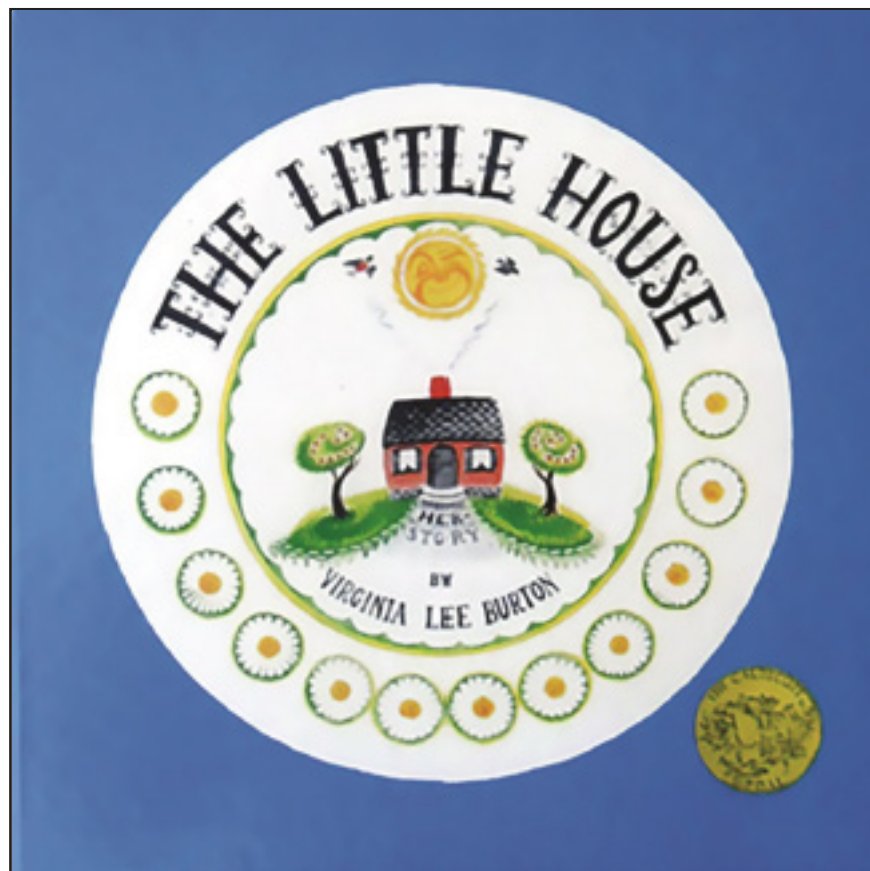


# Living Grace

CYCLE B 30TH SUNDAY  
ORDINARY TIME

"CALLING OUT TO JESUS RESTORES US TO LIFE"



*In **The Little House**, we find a story about a little house that originally lived in the country, but as the years go by the countryside transforms into an urban city. What was once green grass and natural surroundings turned into large skyscrapers and loud train stations. The Little House grew shabbier and shabbier with each passing day. Soon enough, the little house disliked living in a city. "She missed the field of daisies / and the apple trees dancing in the moonlight." Fortunately, there is a happy ending, as the house is taken back to the countryside, "returned home" where she belongs.*



### ***THE PARABLE OF THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND***

*Painting by Pieter Bruegel ~ 1568*

*National Museum of Capodimonte ~ Naples, Italy*

#### **EXPLORING THE ART:**

This painting depicts the Biblical parable of the blind leading the blind from the Gospel of Matthew 15:14. It points to the disability of literal “blindness” to the “blindness of hypocrisy” that Jesus often pointed out in the Pharisees - pointing out the sins of others, without looking at the presence of sin in their own lives. Jesus emphasizes that the Pharisees (the leaders of the church) were the blind leading the blind, and that all would end up falling into the ditch, and the disciples should pay no attention to them. Pieter Bruegel here depicts the subject literally.

#### **SYMBOLISM IN ART & SCRIPTURE**

This painting reflects Bruegel’s mastery of observation. Each figure has a different eye affliction. (Ophthalmologists can recognize five different eye diseases in this painting). The men hold their heads aloft to make better use of their other senses. The diagonal composition reinforces the off-kilter motion of the six figures falling in progression. It is considered a masterwork for its accurate detail and composition. This painting is also a study of the different stages of falling, a technical challenge that Bruegel seemed to be fascinated by toward the end of his life. The expressions on the faces range from trust to surprise and shock. Groups of blind beggars were a common sight in 16th century Europe, and were a subject of regular concern to Bruegel, and he also incorporated similar groups into his other works of art. This work is the subtle mixture of genre painting, moralistic sermon, and landscape painting, all typical of Bruegel’s work.

# Living Grace

READ-ALoud STORY



## **ABIDE IN ME**

*Vicki Shuck, Esperanza Arts*

*If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*

*By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*

*As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Abide in my love.*

*~ John 7:7-9*

Read-aloud video link:

**THE LITTLE HOUSE**

Written & Illustrated by Virginia Lee Burton

# Sunday Gospel

MARK 10:46-52

As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd,  
Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus,  
sat by the roadside begging.

On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth,  
he began to cry out and say,

"Jesus, son of David, have pity on me."

And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent.

But he kept calling out all the more,

"Son of David, have pity on me."

Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."

So they called the blind man, saying to him,

"Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you."

He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus.

Jesus said to him in reply, "What do you want me to do for you?"

The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see."

Jesus told him, "Go your way; your faith has saved you."

Immediately he received his sight

and followed him on the way.

# Making the Connections

FOR ADULTS

**CALL OUT TO JESUS WITH FAITH, AND BE WILLING TO RISK CHANGE, AND YOU WILL BE RESTORED TO AN ABUNDANCE OF HEALTH AND HAPPINESS.**

This gospel gives a wonderful opportunity to talk with your children about disabilities on the inside and the out. The blind man's life is changed because he had the courage to cry for help. His desire for change came from deep within. God offers us healing in many different forms, but we can't receive help if we don't ask for it. The help of others is necessary for The Little House and for the blind man to heal. We need the love and the care of others when we are stuck or can't see a way forward.

Our relationship with God is collaborative. Jesus asks the blind man what he wants. The blind man steps forward and makes his desire clear. It is the blind man's courage and readiness for change, along with the saving touch of God's grace in Jesus, that liberates the blind man. In our children's story, the Little House's life becomes obscured due to changes made all around it. How can that happen in our families? What changes do we need to ask for in order to bring about new life-giving circumstances?

Once the blind man is healed, his life moves in a new direction. Is there a way that this has happened for your family? Is there a way God may be inviting change to happen? Change is often made possible by the assistance of others. The Little House would have remained invisible if not for other people discovering it.

**Can your family open your eyes to see those situations that may be invisible around you? Pray together to Jesus as a family that you may truly 'see'.**

# Making the Connections

FOR CHILDREN

**MY STORY:** Have you ever broken a bone? If so, how did it affect your participation in life? Do you have a family member or friend with a physical disability? How do they handle it? Does life change for a person afflicted with a physical impairment? Does life change for those who love them? Does it make them grow strong on the inside? When does a physical disability become a something that hurts a relationship or friendship between two people? Where does true "strength" lie?

**THE CHILDREN'S STORY:** Does anyone see The Little House? What happens when the Little House is "seen"? Does it take the 'sight' of others for the Little House to get help? Where does true "sight" lie?

**THE GOSPEL STORY:** What does the blind man ask of Jesus? The man wants to change; how does Jesus respond?

**How do we have to be willing to change on the inside to be changed on the outside?**

# Biblical Background

MARK 10:46-52

**GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING:** Jericho is considered a resort town along the Jordan River. It is a warm, desert climate close to the Dead Sea. One travels through Jericho when going from Galilee to Jerusalem.

**TERMS: Mercy** Mercy is inherent in the Mediterranean value system. Mercy describes a person's willingness to pay personal debts. By repeating this statement over and over, the beggar insists that Jesus owes the healing to him. By shouting it out ever more loudly, the clever beggar incites the entire crowd to become aware of Jesus' debt to him.

**Son of David** This title is an acknowledgement that Jesus belongs to the Kingly line of Israel. To call Jesus the Son of David is to reference Jesus' right to the throne of Israel; to call him the Son of Israel and the Son of the King. It was understood in the Mediterranean world that people's identity was tied up in the family line to which they belonged. The beggar identifies Jesus as being from David's lineage; all the listeners would have understood that this was the family line the Savior was expected to come from.

**Cloak** A loose fitting coat worn over a tunic, which was the dress worn next to one's skin.

**CULTURAL INSIGHT:** It was understood in Jewish culture that those that stood in need and begged were called to do so for everyone to be able to fulfill their debt to the poor. The notion was, that we are all required to care for the poor, to give to those in need as God gives to us. It was understood that those with needs fulfilled a purpose, in that they gave the whole community an opportunity to serve by giving to them. This tradition is the root of our current understanding of doing peace and justice, or "pious acts".

**INSIGHT INTO MEANING:** Blindness was very common in these times. A blind person would accept their state in life as one given to them by God. This blind man wants more, and appeals publically to Jesus' honor, in requesting freedom and a change of status. In the time of Jesus, one's status was considered fixed. Jesus' willingness to respond to this man's request indicates that the kingdom which Jesus is ushering in invites people to "rise" up and out of their circumstances. This is the kind of liberation and "sight" that Jesus comes to initiate.

# Family Activities

SHARING THE MISSION AT HOME  
AND IN THE WORLD



**QUESTION OF THE WEEK:** Is there someone you pass by everyday whose needs you might not be noticing?

**CHARACTER QUALITIES:** SENSITIVITY  
OPENNESS

**FAMILY ACTIVITIES:** Choose a physical disability to learn more about as a family. Learn how people compensate for this disability. Find out how you can get involved in your community with a group of people impacted by this physical difference. Discuss ways that your family might be able to build a relationship with someone with a disability and to help others "see", too.