



Day 7 | Wednesday, March 13, 2024
Presenter: Malcolm Nelson

It starts at a young age, watching your parents and guardians move about the house. The great question of nature vs. nurture. Was I naturally going to talk and walk like this, or do these mannerisms mimic my father because I watched constantly. Fortunately for me, I am the youngest of six so I had the opportunity to watch so many before me, and all those charged with my care had to show me the ropes. How to brush my teeth, how to trim my nails, how to cook, clean, separate the white from colors. No don't dry that. No don't microwave that. The pattern on the lawn mower to make sure you didn't miss a spot. Which dishes go where in the dishwasher, because believe me there are some things that do not belong on the top. I won't lie, our parents got us started early. I don't know how many of you had the toy vacuum so you thought it was all fun and games. Sneaky sneaky. I shared with my school

commission on Monday that back in the day on weekends if Luther Vandross or Marvin Gaye woke up before you, you knew that was a cleaning day.

I have the pleasure of keeping one 7th grade religion class, and it is my favorite subject to teach because Jesus is the ultimate teacher. The best days are when I can tie scripture into something they understand. 7th grade standards in the Archdiocese of Seattle focus on the new testament. At St. Therese we take a deep dive into the Gospel of Luke, and then use that to bring connection to other Gospels. Because I shared with them that I would be participating in this Novena, I made reference to this Gospel verse over the course of the last week. So allow me to take you into a 7th grade religion class. I asked them, how many of you brush your teeth? Of course they all raised their hand, even though... we'll you know. I followed it up with, did your parents come help you? Then I asked, how many of you know how to wash your butt? When you work with kids, you have to take every chance you can to keep them laughing and invested. You all now have a window into a middle school classroom. :)

So then we got into the why. Everything we do as educators, as parents, as guardians, is to prepare our children for independence. To prepare them to make decisions that will enhance their life, when we are no longer there to hold their hand. Our goal is to build healthy habits so that they can one day become second nature. Take manners for example, how many of you, by show of hands, had your parents say to you.. "Now, what do you say?" These everyday skills had to be taught to us over time.

Fortunately, my parents did a halfway decent job raising me. My father, even still as an adult, likes to offer me to other people at the grocery store. He'll say to a stranger, Do you have children? No matter their response, do you want another son? "He's house broken" haha

In our Gospel, Jesus says "My Father is at work until now, so I am at work." This angered the crowd because Jesus revealed himself to have power and authority from God. This is also important because Jesus is trying to convey the time is now, that we should be following God. In the old testament, God sent many signs to the Israelites, and we as God's people would follow the signs for a while, until something shinier came along and we got distracted. So God sent Jesus, a human, to show us how to live as humans. And he is the ultimate teacher because while being 100% human, he is also 100% divine. Unlike my teaching where I often say, do as I say, not as I do. Jesus walks the walk, and talks the talk. When Jesus tells us, "the son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees his father doing", is the invitation and reminder for us to lean into him, and one another. God was intentional when he created humans, and thus bringing us back to Jesus reminding us the time is now, every generation is charged with teaching the next generation how to live. Jesus came to earth to show us how to love, so that we can love one another. In the book of Isaiah verse 8 God says "I form you and set you as a covenant for the people, to restore the land and allot the devastated heritages. A covenant, a promise. Each and everyone one of us are formed as a promise from God to the next person. And the

eternal grace God gives us, is because God loves us. “The lord is gracious and merciful.”

And so I'll leave you with this. A mentor of parents, Greg Alex, once taught a mentor of mine, Charles Hopper, a message. The BIBLE is - Basic Instructions Before I leave Earth. At St. Therese Catholic Academy, our last root belief is We Lead By Example. We hold our community to this high standard because our actions will demonstrate if we are a follower of Jesus. The ultimate teacher, who calls us to do the same. One thing I continually convey to my middle school religion classes is Jesus reminds us constantly that the hour is coming. It will not be announced, and so if Jesus shows up tonight, will your life have been marked with good deeds or wicked deeds.