

## **Gospel Connections for Teens**

This book helped me connect the Gospel to my everyday life. It helped me recognize my own personal connection to the Gospel message and it helped me identify others who inspire me by their example.

—Brigette Brennan, a teen editor

*Gospel Connections for Teens* is a book for any teen who is looking for more out of the Sunday readings. It is matter-of-fact, speaks to teens on their level, and challenges teens to think about their lives. I was especially pleased to see the questions at the start of each reflection, challenging the reader to apply the Sunday readings to their daily lives. Any time we can help young people get more out of the Eucharist, our “source and summit,” we should take full advantage of it.

—Matthew Miller, director, Youth Liturgical Leadership Program,  
Saint Meinrad School of Theology, Saint Meinrad, Indiana

How exciting it is to find a book that brings the Scriptures, real-life experiences, and questions for reflection together in an easy-to-use format. Brost suggests that readers “take 5” to examine, “take 5” to read, and “take 10” to reflect. I suggest we each take all the time necessary to use this book in our ministry with young people—and even for our own spiritual journey.

—Michael Norman, associate director, Office of Religious Education,  
Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Through this book I am able to relate my experiences to the Gospels and Jesus’ life on earth.

—Celine, a teen editor

What struck me most about this book is how it immediately connects the Gospel readings to our everyday lives. This is a challenge, to see Jesus Christ in the ordinary and in our everyday experiences. There is also a gentle challenge to live out the words we hear proclaimed each week at the Eucharist. Corey has a great way of showing us that living a life as a person of faith requires action, and this faith-filled life is so needed in today’s world.

What I liked most about the book were the reflections on Holy Week. The powerful words and images took me on my own personal retreat. I believe teens will be enriched as they turn each page and encounter Jesus and his followers in their lives. They will realize they are not alone on this faith journey—and that one of their companions can be the Scriptures.

—Anna Scally, president, Cornerstone Media Inc.

# Gospel Connections for Teens

Reflections for Sunday Mass, Cycle B

Corey Brost, CSV



saint mary's press

Scripture texts used in this work are taken from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, second typical edition, volume I. Copyright © 1970, 1997, 1998 by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, D.C. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

The publishing team included Brian Singer-Towns, development editor; Lorraine Kilmartin, reviewer; prepress and manufacturing coordinated by the prepublication and production services departments of Saint Mary's Press.

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Printed in the United States of America

3436

ISBN 978-0-88489-848-1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
Brost, Corey.

v. cm.

Contents: [2] Cycle B.

ISBN 0-88489-848-2 (v. 1: pbk.)

Gospel connections for teens : reflections for Sunday mass / Corey Brost.

I. Bible. N.T. Gospels—Meditations—Juvenile literature. 2. Church year meditations—Juvenile literature. I. Title.

BS2555.54.B76 2005

242'.63—dc22

2005000795

I dedicate this book to my mom, Mary Claire Brost. Mom, I never would have known God without your strength, courage, and faith. I owe my faith—and any good it has done me or others—to you.

This book was a joint effort. Four teens worked diligently as an editing team to help me refine each reflection. Their input was invaluable. So, thanks to Brigette Brennan, Mark Chaput, John Leahy, and Celine Fitzgerald. Your willingness to grow closer to Christ has inspired me.

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## Introduction

I wrote this book because I never had one like it when I was a teen. I struggled each Sunday to connect the Gospel to my teen joys and struggles. I hope this book helps you do just that.

First, a brief explanation. In the Church liturgical year, the Sunday Gospel readings follow a three-year cycle. This book covers the second year of that cycle, called cycle B. In cycle B most of the Gospel readings are taken from the Gospel of Mark.

Here's how you use this book, then. Look at the chart that follows this introduction. Look up the date of the coming Sunday in the chart, and you will find the correct reflection. Commit to spending twenty minutes each week to reflect on the Gospel before you go to Mass. Use the book's reflection process or create your own. Then go to Mass on Sunday and compare your reflection to the homily. You might even want to get a few friends together over coffee or snacks during the week to compare thoughts on the readings.

Because of space limitations, I've edited a few lines out of some of the Gospel passages. The Scripture citations at the top of the page indicate the complete Gospel passage for that Sunday. If I've shortened the passage, you will see a second citation immediately following the passage, indicating the exact verses I used.

All but a few of the names in the reflections are made up, though all the people I mention are real people I've come across in life and ministry.



## Reflection Chart

Sunday Gospel Reflection	Page No.	2014–2015	2017–2018	2020–2021
1st Sunday of Advent	14	Nov. 30	Dec. 3	Nov. 29
2nd Sunday of Advent	16	Dec. 7	Dec. 10	Dec. 6
3rd Sunday of Advent	18	Dec. 14	Dec. 17	Dec. 13
4th Sunday of Advent	20	Dec. 21	Dec. 24	Dec. 20
Christmas (Midnight Mass)	22	Dec. 25	Dec. 25	Dec. 25
The Holy Family	24	Dec. 28	Dec. 31	Dec. 27
Mary, Mother of God	26	Jan. 1	Jan. 1	Jan. 1
The Epiphany	28	Jan. 4	Jan. 7	Jan. 3
Baptism of the Lord	30	Jan. 11	Jan. 8	Jan. 10
2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time	32	Jan. 18	Jan. 14	Jan. 17
3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	34	Jan. 25	Jan. 21	Jan. 24
4th Sunday in Ordinary Time	36	Feb. 1	Jan. 28	Jan. 31
5th Sunday in Ordinary Time	38	Feb. 8	Feb. 4	Feb. 7
6th Sunday in Ordinary Time	40	Feb. 15	Feb. 11	Feb. 14
7th Sunday in Ordinary Time	42			
8th Sunday in Ordinary Time	44			
1st Sunday of Lent	46	Feb. 22	Feb. 18	Feb. 21
2nd Sunday of Lent	48	Mar. 1	Feb. 25	Feb. 28
3rd Sunday of Lent	50	Mar. 8	Mar. 4	Mar. 7
4th Sunday of Lent	52	Mar. 15	Mar. 11	Mar. 14
5th Sunday of Lent	54	Mar. 22	Mar. 18	Mar. 21
Palm Sunday (The Passion)	56	Mar. 29	Mar. 25	Mar. 28
Easter Sunday	58	April 5	April 1	April 4
2nd Sunday of Easter	60	April 12	April 8	April 11
3rd Sunday of Easter	62	April 19	April 15	April 18
4th Sunday of Easter	64	April 26	April 22	April 25
5th Sunday of Easter	66	May 3	April 29	May 2
6th Sunday of Easter	68	May 10	May 6	May 9
7th Sunday of Easter	70	May 17	May 13	May 16

Sunday Gospel Reflection	Page No.	2014–2015	2017–2018	2020–2021
Pentecost Sunday	72	May 24	May 20	May 23
Trinity Sunday	74	May 31	May 27	May 30
Corpus Christi Sunday	76	June 7	June 3	June 6
9th Sunday in Ordinary Time	78			
10th Sunday in Ordinary Time	80		June 10	
11th Sunday in Ordinary Time	82	June 14	June 17	June 13
12th Sunday in Ordinary Time	84	June 21	June 24	June 20
13th Sunday in Ordinary Time	86	June 28	July 1	June 27
14th Sunday in Ordinary Time	88	July 5	July 8	July 4
15th Sunday in Ordinary Time	90	July 12	July 15	July 11
16th Sunday in Ordinary Time	92	July 19	July 22	July 18
17th Sunday in Ordinary Time	94	July 26	July 29	July 25
18th Sunday in Ordinary Time	96	Aug. 2	Aug. 5	Aug. 1
19th Sunday in Ordinary Time	98	Aug. 9	Aug. 12	Aug. 8
20th Sunday in Ordinary Time	100	Aug. 16	Aug. 19	Aug. 15
21st Sunday in Ordinary Time	102	Aug. 23	Aug. 26	Aug. 22
22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time	104	Aug. 30	Sept. 2	Aug. 29
23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	106	Sept. 6	Sept. 9	Sept. 5
24th Sunday in Ordinary Time	108	Sept. 13	Sept. 16	Sept. 12
25th Sunday in Ordinary Time	110	Sept. 20	Sept. 23	Sept. 19
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time	112	Sept. 27	Sept. 30	Sept. 26
27th Sunday in Ordinary Time	114	Oct. 4	Oct. 7	Oct. 3
28th Sunday in Ordinary Time	116	Oct. 11	Oct. 14	Oct. 10
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time	118	Oct. 18	Oct. 21	Oct. 17
30th Sunday in Ordinary Time	120	Oct. 25	Oct. 28	Oct. 24
31st Sunday in Ordinary Time	122	Nov. 1	Nov. 4	Oct. 31
32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time	124	Nov. 8	Nov. 11	Nov. 7
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	126	Nov. 15	Nov. 18	Nov. 14
Christ the King	128	Nov. 22	Nov. 25	Nov. 21

**Reflections** on the  
Sunday Gospel Readings

## Wake Up! Jesus Is Here Right Now

### Take :05 Examine

How did I live out last week's Gospel message? What was tough? What was rewarding?

### Take :05 Read

*Jesus said to his disciples: "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come. It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work, and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch. Watch, therefore; you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cock-crow, or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!'"*

Stop and think. Do you ever feel alone when you need help with a problem? Do you ever doubt whether your life really makes a difference? A lot of teens often feel isolated or unimportant.

If you have ever had those feelings, pay attention to Jesus' words: "Be alert! Watch!" Jesus wants you to know that God's help is staring you right in the face. His mission for you is right in front of you.

During Advent we join with Catholics around the world to remember that God sent Jesus once and will send him

again at the world's end. Why? Because we need him. We need his help because life is just too hard sometimes. We need his vision because we sometimes miss the work he wants us to do in this messed-up world.

Unfortunately life gets so busy that we often miss the many ways Christ tries to comfort us or send us to others. Advent is a great time to slow down and be watchful. When you hurt, be alert; Christ is sending people to help you. Pray for help to see them and the humility to accept their help. When others hurt, Christ wants to send you. Like the servants in the reading, Christ has important work for you to do in healing this broken world. Pray for help to see those people whose lives you can change.

Take these four weeks of Advent to pray more often. Actively look for how much Christ loves you and needs you. Let Advent remind you that Jesus really comes into the world every day. But we miss that unless we watch for Christ, accept Christ's love, and help others in Christ's name.

### Take :10 Reflect

If a word or phrase from the Gospel grabs your heart, sit quietly for several minutes and repeat it to yourself, asking God to show you how it applies to your life. Or, reflect and possibly journal on the following question:

- When I look at the people in my daily life, who are the ones Christ is sending to help me, and who are the ones Christ is showing me I could help?

## Do You Know John the Baptist?

### Take :05 Examine

How did I live out last week's Gospel message? What was tough? What was rewarding?

### Take :05 Read

*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.*

*As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:*

Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you;  
he will prepare your way.

A voice of one crying out in the desert:

“Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight his paths.”

*John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins. John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He fed on locusts and wild honey. And this is what he proclaimed: “One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”*

John the Baptist. Who was this guy?

Do you know someone who stands up for people who are being put down? How about someone who tells friends

it's crazy to use alcohol or drugs? What about someone who takes a stand on political issues, arguing for peace or pro-life values? Do you know a person who won't laugh at racist jokes?

If you know any of those people, you know John the Baptist. He had the guts to publicly challenge people to follow God's way—a path of compassion, forgiveness, repentance, and sacrifice for poor people. He called on ordinary people and the rulers of his day to change their lives. He pointed to Jesus as the example to follow. In the end his courage cost him his life when King Herod imprisoned and murdered him.

It's tough speaking the truth. I know teens who are mocked by their peers because they publicly demonstrated against war. But they did it anyway because they read the Gospel and they saw protesting for peace as Jesus' way. They had guts. Look around. Other people in our world, probably at your school, are showing similar courage. People like Bono, who speaks out for AIDS victims in Africa. Doesn't our broken world need more people who are willing to stand for God, even when it costs them?

Who was John the Baptist? Why not let it be *you* this Advent.

### Take :10 Reflect

If a word or phrase from the Gospel grabs your heart, sit quietly for several minutes, repeating it to yourself and asking God to show you how it applies to your life. Or, reflect and possibly journal on the following question:

- How can I be more like John the Baptist at school, at home, or at work?