

Life isn't stuff • Breaking open the word

Anything that we do that isn't working toward a deeper relationship with God is useless. That's not to say that we have to spend all our lives in church, but to remember to center everything that we do—our work, our play, our relationships—in God. Otherwise, we run ourselves ragged and create emptiness instead of fulfillment.

The book of Ecclesiastes is a very poetic reflection on life that some people might see as depressing. What it really does, and what our first reading does, is to knock out the extra nonsense that we occupy ourselves with, boiling the meaning of life down to knowing that anything that isn't of God isn't worthwhile. And anything that we do that distracts us from making God our first priority is simply vanity—a puff of smoke, or dust in the wind—that simply doesn't matter.

The second reading reiterates the theme and puts it into the context of the Resurrection. We get rid of anything in our lives that doesn't belong to God and live for God's love instead. We don't need those things—they just hold us back. And they can't compare to the good gifts that God would like to give us. If our hands are full of bad things, they aren't open to receive good ones.

Jesus drives the point home in the Gospel when he says that “life does not consist of possessions.” The man in the story that Jesus told was only concerned with physical comfort. It's not a bad thing that he had enough food and was able to take care of his family; it was a bad thing that once he had what made him comfortable, he forgot about the really important things in life. In a way, he kind of gave up—he basically gave up doing things that mattered and only relaxed all the time.

You can read this Sunday's readings here:

[Scriptures for the Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C](#)

Break open the word with your family

Kids

When two brothers were fighting over their stuff, Jesus said that they were too worried about things, and needed to focus on what was really important—relationships. Do you ever fight with brothers, or sisters, or friends over things that don't really matter? How can you avoid fights like that? How can you make up when you do have an argument?

Teens

Think about the word "vanity." If you don't know the meaning, look it up. What things in your life masquerade as things of worth, but really don't matter? What treasures do you store up (friends, clothes, games, Pokémon (haha!), your physical appearance...)? What would you like to give more value?

Adults

When you assess the things that you do, have, value—what meaning do they have in the context of the Resurrection? What difference do they make in light of eternal life? What difference do they make to the salvation of others?

A little lectio

The ancient practice of prayerfully reflecting on bits of Scripture is known as *lectio divina*. Want to try it out with your family? Head over to [Lectio Divina for Kids](#) to find out how to adapt this prayer practice for your kids.

A little Bible study

Want to do a little Bible study with your kids? Here are some tips:

- During Ordinary Time, the Church pairs the Old Testament and New Testament readings in a way that each sheds light on the other. Ask your kids to look for the common theme connecting the two readings. (Sometimes it's obvious, sometimes it is subtle.) How does the "dialogue" between the readings help you understand them better?
- Get a New American Bible, Revised Edition, and take a look at the footnotes for these readings. How do they change your understanding of what is going on?
- Take a look at the context for the readings—what happens before, or after?
- Read the NABRE's introduction to the book of the Bible that the readings are taken from. How does that help you understand the readings?
- If you don't have a copy of the NABRE at home, you can view it online at the USCCB website at the [Daily Readings](#) web page.

For even more resources for breaking open this Sunday's readings, head over to [The Sunday Website](#).