



build. plant. grow.  
*the word this week*



ordinary  
time



lectionary  
reading

## Cycle C

# Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary #114

### Reading I: Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23

Wisdom literature is always kind of a “wake-up” call for us if we have the ears and the heart to listen. The writer of today’s first reading issues a warning that we can get caught up in the things of the world and that they may overtake our lives, when in fact we should be living according to **wisdom**. Being consumed by things and our own importance is spoken of as vanity. Vanity ultimately means nothingness when it is laid alongside things of true value and **wisdom**.

### Reading 2: Colossians 3: 1-5, 9-11

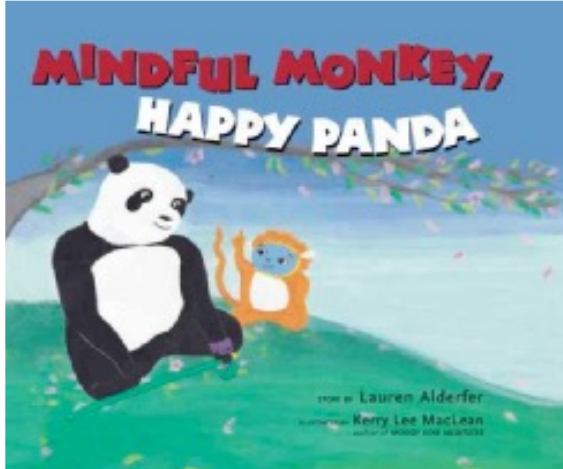
In this letter to the Colossians, Saint Paul is reminding them of the life that they have been called to live as members of Christ. He advises them to seek the things from above, such as **wisdom**, and not the paltry things on earth. Specifically Saint Paul addresses some of the unhealthy behaviors that have been going in the community and he tells them that they must make a choice between living a life of recklessness or living a life of goodness firmly based on **wisdom**.

### Gospel: Luke 12: 13-21

The gospel story speaks to being so obsessed with the things of the earth that they overshadow those things that truly are of value and importance. Jesus warns the crowd and us to “guard against ALL greed.” Often times people think greed only has to do with material possessions, however we can become greedy regarding our relationships, power, and prestige. The greed for such things can become our god. Think of the word EGO as an acronym: **Edging God Out**. Any time we place something or someone above God, we have entered into idolatry.



children's  
story



***Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda***

Written by Lauren Alderfer  
Illustrated by Kerry Lee MacLean  
Publication: 2011 Wisdom Publications  
ISBN-10: 86171-683-3



character  
education  
activity

**Wisdom is the ability to  
discern what is true, right, and  
worthy of our energy and  
devotion**

## Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda

In approaching such a complex concept of **wisdom**, this book introduces the related concept of “mindfulness” in a fun and exciting manner. As the story begins, Monkey is not so mindful--his Monkey mind constantly jumps from one thing to another, but he encounters a mysterious and playful friend in Happy Panda. Panda helps Monkey recognize the simple joy of doing what you are doing while you are doing it. The story illustrates the importance of dwelling peacefully and happily in the present moment.

Think of what it would be like to listen to a story and be able to not think about anything else. Think of how much more we would get out of the story. The writer of the Book of Wisdom speaks to the fact that we often get caught up in all kinds of things and that they make our life far more complicated than it needs to be. We can be like Monkey, thinking about other things while we are involved in another. It can be maddening and the Wisdom writer and the characters of *Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda* remind us that so much of what we involve ourselves in is of little importance or worth.

Saint Paul writes to the Colossians and speaks of those things that get in our way of living a truly good and honorable life. He names them and then says to get rid of them so that you can live freely. Likewise, Jesus warns us that things and wanting things can block our road on the journey through life. He illustrates this by telling a story about a man whose whole life is centered on material possessions. He becomes obsessed with them and getting more and more things. Jesus tells us that the greatest treasures we can have are in heaven and that the greatest wisdom is to grow rich in the things that matter to God.

## Searching for Wisdom

Step One: To recognize that wisdom is something we seek, place a number of wisdom sayings from the Scriptures throughout the classroom and have the students go on a “treasure hunt.”

Step Two: Provide a large box shaped as a treasure chest along with art materials so that the students can design a treasure chest that holds the real treasures in life: the wisdom that God makes available to us if we search for them. Have them place the wisdom sayings in or on the chest.

**Mindfulness is a type of wisdom as it keeps us focused on the present and being focused on the present is truly wise living.**



**case study**

**Look.  
Feel.  
Know.  
Act.**

## **What could you do today?**

For the Christian Community, Jesus Christ has always been the exemplar of wisdom. Throughout the Scriptures we see Jesus taking time away from the crowds and the disciples to enter into prayer with the Father. In most cases Jesus does this prior to making a major decision regarding his life and ministry. Jesus is our model and therefore we can make a commitment to ourselves to take time away in prayer as we enter into a decision making process about something important in our lives. An activity could involve making a bracelet or some type of reminder that can be seen using the initials WWJD, which stands for **What Would Jesus Do?**

## **Look Feel Know Act**

We have seen that **wisdom** or mindfulness is the focus of the stories in *Monkey Mindful, Happy Panda* and the scriptures selected for today. By all accounts being mindful and living according to **wisdom** literature enriches the lives of those in the stories and to not do so means certain destruction. Once we know this and believe this we, in fact, are on the road to **wisdom**, that is living a mindful life in concert with God and what God wants of us. There is a character in the Old Testament by the name of Solomon. God offers Solomon the choice of any gift in the world. Solomon could have asked for all kinds of material things, but he chooses **WISDOM**. Solomon chose this so that he could serve his people wisely and guide them in living a life of goodness. Any gift has more meaning when we can use that gift to help others. **Wisdom** is one of those gifts that is really important for anyone who is going to serve as a leader. Committing ourselves to being a follower of Christ means that we are then dedicated to living wisely, inviting God to lead us by God's **wisdom**.



## closing tool

In *Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda* we see the gradual transformation of Mindful Monkey, who has his mind pre-occupied by so many things that he cannot remain focused to a thoughtful, yet fun-loving character. This transformation occurs because Mindful Monkey has a great mentor, someone to guide him, in Happy Panda. Mindful Monkey had Happy Panda to serve as his mentor. Who, on this earth, would you consider a mentor for you? Of course, we always have the Holy Spirit available within us.

**Pray to God that you will always seek wisdom as the path for your life. Remember that your body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit so wisdom does reside within you. Call on the Holy Spirit to guide you in all wisdom.**



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