



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



### Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for the session, read all the readings.

1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23

Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13

1 Corinthians 15:45-49

Luke 6:27-38

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading which appealed to you? Was there a word or image that engaged you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need for the session.

### The Word In Liturgy

The story told in today's first reading reveals several important motifs from the sacred history of Israel: Saul's mean-spirited jealousy of the more popular David stands in stark contrast to the younger man's respectful attitude toward the king. David's respect is founded on the fact that, for all of his faults, Saul is nonetheless the Lord's anointed. The lesson to be learned here is that the monarchy is of divine origin, and commands respectful obedience, even when the king's actions are worthy of condemnation. The narrative also makes a point of saying that the deep sleep of Saul and his soldiers was induced by the Lord, thus highlighting how Yahweh is guiding the destiny and fortunes of David. David's personal qualities are ideal: He does not take advantage of the king's vulnerability, but rather offers forgiveness toward the very one who was persecuting him. This is precisely the behavior that Jesus urges in today's Gospel.

Today's Gospel reading is a continuation of Jesus' Sermon on the Plain. After last week's blessings and woes (vv. 20-26), Luke here offers teachings (vv. 27-38) and then next week, illustrative parables (vv. 39-45). This section of teachings first sets out a general principle (vv. 27-28) regarding love of enemies, and then applies it in the context of one's enemies, followed by a comparison of how one operates in the context of one's friendships. The basis of this ethic is clearly articulated as being God's treatment of us (v. 36). Then, there is a final admonition against being judgmental of others. Both the newness and the significance of this teaching of Jesus are important to note. Here he is going well beyond the conventional wisdom—both secular and religious—of his day, insisting that this revolutionary ethic was

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rooted in the standard God has set in our regard by acting mercifully and extending to us—undeserved forgiveness. Little wonder that this passage has so often been pointed to as containing the core of the Good News preached by Jesus. His entire ministry— and ultimately his death— modeled for his disciples the centrality of this unearned gift of love and forgiveness in the divine plan of salvation.

### **Catholic Doctrine**

#### ***Love of Enemies***

In Greek, there are three words to denote types of love, eros (sexual love), philia (friendly affection), and agape (preferential love). Agape is the term used in the New Testament in referring to the unlimited love of God who is love itself. Love (agape) is to bind together and distinguish the Christian community. Jesus makes love of God and neighbor the new and greatest commandment which sums up all the other commandments. In this Sunday's gospel text and elsewhere the evangelists report that Jesus also explicitly extends this commandment to include love for one's enemies.

Simply put, seen from this perspective, the new commandment of Jesus has no fixed boundaries. As disciples of Jesus who follow his teachings, we are to love God and love all people. To love all means to love those close by us, our neighbors, those far off, sinners, and those whom we consider "enemies." Loving without boundaries binds everything together in harmony.

To love one's enemies requires the deepest acceptance of the liberating grace of God who delivers us from sin and evil. Catholic teaching emphasizes that this deliverance is achieved by God's actions throughout history, but most especially in the passion of Jesus.

Violence and hate were directed to Jesus. Those who put him to death saw him as "the enemy" and they mocked and shunned him. Yet, in this dark hour, the sacrifice of Christ became the font from which forgiveness of sins flowed forth from God. At that moment Jesus forgave his "enemies."