

Finish the work • Breaking open the word

Being able to finish what you've started is important, so you want to make sure that you have what it takes to get a job done before you start. When we accept a relationship with God, we are promising to see whatever God calls us to, to the end. And, almost none of it is cut and dry...

The first reading, from the Book of Wisdom, is a reflection on the limitations of humanity. We struggle to understand the physical world around us—our knowledge has been unfolding over the course of history, but there is so much we don't know. How can we possibly know God who is so much bigger than anything we can see? It is through God's grace—through the gift of self-revelation that God offers us freely that we know anything about God. God wants to be known by us, and slowly and working with our particular abilities to understand.

Paul, in the second reading, is preparing to send a man named Onesimus to friends in one of the communities he's had dealings with. Onesimus is a slave who had run away—possibly because he had stolen something—and served Paul while he was in prison. Paul converted this man to Christianity while they were together, and is asking the community to accept him as a brother. There is a suggestion that Paul saw Onesimus as one fit for ministry in the community and should be welcomed without any repercussions of his past life. Whatever happened in the past, his worth as a child of God and one who has accepted Christ, outweighs everything else.

In the Gospel, Jesus shares with people who were following him around, the cost of discipleship. He speaks, yet again, of detachment from family and all other things that would cause distraction from living a truly Christian life. Not that family always takes us from that—family can be the most

strengthening place to develop a relationship and come to understand our vocation with Christ—but sometimes, we might be tempted to put the people we love above God (which, in reality is hurting our relationships with them—but that’s another story). Jesus tells us that our commitment to God means being prepared for whatever might unfold in our lives. In some cases, being prepared is easy—we know what is needed to build a house or to complete a school project. But, we don’t know what’s coming down the pike—and for the surprises (good and bad), being prepared means being willing to trust that God will get us through every difficulty and challenge.

You can read this Sunday’s readings here:

[Scriptures for the Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C](#)

Break open the word with your family

Kids

Did you ever start a project—like building something with Legos, or putting a puzzle together—and then realize that you didn’t have all the pieces you needed? How did that make you feel? What did you learn from it?

Teens

If you have made your Confirmation, you know that you were saying “yes” to living fully the call you received by God in your Baptism. Did you understand what you were saying “yes” to? What has that meant for you so far? Has the meaning changed at all since your Confirmation?

Adults

When you began your career, got married, had kids—whatever major things you have committed yourselves to—did you really

know what you were getting yourselves into? What sustained you during times of trouble? Did the way that you dealt with these things strengthen your relationship with God? How did you see God's hand in these times?

A little lectio

The ancient practice of prayerfully reflecting on bits of Scripture is known as *lectio divina*. Want to try it out with your family? Head over to [Lectio Divina for Kids](#) to find out how to adapt this prayer practice for your kids.

A little Bible study

Want to do a little Bible study with your kids? Here are some tips:

- During Ordinary Time, the Church pairs the Old Testament and New Testament readings in a way that each sheds light on the other. Ask your kids to look for the common theme connecting the two readings. (Sometimes it's obvious, sometimes it is subtle.) How does the "dialogue" between the readings help you understand them better?
- Get a New American Bible, Revised Edition, and take a look at the footnotes for these readings. How do they change your understanding of what is going on?
- Take a look at the context for the readings—what happens before, or after?
- Read the NABRE's introduction to the book of the Bible that the readings are taken from. How does that help you understand the readings?
- If you don't have a copy of the NABRE at home, you can view it online at the USCCB website at the [Daily](#)

[Readings](#) web page.

For even more resources for breaking open this Sunday's readings, head over to [The Sunday Website](#).