Who is my neighbor? • Breaking open the word

The way that Moses speaks to the people in the first reading reminds me of how parents sometimes talk to their children—at least how I sometimes talk to mine! He says that the Law of God is not some big mystery that someone would have to go up into the sky and get, or something that has to be explained with great depth—but is something already in our hearts. It's not too hard for us, because God made it a part of us.

The second reading takes it a little further and says that, not only did God put his Law in our hearts already (you know it, in part, as your conscience) but that he came to earth in the person of Jesus to literally show us how to live the Law. He holds it all together—he brings the things that God said to us since the beginning of time to right where we are and explains it in very simple terms—through stories and through his actions toward others.

In the Gospel, we see a man challenge Jesus—trying to make things harder than they are—by asking him how to inherit eternal life. This guy knows the answer already and Jesus says, you tell me. The man says that we should love God with all that we have and love our neighbor as ourselves. That is the right answer. But, he wants Jesus to tell him exactly who his neighbor is. He was probably expecting Jesus to say that the people you already love are your neighbor, but that's not what he said. The story of the Good Samaritan tells the man, and tells us, that even our enemies are our neighbors and that we must treat everyone with kindness and mercy.

You can read this Sunday's readings here:

Scriptures for the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C

Break open the word with your family

Kids

God said that he put his law in our hearts. How do you know what is right and what is wrong? Do you feel it in your heart? How else can you know right from wrong?

Teens

A relationship with God is really, very easy—we just have to treat everyone we meet with love and mercy. Love doesn't mean that you have warm, squishy feelings for them—it means that you would actively work for their best good—to help them when you can. Some people, like the scholar in the Gospel, would try to suggest that there are some people we should love and some we shouldn't. Are there any groups, religions, individuals, races—whatever—that society tells you that you shouldn't love? Or anyone you find it difficult to love? What can you do to help you get over those feelings?

Adults

God doesn't make things complicated—he leaves that up to us. Are there any unnecessarily complicated rules in your life that could use simplification? Do you provide clear rules, reasons and repercussions? Could anything use simplification?

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**.