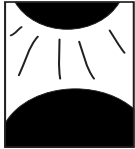


5 Ways

to invoke God's name in daily life

Wherever we find ourselves in life—at home, the office, in the classroom, in the store or on a sporting field—there are small ways we can show that God is active and central to our lives. Share some of the ways you invoke the name of God in the course of an ordinary day. Some examples follow.



1. "Some tradesmen came to do some work on our house and one of them remarked on the lovely view of treetops from our kitchen window saying, 'Isn't God's creation marvellous.'"



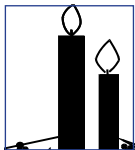
2. "We always hold hands when we say grace at family dinner time. This is hard to do on a day when petty resentments reign; but I think it helps us to say sorry when we need to."



3. "I like to wear a religious emblem around my neck as a public sign that I believe in God. Sometimes it is even a conversation starter and a chance to share my faith with a stranger."



4. "Why do you do this?" said the homeless man as we helped him to the outreach van for coffee and sandwiches. But before we could reply he announced, 'You do good so that someone else will believe in good.'"



5. "On the ledge above the kitchen sink we have two candles, an oil burner and a little print of Millet's *The Angelus*. It is a picture of prayer in the midst of work. After dinner my husband and I light the candles and make washing-up a reflective time."

This *Light of Torah* leaflet series for Catholic parishes encourages parishioners to be attentive to the gift of Torah as part of their sacred Scriptures, and to the gift of Judaism which gave us Jesus, the Living Torah. Text by Teresa Pirola. Illustrations by Francine Pirola. © The Story Source, 2009. Reproduction permitted for non-commercial church use. Further reading: www.lightoftorah.net; www.batkol.info and www.etz-hayim.com.



Light of Torah

Ancient texts
through fresh eyes,
alive for today.

Why reflect on Torah?

At Christmas time, we Christians remember that 'the Word became flesh, and lived among us' (John 1:14). In an ordinary, frail, limited human body, family and cultural setting, our God came to dwell in human history.

Likewise, each time we open our bible we make an act of faith that the Word of God dwells in fragile human words; words that were first uttered upon the lips of our Jewish ancestors-in-faith and recorded and preserved over thousands of years.

Yes, God's Word comes to us humbly, and in humility we need to be patient with our own awkward utterances; we need to learn how to receive God's Word and enter into loving, active conversation with our God who longs to speak with us, to remain with us.

This *Light of Torah* series is a way to grow in our conversation-skills with God. It teaches us to treasure our sacred stories and storytellers, indeed to treasure the people who gave us the bible: the Jewish people and their long history of biblical interpretation. Today our Church recognizes that Jewish biblical insights can enrich our own Christian journey and calls us appreciate the historical, spiritual and biblical connections between the two faiths.

Each week, *Light of Torah* reflects on a portion of the Torah (the first five books of the bible) drawing on Jewish sources and commentators. It is a way for Catholics to be sensitized to the Jewish pulse that throbs in the person of Jesus and in the depths of the Church.



Torah Portion

From the Jewish calendar of Torah readings:

Genesis 41:1–44:17

The story of Joseph continues this week. In an earlier Torah portion, Joseph's dreams get him into trouble because of the envy of his brothers, however in this week's portion his talent with dreams works for his benefit. Unlike the Egyptian magicians and wise men, Joseph is able to present a satisfying interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams. He wins the favor of Pharaoh, is released from prison and rises to power in the Egyptian court. Let's look closely at the interaction between Joseph and Pharaoh in chapter 41.

Sources: Leibowitz, *New Studies in Genesis* (NY, n.p.d.); Goldstein (ed.), *The Women's Torah Commentary* (Woodstock, Vermont, 2000). Scripture quotations: NJB.

Tasting Torah

Read aloud 41:14-36.

Pharaoh commands that Joseph, imprisoned in a dungeon, be brought out to interpret Pharaoh's dream. This is a crucial moment for Joseph. So much is at risk! Will he find favor with Pharaoh and save his skin or will he be returned to jail?

Can you sense the pressure of this moment? Have you ever been placed in a situation where your life, career or a relationship hung in the balance; a moment when your words and behaviour could have dire consequences?

Touching Torah

Look carefully at Joseph's reply to Pharaoh in 41:16, 25-32. A repetitious theme threads its way through the text, a theme which has led some commentators to conclude that this is a fine moment in Joseph's life when he stands in the midst of an antagonistic, pagan environment and courageously invokes the name of God. Can you pick the repetition?

Verse 16: "Not I," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "*God will give* Pharaoh a favorable answer."

Verse 26 Joseph says: "*God has revealed* to Pharaoh *what he is going to do.*"

Verse 28: "*God has revealed* to Pharaoh *what he is going to do.*"

Verse 32: "...the event is *already determined by God*, and *God will shortly bring it about.*"

Clearly for Joseph, God is active and centre-stage. God is the one who *does*, who *reveals*, who *determines* and who *brings to pass*.

Depthing Torah

But is Joseph really displaying his own robust faith or simply being a smart strategist? If we look back to last week's Torah portion we find our thread of repetition in other situations as well. To his master's wife who tries to seduce him Joseph says: "How could I do anything so wicked, and *sin against God?*" (39:9). And to his fellow prisoners who are troubled by their dreams he says, "Are not interpretations *God's business?*" (40:8). Joseph is a God-fearing Israelite, who chooses to openly proclaim the God of his people in the presence of Pharaoh.

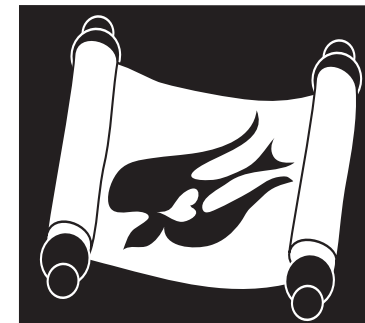
Fortunately for Joseph, his reply not only meets with Pharaoh's favor ("Can we find anyone else endowed with the spirit of God, like him?" 41:38) but even brings Pharaoh to a certain recognition of the God of Israel, for he now approaches Joseph not simply as an expert on dreams but as a collaborator with God. "Since God has given you knowledge of all this..." (41:39). The king of Egypt for the first time defers to the King of kings.

Doing Torah

How difficult is it to bear witness to your faith, to your church, or simply to be true to yourself, in a potentially hostile environment?

Share an experience where you were faced with a 'Joseph before Pharaoh' moment.

What are some of the ordinary ways you 'invoke the name of God' in your daily life?



Faith & life

For many a missionary the cost of invoking God's name has been death. Says Fr Leo, a missionary priest in a poor mountain village in Peru which has a history of terrorist attacks:

"I am no hero. I really don't want to die, not even for the Gospel. Trying to live for it is okay, but I'm not too pushed about dying for it, at least not for quite a while yet. That is the prayer I make to the Lord every day..."

So why does he stay in such a dangerous place when he could asked to be moved?

"I am a willing member of my religious congregation. We continually restate our solidarity with people in their suffering, deprivation and marginalization."