



## Cycle B

### Seventeenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Lectionary #110

#### Reading I: 2 Kings 4: 42-44

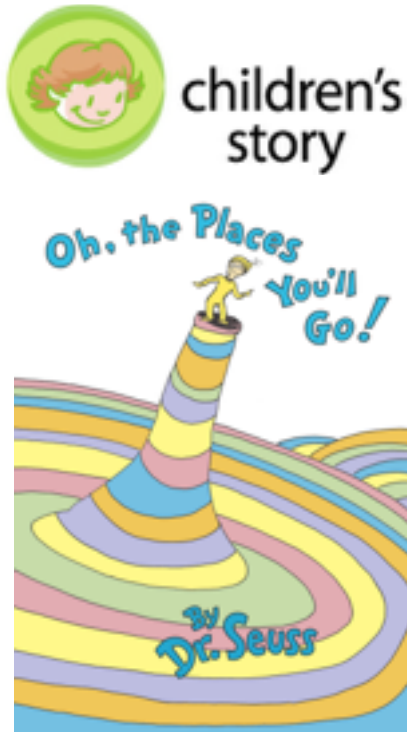
This reading from the book of Kings presents us with a situation that has challenged people throughout the ages: the idea of sharing. In this passage, we hear Elisha, the prophet, **encouraging** the servant to share his twenty barley loaves with the people. However, the servant objects, stating that he does not believe that the twenty barley loaves can be shared with the hundred people present. Elisha assures him that there will be leftovers from what he shares. This story certainly foreshadows what we will hear about in today's Gospel.

#### Reading 2: Ephesians 4: 1-6

Even from his prison cell, Saint Paul is **encouraging** the faithful to live out the virtues that are essential to being grounded in Christ Jesus. Saint Paul is calling the Church at Ephesus and other churches to be one in faith, hope, and love. Saint Paul constantly **encourages** all of the communities he established to imitate the attitudes and actions of Christ in order to become new people through baptism.

#### Gospel: John 6: 1-15

In this reading, there is clearly a reference to the story of Elisha that we heard in the first reading, but Saint John clearly indicates that Jesus is much greater than Elisha. We see the virtue of **encouragement** illustrated through Jesus' interaction with Philip and the other apostles. Jesus **encouraged** the disciples to trust that God would work through the elements provided. Some scripture scholars have suggested that an even greater miracle might have been that all the people present shared what they had with one another without worrying about their own needs.



### Oh, the Places You'll Go!

Written by Dr. Seuss

Illustrated by Dr. Seuss

Publication: Random House, 1990

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character  
education  
activity

**I know why I am here and my only real focused goal is to live each day to the fullest and to try to honor God and be an encouragement to others.**

**What the future holds is firmly in God's hands, and I am very happy about that.**

**-Ken Hensley**

## Oh, the Places You'll Go

*Oh, the Places You'll Go* is probably one of the best books to help **encourage** children of any age. This story is inspirational and honest as it serves as a send-off for children. Dr. Seuss rejoices in the potential everyone has to fulfill their wildest dreams: *You'll be on your way up! / You'll see great sights! / You'll join the high fliers / who soar to high heights.* At the same time, Seuss won't delude the starry-eyed about the pitfalls of life: *You can get all hung up / In a prickly perch. / And your gang will fly on / You'll be left in a lurch!* But fear not, for Seuss is convinced *98 and 3/4 percent* that success is guaranteed. The **encouragement** is authentic and realistic so that children know that they can accomplish great things despite challenges that they may face along the way.

### Activity: A Life Plan Keeping God's Will in Mind

Step One: Provide each student with an 8x11 piece of paper that you will have designed in the following manner:

At the top of the paper, place the following title line: **A Life Plan Keeping God's Will in Mind**

Underneath the title, make three columns and designate them as follows:

Column 1: Sentence Completion

Column 2: Who can help with this?

Column 3: Prayer to God for help in this

Step Two: In Column 1, provide the following sentences to be completed by the students:

1. By the end of the school year, I hope to...
2. Two years from now, I hope to....
3. By the time I start high school, I hope to...
4. After I graduate from high school, I hope to...
5. When I am 35 years old, I hope to...
6. When I am 90 years old, I hope to...
7. My goal in life is to...

Step Three: In the second column, students should identify anyone who would be helpful and **encouraging** to them as they work to reach their goals.

Step Four: In the third column, students should write a specific prayer to God asking for help along the way.

**Encouragement, -noun-**  
**The action of giving  
someone support,  
confidence, or hope.**



**case study**

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

## **What could you do today?**

Most likely, you say the Lord's Prayer, the Our Father, every day in the morning, at school, or before you go to bed at night. Before you say the Our Father, state your desire or goal for your day and pay particular attention to the phrase *thy will be done*. This is a statement that says that you trust that God will ALWAYS see to your greatest good. God **encourages** us to turn to Him in prayer and we must believe that God will answer our prayers in the manner that is best for us.

## **Look Feel Know Act**

Think about how meaningful **encouraging** words are for you, especially when you might be having a difficult day. Words of **encouragement** can make any situation a bit better and can also assure you that you are not alone because someone decided to speak those words of **encouragement** to you. Doing the same thing for someone else when they are feeling down or need a lift can be a lot like giving someone a much needed gift. Commit yourself to say kind, loving, and **encouraging** words. In one of Saint Paul's letters, he **encourages** people to *say only the words people need to hear, those words that will really help and encourage them*.

One would have to look far and wide to find a book that is more **encouraging** than Dr. Seuss's *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* The story is an excellent way to teach children about the importance of being **encouraged** by the word of God, by leaders in the community, and by speaking **encouraging** words to those around them. The theme of **encouraging** people is present in all three of the readings selected for this Sunday and is one of the most important virtues for living a Christian life.



closing  
tool

Pray that you will be able to open your ears when the selections from the Bible are read so that you will hear and take into your heart words of encouragement, even if they might be challenging to understand at first. Know that God is always encouraging you. Amen.



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