



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



### Junior High Session

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

Luke 6:27-38

### Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Jesus our guide, it is easy to love those who love us.

Help us to love even those whom we consider our enemies.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

### Opening Life Reflection

Jesus taught us how to love and live non-violently in the world. Love directed Jesus' life on earth and love is the guiding force for Christians today. We are called to love even our enemies.

To begin today's session, invite the young people to reflect on the movies that they have seen that portray enemies, and news reports that they have heard about groups of people who are enemies.

- What message do you receive from the movies you see and the news reports you hear, about how to treat one's enemies?
- Name some people that you know or have heard about who have dealt with their enemies in a non-violent way.
- What can you learn from the way Jesus treated his enemies?

Allow time for discussion. The grace of God gives us the ability to love even our enemies.

### Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading David does not destroy his enemy. Listen to how David relies on God.

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

Allow for silence.

### Scripture Discussion Starters

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- Who is David's enemy?
- Why does David choose not to destroy Saul?
- How does David rely on God to deal with his enemy?

In the gospel reading today Jesus teaches about loving one's enemies. Listen to what he has to say.

Read Luke 6:27-38.

Allow for silence.

- What does Jesus tell us about how to treat our enemies?
- What does Jesus say about only loving those who love us?
- What does Jesus mean by saying, "the measure you give will be the measure you get back?"

### **Scripture Background**

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings.

In the Old Testament reading today, David chooses to spare his enemy from destruction. There is no hint of vengeance or hatred in the description of David's treatment of Saul. We only hear that David relies on God to reward those who are righteous and faithful. David's respect for Saul is founded on the fact that, even with all of his faults, the king is still the Lord's anointed. David's personal qualities are admirable. He does not take advantage of Saul's vulnerability. Instead, David offers forgiveness when his enemy is defenseless.

In today's gospel Jesus presents a remarkable vision of love. It is a vision that moves beyond loving only those who love us in return. Jesus challenges his followers to love their enemies and do good, expecting nothing in return. According to Jesus, God sets the standard of how we treat our enemies. And that standard includes acting merciful and extending forgiveness even toward the undeserving. This teaching was unconventional for its time and it continues to challenge followers of Jesus today.

Jesus taught love of enemies with his actions as well as his words. Jesus' entire life and ultimately his death modeled a self-giving love offered to all. Jesus offered forgiveness to the very ones who were persecuting him. The love and forgiveness that Jesus extended was given freely for the salvation of all humanity.

### **Questions for Deeper Reflection**

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- Do you treat others the same way that you would like to be treated? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does God love us even when we do not deserve God's love?
- How can you extend love and forgiveness to those who have not earned it?

[If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the Gospel in Life.]

### **Doctrinal Discussion Starters**

#### **Love of Enemies**

In this Sunday's gospel we find that Jesus' commandment to love God and neighbor extends to include love for one's enemies. As followers of Jesus we are to love God and love all people. This includes those whom we consider our "enemies."

Violence and hatred were directed to Jesus. Those who mocked him and put him to death saw Jesus as "the enemy." Jesus forgave his "enemies," and by his sacrifice all people are reconciled with God.

We all need to stand up for ourselves when we are being harmed or mistreated. However, as followers of Christ we are called to seek non-violent ways of dealing with conflict. We are given the ability to offer love to the undeserving and expect nothing in return when we turn to love's Source. Love for one's enemies requires reliance upon the grace of God.

- How can you follow the example of Jesus in the way you treat those who hurt you?
- How can you rely on God to help you forgive those who have not earned your forgiveness?
- Are you able to accept the forgiveness and mercy that God offers you?

#### **The Gospel in Life**

Ask the Guidance Department or a teacher if there is a peer mediation program or a conflict resolution team to work with young people who are facing conflicts. Find out how you can help your peers reconcile their grievances non-violently.