



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



To prepare for this session, read all the readings.

Sirach 27:4-7

Psalm 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16

1 Corinthians 15:54-58

Luke 6:39-45

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Is there a particular reading that appeals to you? Is there a word or image that engages you?

Read the following 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.

### The Word in Liturgy

The Old Testament reading from the Book of Sirach comes from the tradition of Jewish Wisdom literature, which is concerned with teaching the basis of moral behavior that is in accord with the designs of Israel's God. This passage, chosen to support the Gospel reading, is part of a commentary on the eighth commandment, against lying. The advice is clear: one's speech is a sure guide that reveals the inner character of the person. One who is desirous of the moral life is well advised to avoid the company of a person whose speech betrays a corrupt heart. This instruction is a practical application of an important insight into the necessary connection between a person's behavior and the moral values by which one ought to live. The Responsorial Psalm echoes the theme that by a person's fruits you shall know their inner character.

The reading from 1 Corinthians is extremely dense, as Paul summarizes a number of key teachings. Paul quotes from the Old Testament, insisting that in Jesus' resurrection the ancient promise has been fulfilled that death will be destroyed. Death — seen as a punishment for sin — has been overcome in Jesus' resurrection. Paul affirms that Christ's resurrection has brought to the Christian freedom from sin, the law, and death. Concerning salvation, Paul teaches: We experience the power of the resurrection "already" at work in our lives; but, its full realization has "not yet" come upon us, and so we must continue to be attentive to how we conduct ourselves.

The Gospel reading from Luke contains two parables from the Sermon on the Plain — the first has to do with blindness, and the second is about trees bearing fruit. These two parables



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make the same point about the importance of Jesus' disciples living exemplary lives in accord with his teaching. The admonition about blindness is important for those whose example will influence others. Otherwise, one risks the catastrophe of falling into a ditch, or the absurdity of an unnoticed plank hanging from one's eye. Catholic moral theology has always insisted that the basis of Christian morality is the teaching and example of Jesus. Luke extends responsibility of Jesus' teaching and example to the next — and to every successive — generation of Christians who must show others the way by listening to Jesus and putting his words into action.

## **Catholic Doctrine**

### ***Principles of Catholic Morality***

Catholic teaching insists that God speaks to our hearts, that his law is written within us and that is possible for us together, informed by Scripture, Tradition, and the teaching authority of the Church, to discern this law. Deep within one's conscience, God's voice echoes, calling us to love and do good and to avoid evil. The Catholic perspective on conscience is that we do not, on our own, invent this inner voice, but that we are drawn to obey it (CCC 1776).

Precisely because we are free to choose either good or evil, we are moral beings. When, in freedom, a person acts deliberately, that individual is the author of his actions. Those actions can be morally evaluated as either right or wrong (CCC 1749).

Traditional Catholic teaching emphasizes that the determination of the morality of a human act depends on three things: the object, the intention, and the circumstances. Catholic moral theology holds that for an action to be judged as morally good, all three things (the object itself, the intention, and the circumstances) must be good. For this reason, a good intention cannot transform an intrinsically bad behavior into something which is good. Thus, there are objective norms of morality available to us which express the rational order of good and evil. These objective norms are attested to by our conscience (CCC 1751).

Conscience enables us to act responsibly. It is that reasoned judgment by which a person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete action that is going to be performed, is currently being performed, or has been performed (CCC 1778).

Catholics believe that the "inner voice" of conscience must be informed. Church teaching assists us in that formation of conscience. Through good preaching, sound religious education, an understanding of Scripture, spiritual direction, the witness and example of other Christians, and the authoritative teaching of the Church, conscience is formed. This formation is a life-long project where we prudently sift through our experience and the signs



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of the times, seek competent advice, and with the help of the Holy Spirit educate our conscience (CCC 1785).

The purpose of educating one's conscience is to propel the believer further along on the path of right and to help one avoid sin. Sin offends against reason, truth, and right conscience.

