build. plant. grow.
the word this week

ordinary time

Hospitality

lectionary reading

Lectionary # 142

Reading I: Isaiah 25: 6-10a

The **hospitality** of God for all people is immediately evident in the opening line of this passage from the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah seeks to feed our religious imagination and paints a picture of a time that is not yet, but certainly will be. He presents the image of a banquet hall where a sumptuous meal is made ready. This particular image is often referred to as the "Eschatalogical banquet" and has, from ancient time, served as an image for heaven. **Hospitality** and gratitude have long been the identifying marks of the Judeo-Christian Traditions.

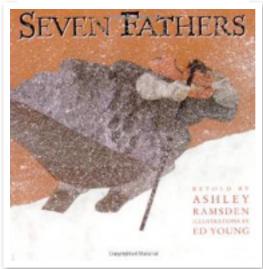### Reading 2: Philippians 4: 12-14, 19-20

Saint Paul speaks to a reality within his own life in the ministry of the Lord when he states that he has known how to live in both humble and abundant circumstances. In the concluding statement of this passage he acknowledges the absolute **hospitality** of God when he states emphatically that trust in God will "fully supply whatever is needed, in accord with the glorious riches in Christ Jesus". In this passage, as in many places throughout the holy scriptures, we learn and must remember that God provides for our needs and not necessarily for our wants. **Hospitality** does indeed provide for needs.

Gospel: Matthew 22 : 1 - 14

Like the first reading from the prophet Isaiah, the beginning of the gospel stresses lavish preparations and **hospitality** the king has planned for those invited to the banquet. In this passage there is clear rejection of the **hospitality** being extended to the invited guests. Those who are invited and choose to ignore the invitation bring wrath upon themselves, including the one who does accept the invitation but comes ill prepared for such favor.

children's story

character education
activity

The word hospitality comes from the Greek language and literally translates to mean "love of strangers."

Seven Fathers

This retelling of a Norwegian folktale speaks beautifully to the virtue of **hospitality** from both the perspectives of the one seeking and the one providing **hospitality.**

On a winter's night, in blinding snow, a solitary traveler is searching for refuge from the cold. Suddenly he comes upon a house blazing with lights and he has a sense of relief. Essentially, the traveler encounters a number of individuals one by one in his search for respite from his travels. In each encounter one can experience the respect, patience and sense of trust the traveler shows in order to receive what he needs. This is a rare story for today's society for seldom do we hear of the importance of the guest/host relationship, and in this case it is what keeps the traveler alive. **Hospitality** to the stranger, throughout the scriptures and in ancient societies focused a great deal on whether a person lived or died in a hostile environment.

Activity

Step One: Ask the students to imagine what makes them feel welcome and cared for when they enter a new or unfamiliar place. Once the students have had some time to think about these things, make a list on the board that the students can easily see. Have them note the differences and the similarities.

Step Two: This will be an opportunity for the students to enter into "role play" that will assist them in understanding good manners and etiquette. Demonstrate such things as the importance of how to introduce oneself with a hand shake, looking at others in the eyes when speaking to them and greeting them, and ways to help them remember the name of the person they just met. This becomes an opportunity for them to recognize that in meeting others, they have the opportunity to meet the Jesus that lives within them.

Hospitality is a virtue that is both commanded and commended throughout the Scriptures..."by entertaining strangers you may be attending to angels without knowing it." Hebrews 13:2 131313:2Scriptures ..."bye ntertaing stargers

case study

Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.

What could you do today?

Make a list of "I WILL" statements and post it on the refrigerator or some other place that you will see frequently so that it will remind you and others in your family of the need to be **hospitable** and kind.

Such a list might look something like this:

I WILL...
*welcome visitors
*make others feel important
*prepare for guests
*gladly share my things
*not expect anything in return for the kindness I show to others.

Other books about **hospitality** that you might like to read:
Ribbit by Rodrigo Folgueria
The Bus Driver by Todd H. Doodler'
The House that wanted a Family by Susan Spence Daniels

Look Feel Know Act

When you look at all the wonderful things and people that God has given you, it is hard not to feel thankful and to then want to make some expression of gratitude for all these good things. One way is to treat others as you would want to be treated, to extend **hospitality** to others. Always try to show thanks to God by extending care and regard to others, especially since you know that God dwells within you and others. If you keep that fact always in the forefront of your mind and within your heart, being hospitable will become as natural and automatic as breathing!

Seven Fathers clearly illustrates the scriptural theme of **hospitality**. The hospitality that is extended goes beyond some simple niceties and provides the necessities of life when a stranger is faced with a harshness that can accompany life. The extension of hospitality, even something as simple as a smile, can give another person a sense of hope and regard that others may be in great need of given what may be going on in their life and that particular part of their life's journey when you meet them.

closing tool

Lord, give me the eyes of Jesus to see my family, neighbors and strangers as you would. Teach me Lord, to love and care for others and not count the cost. Amen.

Santa Clara University

Character Education at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics
ethics programs for communities that learn, live, pray, or work together