

Our Sabbath Scripture Stories



F A M I L I E S R E C L A I M I N G S U N D A Y

Read aloud: Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18
 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18
Gospel: Luke 18:9-14

"Happy Anniversary, Mom and Dad!" the banner read as Mr. and Mrs. Pauline came into the kitchen this Sunday morning. It was a beautiful, sunny day, and the Pauline children had woke up early to make a special anniversary breakfast for their parents.

"Thank you, everyone!" Mom and Dad replied.

"We hope that you like what we made you!" Vincent said. "I was the chief cook. I made the waffles mixed with bacon bits and scrambled egg chunks!" he said proudly.

"And I made the fresh squeezed orange juice!" said Hillary. "Lucy made the muffins, and Mary Clare made the toast."

"And the best part is that we all got you presents!" Vincent said.

After a wonderfully "tasty" breakfast, Mr. and Mrs. Pauline sat down to open the gifts their children had bought for them. One after the other, the gifts were opened. They were nice and useful: salt and pepper shakers, a napkin holder, and a fancy box of candy.

Four-year-old Hillary had put her present on the table, but then Mrs. Pauline noticed that she quietly took it away. She hid it under the cushion of the couch.

"Hillary," Mom asked her very gently. "What happened to the present you wrapped?"

Hillary's eyes were wet with tears. "Their presents were all from the store," she wept, "and my present is just something I made. It's not as nice as the other presents!"

Dad swept Hillary up into his arms.



"Hillary," Dad said to her, "our Gospel reading for this morning talks about this very thing. Maybe now is a good time for us to read this Scripture passage."

Dad went over to his desk and grabbed his Bible. He sat down and read from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 18. When he was finished, he said, "Today's reading talks about humility. Now, who was the self-righteous person in this reading?"

"I know," answered Mary Clare. "It was the Pharisee!"

"Right, Mary Clare," Dad said. "The Pharisee was so busy talking about himself and his good deeds that he was *too* proud and boastful."

Dad continued, "Now, what about the tax collector?"

Vincent jumped in, "He was the one who was humble. He kept asking God for mercy, and he recognized that he was a sinner. It seems to me that he was the sincere one."

"Absolutely right, Vincent!" Dad agreed. "He was clearly aware of his unworthiness in the sight of God, but had the courage to beg God to forgive him anyway."

"Which brings us now to Hillary's present ... " Mom said, as she pulled the package wrapped in balloon-print paper from under the couch. "Hillary doesn't think her present is worthy to give us for our anniversary. She even feels sad to the point of tears. But, let's see ... "

Mom slowly opened up the little wrappings to see the contents. The other presents were wonderful, but she knew this one had a special meaning. Mom opened the cover of the box and found the treasure Hillary had made for them. Inside was a pink paper heart with Hillary's self-portrait on it. In her own 4-year-old handwriting, it read, "God loves you, and so do I!"

"Hillary, thank you!" Mom and Dad exclaimed as they held her tight. "We will cherish this present always!"

Hillary managed to smile. "But I thought you wouldn't like it."

"Oh, Hillary!" Mom said. "It's one of the nicest gifts we've ever gotten!"

"Well, to tell you the truth, God gave me the idea on what to make!" Hillary shyly grinned.

"Thank you, Everyone!" Dad said as he stood up. "Thank you for the wonderful anniversary surprises. But now, it should be no *surprise* that we need to leave for Mass!"

What does the word "humility" mean to you?