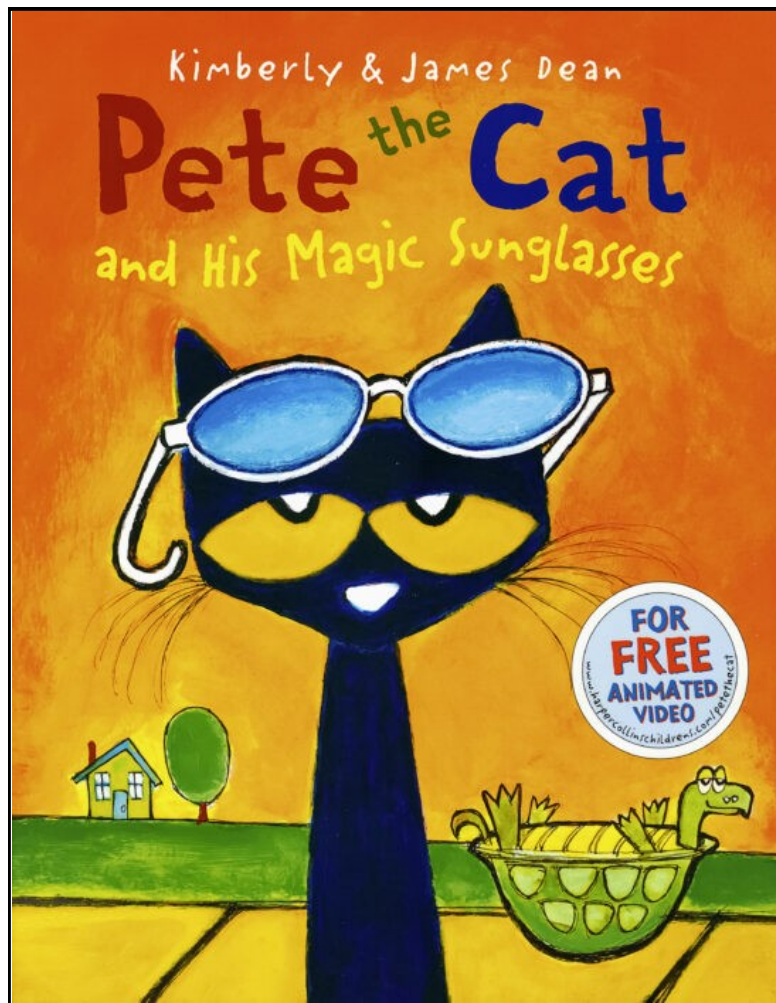


Living Grace

CYCLE B 3RD SUNDAY
ORDINARY TIME

"FOLLOWING GOD WITH ABANDON"



*In **Pete the Cat and His Magic Sunglasses** Pete wakes up feeling grumpy. Nothing seems to be going his way, but with the help of some rockin' magic sunglasses from Grumpy Toad, his mood changes from grumpy to awesome. As Pete the Cat travels through town, he meets friends that could use a little bit of magic. Pete the Cat goes on to help a hungry squirrel, a tipped-over turtle, and a lonely alligator all get a boost of positive vibes from the magic sunglasses. They all discover that the sun is shining and everything's alright, and most importantly, Pete learns that the good mood has been inside him all along!*

Art & Faith

EXPLORING THE BEAUTY & TRADITION
OF SACRED ART



CALLING OF THE APOSTLES

*Fresco painting by Domenico Ghirlandaio ~ 1481
Sistine Chapel, The Vatican ~ Vatican City*

EXPLORING THE ART:

This fresco painting depicts the Gospel story of Jesus Christ calling Peter and Andrew to become his disciples. Interestingly, there are actually three scenes going on at the same time in this painting. In the background left, the fishermen Peter and Andrew are walking out of the water toward Jesus. They can also be seen in the background right, behind Jesus, who calls James and John, who are restoring the nets on their father Zebedee's boat. Then in the foreground, Peter and Andrew, dressed in cloaks with their traditional colors (yellow for Peter and green for Andrew), are kneeling beside Christ, who blesses them.

CALLED TO BE FISHERS OF MEN

Another interesting element is that the onlookers, who are represented as witnesses of the biblical event, are dressed in contemporary clothes, not the clothing of biblical times. And their faces are actually portraits of people who currently lived in the Florentine community in Rome. It is said that the inclusion of these Florentines in a fresco painted for the Vatican had political significance, because the Florentine government had recently accused Pope Sixtus IV of complicity in the conspiracy to murder the leading members of the powerful and wealthy Florentine Medici family.

Living Grace

READ-ALoud STORY



"Abide in Me" by Vicki Shuck, Esperanza

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:

PETE THE CAT AND HIS MAGIC SUNGLASSES

By Kimberly and James Dean

Sunday Gospel

MARK 1:14-20

After John had been arrested,
Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God:
"This is the time of fulfillment.
The kingdom of God is at hand.
Repent, and believe in the gospel."

As he passed by the Sea of Galilee,
he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea;
they were fishermen.
Jesus said to them,
"Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men."
Then they abandoned their nets and followed him.
He walked along a little farther
and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John.
They too were in a boat mending their nets.
Then he called them.
So they left their father Zebedee in the boat
along with the hired men and followed him.

Making the Connections

FOR ADULTS

SEEING THE WORLD THROUGH GOD-COLORED GLASSES BRINGS A CHANGE OF DIRECTION!

Both Pete the Cat, Peter the Apostle, and their friends were experiencing the doldrums of everyday life when it becomes ordinary and predictable. The 'blues' can happen when things become TOO routine. However things changed for them when someone came along and invited them to put on a new set of glasses, a new lens, to see the world in a whole new way. Pete the Cat had the doldrums until he put on the "Magic Blue Sunglasses". Pete put on the blue sunglasses and looked all around! WOW! "RIGHT ON!" he exclaimed! Pete saw all things new, "The birds are singing. The sky is bright. The sun is shining. I'm feeling ALRIGHT!" Wow those sunglasses completely change his whole point of view!

Jesus invited Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they abandoned their nets and followed him," the gospel tells us. They would never be the same, somehow in that invitation and their ability to respond, they began to see the world and their lives through a whole new lens. Pete the Cat, like Jesus, continue down the road and keep inviting. The transformation in both set of characters in each story is remarkable. Suddenly, they SEE. They drop everything to follow along. They then through their sight their behavior changes and eventually they become members of a whole new society. One that sees that "the birds are singing. The sky is bright. The sun is shining. I am feeling ALRIGHT!" People want to join along people like that!

Jesus invites us to hear the Good News of the Gospel, that God has sent his son to free us from the burdens and worries of sin and death. From a life of slavery and the work of drudgery, to having a new way of participation and purpose in the world. The love of God, and our love for each other, will transform us and our whole world for a life of meaning, companionship, and fulfillment. All that our hearts were created for. That news and experience is going to change us! Change us in ways that people will notice. Through the invitation to this transforming journey as in Pete the Cat and Jesus, a new community is formed. That is important to see. We need community to walk in the world ALIVE in Christ. We need community to not fall back into the doldrums. We need community to see life through the lens of Called, Gifted and Missioned for a purpose.

SEEING and experiencing this Good News is going to change us! Change us in ways that people will notice. It's through creating communities of people who SEE that heaven grows on earth. What an amazing invitation we are given by Jesus. Pete and his friends get it, Peter and the apostles see, now will we? That's the question the church brings to us as we begin this most important New Year!

Making the Connections

FOR CHILDREN

YOUR STORY: Do you ever have any days where you are feeling the blues?

THE CHILDREN'S STORY: Do you know anyone like grumpy turtle? What would you think if a Grumpy turtle in your life came in singing tunes of joy and happiness? Would people follow a changed grumpy turtle and start to sing along? Would that seem like a miracle to many people? Imagine the scene with the person you are thinking of? What would it look like?

THE GOSPEL STORY: What do you think the scene looked like on the Sea of Galilee the day Jesus came and invited the first apostles to follow him? Do you think they seemed changed to people? Why do you think they followed Jesus and "the hired men" and their Dad Zebedee, stayed home? Is there a certain openness one needs to follow Jesus? What other qualities do you think a person needs to follow Jesus? What would have been the challenges for the first apostles? What are the challenges for you in following Jesus today?

Biblical Background

MARK 1:14-20

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING: Jesus the craftsman moves from Nazareth, an insignificant village, to Capernaum, a hub of activity on the Sea of Galilee at the crossroads of major highways. His presence and activity stir curiosity and become the topic of gossip.

TERMS: *Fisherman* Around the Sea of Galilee fishing would have been one of the standard occupations. Commercial fishing was a big business then, required owning boats and managing a large staff.

Son of In the Mediterranean World one's identity is in relationship to one's father.

Gospel of God God's good news, a new message from God, the announcement.

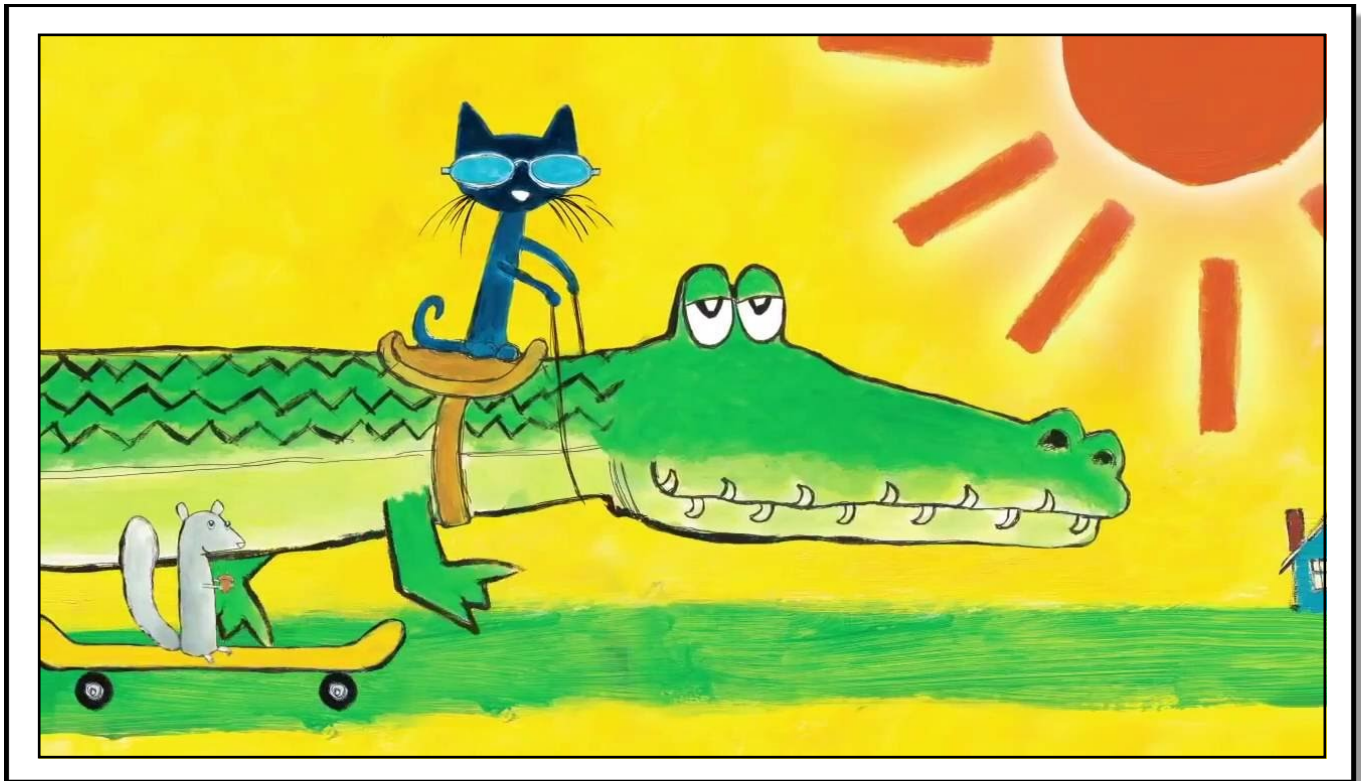
Repent and Believe Turn around, going one way and responding to an invitation to turn around and go the other. It can involve being a witness to this kind of change in people that inspires one to turn around and follow this good news. This 'good news' is Jesus' pronouncement of God acting powerfully in people's lives, healing the blind and the lame. Come this way.

CULTURAL INSIGHT: Gathering a following is a common experience in the Mediterranean world. Technically, a group that gathers for a specific purpose for a long time is called a coalition. Usually the faction leader has a grievance and gathers around him others who share the grievance. Fishing was a major industry in the first century, much too demanding to be the pastime of a single family. The brothers Simon and Andrew works with their father Jonah, while the brothers James and John worked with their father Zebedee. These two families are examples of small corporations that also employed "hired hands".

INSIGHT INTO MEANING: Two new metaphors are introduced to these first apostle of Jesus, "kingdom of God is at hand". To the Jewish Mediterranean mindset what would this inspire? It truly had to inspire the hearts of these men to drop their nets, their livelihood and to follow Jesus. Truly Jesus must have offered them a new lens that changed the way they saw everything. And now that they "saw" they could make big life direction choices with an unwavering certainty. It can be very helpful for our own lives to reflect on what would have given them that kind of certainty to leave their livelihood and their families to follow Jesus? For us it may involve a shift from being a self and world centered human, to becoming a God-centered human being. Whatever is in your center is going to be the hub that the wheel of one's life revolves around. This might help us to understand what real conversion looks like. Looking out at life from completely different centers. The other new term is to become "fishers of men". This connotes an invitation to a whole new responsibility. No longer is one's life about fish and feeding themselves. But one's life becomes about feeling a care and a call to care for all God's children in the world. Thus, again we learn from this reading that following Jesus means to move out of a self-centered preoccupation to a world-centered occupation of being entrusted with the feeding and nourishing of the life of the world, both in this life and the next.

Family Activities

SHARING THE MISSION AT HOME
AND IN THE WORLD



QUESTION OF THE WEEK: Do you know someone who was really changed by following Jesus? What did those changes look like?

CHARACTER QUALITIES: ABANDON
JOY

FAMILY ACTIVITIES: Talk about what it means to put on “the magic blue sunglasses” in the world. And the ‘eyes of Christ’. Have each family member talk about what it means to them. Make a New Year’s resolution as a family to see the good and strengths in your family life. Then invite others into your families experience and joy. See what happens!