

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Anyone who loves God is known by him. Put trust in that Spirit that leads to do good; to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously.

—I Corinthians 8:3 NRSV and Doctrine and Covenants 10:6 adapted

Explore

large candles, matches, votive candles, paper, pens, flip chart or chalkboard, markers or chalk

Living Examples

Before class, light a large candle to represent Christ. Ask: Who is a living example? If you could identify a person who you consider to be a living example of Christ, who would it be? Ask the students to think silently about that person as they light a votive candle from the Christ candle. Ask: How does the light of the candle reflect the life exemplified by the person in your thoughts? On paper, have students list the characteristics of the person. Have students put out their candle when they have finished. On a flip chart or chalkboard make a composite list from all the characteristics identified by the class.

Extract

Bible, newsprint, markers, paper, pens or pencils

Early Examples

Parents are usually the youths' first examples. Give students markers, and, on a big sheet of newsprint, have them quickly list things they could learn from parents' examples—whether positive or negative (food likes or dislikes, treatment of partner, willingness to help at home, use of intellect, athletic or musical ability, religious practices, politics, hospitality, tolerance). Ask them to reflect on this list. (As the teacher, be prepared for a range of responses. Listen without judgement or commenting, hold your own concerns, and express the concerns you may have only in prayer to God, unless there are safety issues involved.)

I Corinthians
8:10–12

Perhaps at no other time in life are we pressured by both positive and negative examples as much as during the teen years. Teens of the twenty-first century are pressured by a wide variety of life examples. Read I Corinthians 8:10–12 and ask youth these questions: If you are called to be a living example, do the “gray areas” make a difference? Does it matter if I take one puff, one sniff, or just one drink this time? if I watch inappropriate movies? if I share destructive gossip? if I become addicted to violent television? Define gray areas in relation to black or white and right or wrong. Have an open discussion with students sharing their responses to the previous questions. On the paper provided, ask students to reflect on the Corinthian scripture and the living examples currently in their lives.

Experience

display items, tray, cloth, paper, pens or pencils

The Pattern

Focus the class attention on a display of items prepared before class and covered with cloth. (**Display items may include: building plans, landscape diagrams, clothing patterns, craft instructions, Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, recipe books, or other items used as patterns or guides.**) Provide each student with paper and pen or pencil. Tell students to observe the items on the tray when you uncover them. They will have thirty seconds to look. They are to try to remember as many items as they can when the tray is removed. When time is up, remove the tray of items, and ask students to list on the paper the items they remember. Allow about three minutes, then have students share what they wrote and tell how the item can be used as an example or guide.

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If students haven't already identified the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants as a means to understanding what it takes to be a living example, introduce them. Discuss how members of the Community of Christ are called to walk the path of the disciple. Ask: Whose example do we follow when on this path? Using markers draw a path on a large piece of banner paper taped to the wall. Ask the group to think of any common clichés (sayings, phrases) that in some way convey the ideas of being a living example (walk the talk, practice what you preach, put your money where your mouth is, actions speak louder than words) and write them on the path. Ask them to interpret these saying in terms of being a living example of Jesus. Let students add illustrations to enhance the banner. Talk about how they can be part of a group, yet be seen as someone different because of attitudes and actions. Is it possible? If so, how? Add group suggestions around the outside edge of the banner to frame the path. Search the scriptures for guidance and examples.

markers, banner paper, Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants

Memo to Self

Make a memo board for your locker, from the supplies provided by your teacher, to help you remember to follow the example of Christ. Follow these steps:

1. Decorate a piece of card stock and include the phrase, "I will follow Christ by."
2. Cover your finished product with clear adhesive plastic on the front and back.
3. Attach flat magnets to the back side.
4. You may want to punch a hole through a corner and use a string to tie on a washable marker.

card stock; clear adhesive plastic magnets in long, flat strips; hole punch and string; glue (optional); washable marker pen

Expand

Ask: Is your life the kind of example that would attract others to Jesus Christ? Doctrine and Covenants 153:9a–c gives the "how to." Review the list created at the beginning of class. Ask each student to silently measure their life against the criteria they collected. Think about where they are and how they might become a living example. Instruct students to relight their votive candle from the Christ candle as they finish meditating on the activity. When all candles are lit, close with prayer.

votive candles, Doctrine and Covenants 153:9a–c.

Lectionary scriptures—Deuteronomy 18:15–20; Psalm 111; I Corinthians 8:1–13; Mark 1:19–25 IV/1:21–28