



easter



lectionary
reading

Cycle C

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Lectionary #61

Reading I: Acts of the Apostles 7: 55-60

This is the first record in the early church of someone spilling their blood for the sake of the Gospel. Stephen, a man of great faith, angered the synagogue officials for proclaiming the superiority of Jesus over Moses and the Temple. Many people provided false testimonies to accuse Stephen of blasphemy, and this led to his stoning. In the midst of the stoning, Stephen is provided with an image of Jesus seated at the right hand of the Father, and this image instilled in him such **confidence** that he not only hands himself over to death, but forgives those who have murdered him, similarly to the way that Jesus forgave those as he hung on the cross.

Reading 2: Revelations 22: 12-14, 16-17, 20

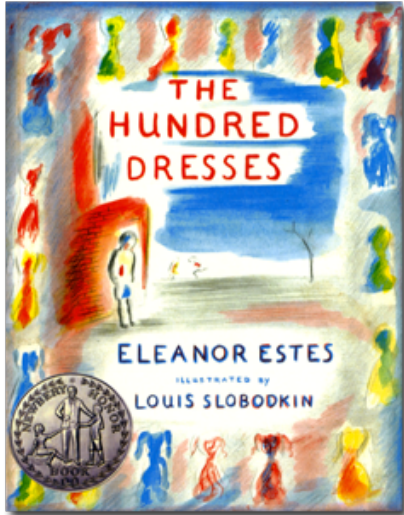
These are the final words of the New Testament, and they instill great **confidence** to those who believe. We hear Christ's voice announcing blessings, recompense, and *I Am* statements that provide us with promises of hope and healing. This passage was initially intended to give comfort and **confidence** for those caught in the midst of turmoil. This **confidence** is ours as well, and we can draw on it as we face our own challenges.

Gospel: John 17: 20-26

Common in the Gospel of Saint John is the unity and trust that Jesus has in the Father, and this is an example of the great **confidence** that he has in their relationship. This absolute **confidence** is exhibited when Jesus speaks about the oneness and unity that exist in the love that the Father has for the Son and the Son for the Father. Jesus wishes for this unity to extend to all those who are a part of him and become the model of unity that Christ seeks for his Church. This love calls us to a **confidence** in the Trinity that supersedes any other person or thing that we might rely on. Our absolute **confidence** must always be in the Triune God's love for us.



children's story



The Hundred Dresses

Written by Eleanor Estes

Illustrated by Louis Slobodkin

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character
education
activity

Have no fear of moving into the unknown. Simply step out fearlessly knowing that God is with you, therefore no harm can befall you; all is well, very well. Do this in complete faith and confidence.

-Saint Pope John Paul II

The Hundred Dresses

In this story, a little girl named Wanda is faced with difficulties that go along with the experience of poverty. She is harassed by the other children in her class because she wears the same drab blue dress every day, yet she has a creativity that is unrivaled. She proclaims that she has 100 beautiful dresses all lined up in her closet, and indeed she does, but they are all paper dresses that she has designed. In the midst of the teasing, Wanda is **confident** because she believes in herself and her creativity. Eventually, Wanda's talent is brought to light, but not before she has moved away, which makes it impossible for those who have teased her to make things right.

Writing the Sequel to The Hundred Dresses

Step One: Break the class into groups of 3-5 students and invite them to write a sequel to the story of *The Hundred Dresses*. How might their stories be different from Wanda's experience in Boggin Heights? Ask them to address some of the following questions as they create the sequel:

- What is Wanda's new life like in the new city she has moved to?
- Does she still hold believe in herself and have confidence, and how is that shown?
- Do the children at her new school tease her?
- How does Wanda speak about Maddie and Peggy to her new school mates?
- What does Wanda eventually do with her life? Is there a possibility that she will meet those who made fun of her again in the future? If so, how will she respond to them?

Step Two: Invite the students in the groups to work on illustrations that will accompany the sequel they are writing.

Step Three: Invite the students to write about something that they **confidently** know is one of the gifts God has given them and to write a short story about that gift. If they wish, they could also include an illustration of this.

**Con-fi-dence- noun-
the feeling or belief
that one can rely on
someone or something;
firm trust.**



case study

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

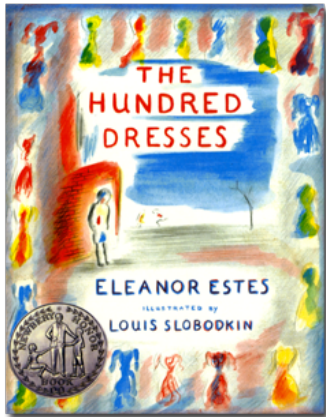
What could you do today?

Building **confidence** in ourselves occurs in many different ways, but one way is to participate in activities that are new and that contribute to the community. One important community that you might want to contribute to is your family. You can ask your parents how you might learn to do something new that would help the family, such as learning how to do a new chore. You might volunteer to unpack the groceries, ask to help prepare dinner, or clean the car. Once you learn these things, your ability to contribute to your family will help you grow in **confidence** in your abilities.

Look Feel Know Act

If you look in newspaper articles, magazines, on the Internet, and on different television stations, you will likely see special reports of people who have done great things despite the many barriers they have faced in their lives. Find one of these stories that interests you and do a little more research regarding that person. Try to identify the setbacks or challenges that they have had to face, how they rose above them, and how those events helped them grow in **confidence**.

After looking at this person, try to identify how you have risen above obstacles in your life, and reflect on whether these situations allowed you to grow in **confidence**. Think about this **confidence** and how it might inspire you to take on a new challenge. Remember that God should always be your partner during any challenge that you face. Always be open to the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding you. Have **confidence** that God always knows the direction we should go in and will always seek for us to reach our greatest good.



The Scripture passages and the children's book *The Hundred Dresses* are filled with opportunities to see how **confidence** can play an immense role in being faithful to who we are and what we are called to do in life. In all of the accounts, odds that are seemingly insurmountable are overcome with faith and **confidence**. For people who live in faith, God plays a huge role in our ability to live **confidently** in a world that is ever changing. Remember that God will, if invited, be part of the process of building up our **confidence**.



closing
tool

Lord, you are the true source of light and wisdom. I pray that your light and brilliance will illuminate my heart and mind so that I may have the confidence to live in a way that your spirit will guide and teach me. May the confidence I have be humble in nature so that my thoughts, words, and actions reflect you. Amen.



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