

# Grade 7 - Lesson 3

St. Michael the Archangel Parish

## Proclamation:

*For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*



## Catechetical Points

- How we should strive to be our best selves by practicing goodness, courage, justice, common sense, balance, and forgiveness in our everyday lives,
- To understand that all people have deep worth, to give and receive love, and to give and receive forgiveness.

## Materials

- Challenge to Be Your Best Self Quiz

## Catechist prayer before the lesson:

*God, the Father of life, help me to set a good example for my students. Help me to keep my actions and my words consistent with one another and with the teachings of the Church. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Before class starts:

- Students who arrive early can play Train Wreck with students from the other grades.

[5 min] **Opening Prayer**

- Ask the students if there is anything they would like to pray for. Pray an **Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be** together. (Student text page 175)

[5 min] **Icebreaker Discussion**

- What was the funniest thing that happened to you today?
- What was something nice that someone did for you today?
- What challenged you today?
- If one of your classmates at school could be the teacher for the day who would you want it to be?

[60 min] **Forgiveness**

- See the following pages to follow the steps for the lesson on forgiveness. There will likely be more content than you have time to cover, so you can decide to skip some parts.

[5 min] **Closing Prayer**

- Invite the students to think about one or more people who they would like to forgive for hurting them. Give a minute for them to reflect silently.
- Ask God to give us the grace to forgive the people we have in mind and pray the **Our Father**.

# Lesson One

## Living from Your Best Self



### Charting A Course

In this curriculum, the students will be challenged to live life from what we will call their “best selves” in each and every circumstance. In particular, the students will learn: to practice goodness, courage, justice, common sense, balance, and forgiveness in their everyday lives, to understand that all people have deep worth, to give and receive love, and to give and receive forgiveness (the lessons in this guide will also teach on the meanings of each of the above).

Today, in particular, the students will discuss what it means to live from their best selves. They will learn the importance of positive and edifying thoughts, words, and actions (truthful, loving, kind, generous, respectful, grateful, forgiving, and so forth); learn the importance of inherent worth, genuine love, courage, justice, balance, common sense, and forgiveness; understand the importance of confidence and humility; and the important role feelings play in one’s well-being and relationships.<sup>3</sup> The students will learn about each of these in greater detail in future lessons.

We must practice often if we are to persevere in living from our best selves. This takes self-control. Please keep in mind that the ideal for the students is to practice living from their best selves because they value these principles and behaviors. At first, however, they may need a good deal of external motivators and encouragement. We will all, at times, behave unfairly and fail to live from our best selves despite our best intentions and efforts. Please help the students understand that when they occasionally fail in an attempt to live from their best selves, they should respond to themselves and others with love, change what needs to be changed, and continue trying.

Communities benefit when people strive to live from their best selves.

Please feel free to email the authors with questions about the lesson: [jaknutson03@yahoo.com](mailto:jaknutson03@yahoo.com); [rd.enright@yahoo.com](mailto:rd.enright@yahoo.com).

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<sup>3</sup> The idea of becoming one’s best self as it relates to forgiveness is taken from Pdraig Twomey, director of our forgiveness education project in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

## Discussion Questions

Instructions to the students: Please complete the questions while you are reading, listening to, or watching the story. If you are reading a chapter book in small groups, be prepared to summarize each of your assigned chapters for the rest of the class.

1. What does it mean to be your best self?
2. What are some examples of people living from their best selves in today's story (or portion of it)?
3. Did any live from their best selves through loving, kind, generous, and respectful thoughts (as best we can tell), words, and actions? In what ways?
4. What does it mean to be courageous? Do we see any examples of people living from their best selves through courageous thoughts, words, and actions? How?
5. What is justice? Do we see people thinking, speaking, and behaving justly? Please give examples.
6. What is forgiveness? What are some examples, if any, of forgiving thoughts, words, and actions in today's story?
7. What are some ways of showing self-control? Did any people in our story live from their best selves through self-control? How?
8. What does it mean to persevere? Did any bring forth their best selves through perseverance? In what ways?
9. What, if any, are examples of confidence? What, if any, are examples of humility?
10. Did those who worked to live from their best selves find balance? For example, did they show justice and forgiveness? In what ways? Were any people both confident and humble? How? Did they love the self and others? Did they work and play or work and rest? Are there any other examples of balance?
11. What effects did these positive thoughts, words, and behaviors have on all involved?
12. What is the importance of taking care of our physical health when living from one's best self?
13. Did it seem that some of the people in the story practiced healthy living? In what ways?
14. Were there any people in the story who seemed to bring forth their best selves by fostering *positive feelings* and letting go of *negative* ones? Who? How did they do this?
15. Were there any examples of people *failing* to bring forth their best selves through thoughts, words, and actions? In what ways?
16. What effects did these failures have on all involved (including the person who failed to live from his or her best self)?
17. Do you think that it is easy to be one's best self? Why or why not?
18. In order to become one's best self, we must continually practice. How can we practice being our best selves?
19. What should we do when we fail to live from our best selves?
20. How might we change individual lives and communities by living from our best selves?

## **Exercise Those Forgiveness Muscles**

*Take the Challenge to Be Your Best Self*

### **Quiz:**

On a 1 (not at all) to 5 (very frequently) scale, please rate as honestly as you can, the following about yourself:

**1) Have you had thoughts today that reflect you at your very best (positive and edifying thoughts)?**

1 (not at all)    2    3 (to some degree)    4    5 (very frequently)

**2) Have you tried to speak in such a way that you are living from your best self (positive and edifying words)?**

1 (not at all)    2    3 (to some degree)    4    5 (very frequently)

**3) Have you behaved in such a way as to live from your best self (positive and edifying behaviors)?**

1 (not at all)    2    3 (to some degree)    4    5 (very frequently)

**4. Have you tried to care for your physical needs in such a way that you are honoring your body?**

1 (not at all)    2    3 (to some degree)    4    5 (very frequently)

**5. Have you tried to work with angry feelings so that you become more forgiving?**

1 (not at all)    2    3 (to some degree)    4    5 (very frequently)

**6. Have you tried to bring your best self (reflected in your thoughts, behaviors, and feelings) deeply into your heart, to the very core of who you are?**

1 (not at all)    2    3 (to some degree)    4    5 (very frequently)

Scores: Please add up each of your scores to each item

If you scored between:

6-12, it is time to hit the gym to build your forgiveness muscles.

13-18, you are on your way to being forgivingly fit.

19-24, you are forgivingly fit.

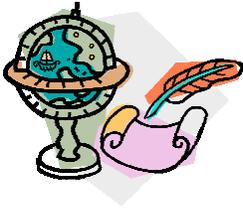
### ***The No-Reward Reward***

As you may know, people often reward you when you say nice things, behave well, and in general live out your best self. Such reinforcements from others are great and we do not discourage this at all. Yet, the point of this quiz and of Lesson 1 is to go into the interior, go deeply into the heart of your best self. We encourage you to do that now as a major challenge in your life. Can you lead the life of your best self even when others are not rewarding you? Do you have the discipline of going into the best-self gymnasium to begin the process of becoming best-self fit, or becoming forgivingly fit?

**The reward is in a life well lived.**

## Lesson Two

### Living from Your Best Self: Genuine Love



#### Charting A Course

In today's lesson, the students will learn about agape love (we will also refer to it as genuine love). In particular, they will learn the meaning of agape love, how to offer it, and the ways people and communities benefit from it.

Agape love involves feelings of warmth and care, but it is much more than a feeling. It is a commitment or decision to see that all people have deep worth—even when they behave unfairly—and to treat them as such (with goodness--love, kindness, respect, and generosity).

When we give genuine love, we care for and about others and are interested in their wants, needs, and overall well-being. This focus on others within genuine love does not mean that we then disregard or disrespect the self. On the contrary, genuine love involves a deep respect and love for the self and for other people. A conscious decision is made to recognize the deep worth of others and the self while offering genuine love to both others and the self.

Agape love includes the following: patience (accepting others for who they are and treating them as people of deep worth while waiting for them to grow, work through problems, and change); humility (focusing on the deep worth of others, recognizing that we too have weaknesses, placing others' needs ahead of our own, and not being easily offended); goodness (kind, respectful, compassionate, and generous behaviors); gratitude (acknowledging others' kindness, respectfulness, and generosity; being thankful for others' patience with us) and truthfulness [about ourselves (we recognize our strengths and weaknesses), our circumstances (we face reality), and others (their strengths and weaknesses)]. When we love with an agape love, we are quick to forgive.

We show agape love through thoughts, words, and actions. We can do this through a lavish outpouring or through self-restraint. For example, we can give gifts. These can be either tangible gifts like cards, food, clothes, and so forth or intangible ones like encouraging words, smiles, service, warmth, and so forth. It is also possible to show genuine love by refusing to speak harsh words about or to others and by resisting the temptation to behave with indifference or unkindness. We become able to give agape love by receiving it first from others (family, friends, teachers, community members, or a higher being).

It is important that we differentiate between genuine love and pseudo- or false-love. If we do not have a clear understanding of genuine love, we may, in the name of love believe that love means giving a person everything he or she wants (rather what he or she needs), keeping them always comfortable, and regarding them as having greater worth than others or ourselves. We are not saying here that it is wrong to meet people's wants and needs or to help them become comfortable. We are simply saying that genuine love is not weak. It requires both clear thinking and a tender heart.

When we love with a genuine love, we do not try to control others, what they want to become, or where they want to go. We do not allow people to endanger their own or others' lives with poor choices, however. When we walk in genuine love, we acknowledge the truth about people and circumstances, correcting when correction is needed. We do not turn away from or abandon people for imperfections. Improved relationships, joy, and inner peace can be experienced through the practice of agape love.

Genuine love does not ask us to ignore injustice (you are to take steps to protect yourself); think that the people you love are of greater worth; entirely forego your own wants and needs in favor of the wants and needs of those you love; or let those you love always have their own way. This would be a form of pseudo- or false-love. We cannot genuinely love others without loving the self, as well.

Please feel free to email the authors with questions about the lesson: jaknutson03@yahoo.com; rd.enright@yahoo.com.

### **Learning and Behavioral Objectives**

In this lesson, the students will:

- Learn about agape or genuine love. It is foundational to forgiving.
- Learn to differentiate between pseudo- and false-love.
- Learn that agape love helps us to live from our best selves.
- Read, watch, or listen to the story. See The Story and Discussion Section.
- Participate in the class discussion. See The Story and Discussion Section.
- Complete the activity. See the Let's Exercise Those Forgiveness Muscles section for further instructions.

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<sup>4</sup> The idea of becoming one's best self as it relates to forgiveness is taken from Pdraig Twomey, director of our forgiveness education project in Belfast, Northern Ireland.



### **Exercise Those Forgiveness Muscles**

Please feel free to decide whether or not to include suggested activities in your lesson.

#### ***Genuine-Love versus False-Love***

The students will further learn about genuine or agape love and false or pseudo-love. They will participate in an “all-class-debate.”

First, the students will individually write a series of statements regarding both genuine and false love. These will be statements that define agape love and false love.

Second, the statements will be given to the teacher. The teacher will read aloud the statements.

Third, the students will be asked to walk to the right side of the room if they agree with the statement that was just read by the teacher or to the left side of the room if they disagree.

Fourth, the students will defend their choice through a discussion.

Finally, the students will be given the opportunity to change their view on the statement.

The teacher will continue this procedure with the rest of the statements (or as many as time allows).<sup>5</sup>

#### ***My Love Walk***

The students will further learn about genuine love. They will write a letter describing the ways they often show genuine love to others. They will include specific ways they will work to show genuine love in the future. **This exercise is completely private. The students will not be required to share their letters with others. Please discuss the importance of honoring others’ privacy.**

#### ***Journaling Activity***

We ask that each student continue writing in his or her personal journal. **It is very important that the students understand the importance of respecting the privacy of others as they journal.**

Following are some questions for reflection.

1. What is your understanding of genuine love? What are examples of genuine love?
2. Reflect on the ways that you have been shown genuine love and how this has affected your life.

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<sup>5</sup> This activity was inspired by Pdraig Twomey, director of our forgiveness education project in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

## Discussion Questions

Instructions to the students: Please complete the following questions. If you are reading a chapter book in small groups, be prepared to summarize each of your assigned chapters for the rest of the class.

1. What is agape love (we will refer to it as genuine love)?
2. How can we show genuine love?
3. What are some characteristics of genuine love?
4. How can we persist in genuine love—even when others behave unjustly?
5. In today's story did any person(s) show genuine love by recognizing that all people have deep worth? Please give examples. How were these givers and receivers of such genuine love affected?
6. Did any people show genuine love through their thoughts, words, and actions? Please describe. What effect did these have on the givers and receivers?
7. Did any people show genuine love by accepting others just as they are (this does not mean we excuse unfairness or inappropriateness) and being patient (we treat others as people of deep worth while we wait for them to grow and change)? In what ways? How did these acts of love affect the givers and receivers?
8. Did any people show genuine love by caring for the wants or needs of others (while also caring for the wants and needs of the self)? Who? In what ways? How were those involved affected by this genuine love?
9. Genuine love means that we are truthful about ourselves, others, and our circumstances. Did you see any examples of this? Please describe. What effect did this truthfulness have on all involved?
10. Were there any signs of genuine love toward a person who was unfair? What happened? What effect did this have on those involved?
11. Genuine love involves loving the self and others. It involves giving and receiving love. What, if any, are some examples of people finding these balances?
12. Are there any examples of people failing to give genuine love to both the self and others and to both give and receive love? If so, what are they?
13. Pseudo-love is false love. What, if any, are some signs of false love in today's story? Did any fail to see the deep worth of both the self and others? How? What were the consequences of this lack of genuine love?
14. Is love something that must be earned? Why or why not?
15. Do all people, including each of you, deserve to love and be loved? Why or why not?
16. How are we living from our best selves when we walk in agape love?

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Curriculum Guide DVD Summary

**DVD Title:** *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*

**Author:** Based on the book by C.S. Lewis

**Main characters:** Peter, Susan, Edmund, Lucy, Prince Caspian, Aslan, Miraz

**Executive summary:** Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy Pevensie return to Narnia to help free the Narnian creatures from a race of men called the Telmarines who have taken over Narnia.

**Detailed summary:** The Telmarines have taken over Narnia and the Narnian creatures are hidden in the forest. Narnia is now ruled by King Miraz and his wife Queen Prunaprismia, but the rightful king of the Telmarines is Miraz's young nephew, Prince Caspian. Miraz had usurped the throne by killing his own brother, Caspian's father King Caspian IX. Miraz then tries to kill Prince Caspian so his own son can be king.

The night Miraz's son is born, Prince Caspian is awakened by his teacher, who tells him to hide in the forest. The prince rides off just before the guards enter his room and shoot arrows into his bed. Prince Caspian escapes to the forest and is helped by some Narnian dwarves. Under attack in the



forest, Prince Caspian blows on a horn that his teacher gave him.

At that very moment, Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy are waiting to catch a train at the train station. The children returned from an adventure in Narnia just one year earlier. Suddenly the wind blows and the children are transported back to Narnia where hundreds of years have passed and it looks much different. The children go to where the castle once

was and it is now rubble. They find items that they left behind a year ago. Peter and Edmund find their swords, Susan finds her bow and arrows, and Lucy finds her healing potion.

Continued on Back



## ***The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian***, Page 2

Meanwhile back at the castle Miraz announces that his nephew, Prince Caspian, has been abducted by Narnians. The guards have captured a Narnian dwarf named Trumpkin. The evil uncle plans to wage a war against the Narnians.

Peter and the other children save Trumpkin and discover that Prince Caspian brought them back to Narnia when he blew Susan's horn.

Prince Caspian is staying at the home of Badger and a dwarf named Nikabrik. Prince Caspian tells them about his uncle's plan to steal the throne.

Trumpkin takes the children to Caspian. He warns them, "You may find Narnia a more savage place than you remember."

Prince Caspian, Badger and Nikabrik flee the Telmarine guards who have found them in the forest. When Badger is shot, Prince Caspian saves him, aided by a warrior mouse. The centaurs have also gathered in the forest.

The children and Trumpkin need to find a way to cross the river. Lucy sees Aslan, but the others don't see him. Lucy goes to where she saw Aslan and finds a passageway across the gorge.

Prince Caspian tells the Narnians that if they help him recapture his throne, he will bring peace to the land. The children and Trumpkin meet up with the prince and the other Narnians. Lucy wants Peter to wait for Aslan, but Peter is ready to attack the Telmarines. They attack the castle in the night. Prince Caspian rescues his teacher from the dungeon.



Prince Caspian goes to his uncle's room and has him at the tip of his sword when his aunt wakes up and protects her husband. Miraz admits that he killed the prince's father. Miraz escapes. The rest of the Narnian troops storm the castle. They are overcome by the Telmarine soldiers, who are stronger than they are. Peter orders the Narnians to retreat. Many escape, but many are trapped and killed. Peter and Prince Caspian fight over whose fault it was that the mission failed.

After the attack, Miraz is crowned King. Nikabrik tries to get Prince Caspian to bring the evil White Witch back to Narnia to help them win the battle, but he is stopped by Edmund, who shatters the ice that holds the witch. Nikabrik is killed in the fight.

-Continued on Next Page-

## ***The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian***, Page 3

Prince Caspian asks his teacher why he never told him about his father. His teacher says that he always had faith that Prince Caspian would be a better ruler than those who came before him.

The Telmarines are ready to attack the Narnians. Peter challenges Miraz to a one-on-one duel. If he loses, he will give him Narnia. Miraz accepts the challenge.

Lucy and Susan go into the forest in search of Aslan. They are attacked by some guards and Prince Caspian saves them.



Peter fights a ferocious sword battle with Miraz. Peter defeats Miraz, but he does not kill him. He hands his sword to Prince Caspian, who has returned to the battlefield. The Prince also does not kill his uncle Miraz. He only demands that he give the Narnians back their kingdom. Miraz agrees but is killed by one of his generals, who now wants to be the leader and destroy Narnia. The Narnians defend themselves valiantly.

As Lucy runs from a Telmarine soldier, Aslan appears and saves her. He wakes the trees who go to the battlefield to help the Narnians win the fight against the Telmarines. The Telmarine army retreats to the river. There Aslan roars and causes the water to rumble and rise up and defeat the enemy troops. It is over. Narnia is saved.

The people of Narnia celebrate the return of peace to the land. Aslan creates a portal to allow the Telmarines to return to the land from which their ancestors came. Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy also choose to go through the portal and return to England. Before they leave, they are told that only Lucy and Edward will return to Narnia someday. When the children step through the portal, they are back at the train station. ❤️