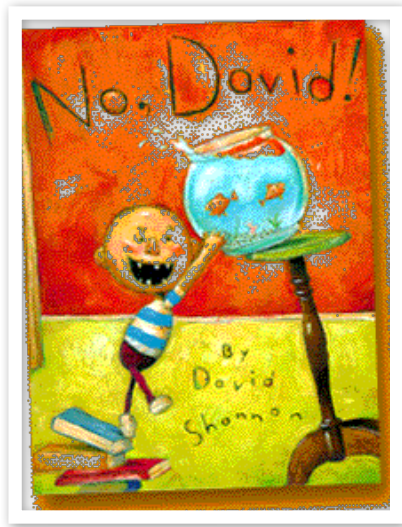
Saint Paul speaks of the fact that God will always provide life for those who are faithful. This is a critical and crucial statement for the Christian Church at Rome to hear for they are in the midst of suffering, persecution and the threat of physical death for their faith in Jesus Christ. Saint Paul reminds and reaffirms the Christian Community that they are spiritual beings having a human experience and that physical death cannot hold sway over everlasting life given the spirit through the power of Jesus Christ risen from the dead. The Romans are reminded that their faithfulness to the **covenant** made with God sealed with the blood of Christ will endure. It is precisely through this **covenant** that we become and forever remain a *dwelling place* that is, *a temple of the Holy Spirit*.

Gospel: John 11: 1-45

The action of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead is yet another sign of God's **covenant promise** of life. In all that Jesus does, we see the glory of God. In the raising of Lazarus, we have the most spectacular manifestation of God's glory through Jesus Christ. This sign or miracle is the backdrop for the religious authorities seeking to bring about the death of Jesus. This is the ultimate catalyst that begins the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, which is the seal and fulfillment of the **covenant** God has made in His love for humanity.



children's story



No! David.

Written by David Shannon

Illustrated by David Shannon

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character
education
activity

**The ultimate revelation of
God's loving covenant with
humanity is in the person of
Jesus Christ and all that Jesus
Christ has done for us.**

No, David!

The title of the book indicates that the character, young David is hearing the words, *No, David!* quite often as a consequence of his involvement in activities that he is not supposed to be doing. The story recounts a litany of the naughtiness with which David involves himself. The young boy careens from one unruly deed to the next--coloring and drawing on walls, tracking mud into the house, jumping up and down on the bed, just to name a few of his infractions. Meanwhile in the background are heard the many timeless childhood phrases such as *come back here, be quiet, not in the house,* and most vigorously *No, David!* Throughout the antics of young David one hears the corrections of a parent who loves him and wishes to give him direction. The story concludes with the parent who has corrected David embracing him and saying *I love you.* Truly an age appropriate story about how the teaching of God's covenant of love is mirrored as best as possible by the love of a parent, a love that embraces and corrects as well.

Activity

Step One: Ask the children in the class if they can relate to David's experience of being told some of the comments sent David's way throughout the story.

Tell the students that they are going to make a big book about something they did or something they know would get a response of *No* from a parent. Ask them if, even after being told *No*, they knew that their mom or dad loved them.

Step Two: Provide each student with a large piece of paper and drawing materials. Assist the students in drawing a line across the top and the bottom of the paper to allow for text to be written in those sections, while the center section of the paper will be used for the drawing.

Step Three: After the drawings are complete and the book is assembled use it as an opportunity to speak to the children about the love that God has for us, even in the midst of our failures or sins. Stress that the love that God has for us helps us to realize and want to be as good as we possibly can be.

A covenant is an agreement between God and His people that binds one to another and the binding force in this covenant is LOVE.



case study

**Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.**

What could you do today?

A **covenant** is much the same as a promise. When we enter into a promise with someone we are making a commitment to live up to that promise. Often formal promises are written up into contracts that reveal the expectations of each person entering the contract. If there is a particular chore or duty you are responsible for, ask your parents to help you write up a contract so that it might remind you of your responsibility and help you to remain faithful to what is written in the contract.

Look Feel Know Act

Think of what happens when promises or contracts are broken. How do you feel? Often times there are instances in our lives and in the world when contracts or promises are not kept. When this occurs there are many things that can result: hurt feelings, disappointment, negative feelings, sadness or anger, all of which can cause a disruption in having a peaceful life.

Can you recall how you felt when you failed in keeping a promise? How about when someone failed in keeping their promise to you? What did you feel? Once you have recalled these feelings, make a commitment to yourself and ask God's help in being faithful to being honest and keeping your word.

In the book *No, David!* we have the opportunity to see that God's love involves correcting us in the midst of any of our wrongdoing. The parent in the story clearly wishes to show David love by guiding him. Even in the midst of David's disobedience the parent still loves him. It is crucial that a child, and an adult for that matter, learn and know that God may not be especially enamored with some of the actions, words, and thoughts that we involve ourselves with but ultimately God loves us. It is crucial that there be a distinction made between wrongful actions that are not lovable, whereas the person is always loved by God.



**closing
tool**

Pray that you will give thanks to God for striving to be faithful to the covenant of love made between you and God. Pray also that God will strengthen you to be one of the most clear images of God in the world.



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