

Story Path Selections

Year B November 11th, 2018

Gospel Reading: **Mark 12:38-44**

Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts

Jesus chastises the religious leaders for only doing things to show off. He commends, instead, a woman who gives her last two coins, without attention or applause. Jesus knows that what is outside doesn't necessarily mean the most. In *Those Shoes*, everyone in Jeremy's class is showing off their new, impressive shoes and Jeremy, understandably, wants them. But his family can't afford them. He first has to wear a pair of shoes from a charity box, and then his grandmother gets him a pair of boots but they are not the impressive shoes. At a thrift shop, he finds a pair of the impressive shoes he wants. Those shoes are way too small, but in his desperation to look as cool as his classmates, he wears them anyway, despite how much they hurt. But he notices another student at school, Antonio, whose own shoes are in terrible shape. Antonio has noticed Jeremy's shoes and Jeremy knows that he would even wear the charity box shoes if it meant having shoes that are not falling apart. Eventually, Jeremy gives Antonio the too-small impressive shoes, and learns to appreciate the shoes and boots he has. Jeremy realizes what Jesus is telling the religious leaders and disciples—that showing off and focusing on what is on the outside is not the most important thing, and that giving to others quietly and from the heart is the worthier goal. Like Jeremy, we may be taken in at first by public displays and showing off, like those of the religious leaders, but as people of faith, we train our eyes to notice what we have, and to offer it up with quietly generous hearts.

Year B November 18, 2018

Second Reading: **Hebrews 10:11-14, (15-18) 19-25**

Everybody Brings Noodles by Norah Dooley

The end of our Hebrews passage encourages the readers not to neglect meeting together. The gathering of the community of faith is crucial, a chance to approach Jesus in faith and confidence, a chance to confess our hope in him, and a chance to provoke one another to good deeds. The community of faith needs to gather together to do those things. In *Everybody Brings Noodles*, Carrie

plans a talent show so that everyone can display their talents, but the real draw is that everyone gets to come together in their community and show what they have in common—their various types of noodles. This type of community is just as important today as people of faith as it was when the letter of Hebrews was originally written. It is a chance to show what we have in common, like Carrie and her neighbors do, a chance to worship, a chance to provoke one another to good deeds.

November 25

Gospel Reading: **John 18:33-37**

The Quiltmaker's Gift by Jeff Brumbeau

(Written for ages 4-8)

In *The Quilt Maker's Gift*, a talented quilt maker whose quilts are praised and treasured by the people she gives them to catches the notice of a greedy king. He demands that she make him a quilt but she refuses to give in to his demands. She stands up to the king, telling him she will only give him a quilt if he gives away all his possessions, which he will not do. He tries to make her give him a quilt, and each time she refuses and stands up to him. No matter what, the quilt maker stands up to the king until he changes his ways. Pilate was one of the most powerful men in Jesus' time and it had to be scary to be brought before him, but Jesus stood up to Pilate and answered back forcefully and without giving in to Pilate at all. Even to the end of his life, Jesus stood up for his purpose, even against the most powerful people. As his disciples, we follow him in standing up no matter what, always remembering our purpose in Jesus.

December 2

Gospel Reading: **Luke 21:25-36**

Owl Moon by Jane Yolen

(Written for ages 3-7)

Comment: In Luke, Jesus tells the disciples to be alert and be on their guard. Scary things, strange things, and amazing things are coming, but in order to endure, they will have to be watching and paying attention. In *Owl Moon*, a little girl and her father go out late at night into the snowy woods under a giant moon in order to find owls. They have to be quiet and careful, and always keeping watch and paying attention. They have to look and listen hard in order to see an owl. Eventually they do see an owl, just as Jesus tells the disciples that the things they need to watch for and be on

the alert for will come. We are also Jesus' disciples, and so we have to be alert and on our guard, we have to look and listen hard for the things which he has told us to watch for.

December 9

Second Reading: Philippians 1:3-11

Bear Says Thanks by Karma Wilson

(Written for ages 4-8)

Comment: A bear sits alone in his cave, missing his friends. He wants to make a big dinner for them, but has nothing in his cupboards. As each of his friends comes to the house, they bring an item of food, and Bear says "Thanks!" Bear is upset that each of his friends has brought something, and he has nothing to offer. His friends affirm that he has stories to share, and they all enjoy time together. The letter to the church at Phillippi begins with Paul's extreme gratitude for the people there. He has been through a lot, and he knows the people of Phillippi both hold him in prayer and continue his ministry by sharing the gospel. This story can help children to recognize that different people (or creatures!) can bring different gifts to the community of faith. A good activity to pair with this story and scripture lesson would be to name the different qualities we are thankful for in our friends and family, and perhaps even write a letter of thanks to them as Paul has done.