



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



### **Junior High Session**

Sirach 27:4-7

Luke 6:39-45

### **Opening Prayer**

Let us pray.

God our Creator,

open my heart to your goodness and love.

Guide my choices so that they are signs of your goodness and love.

Amen.

### **Opening Reflection**

The theme for today is the gift of free will and making good decisions. On a piece of paper, sketch a cartoon like illustration in which "Conscience" is a character who is helping a friend make a decision. Discuss:

- What is conscience?
- What are some choices that we make every day?
- What is the difference in making a "big" choice and a "little" choice?

Allow time for discussion. Our family, teachers, and friends help us to make choices. Christian life is made up of making choices. Within us, a persistent "voice" helps us make good moral choices.

### **Listening to the Word of God**

In today's Old Testament reading, listen to discover what it said about the eighth commandment, against lying.

Read Sirach 27:4-7.

Allow for silence.

### **Scripture Discussion Starters**

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- What does one's speech tell about the character of the person?
- How does the reading explain the way one's faults appear?
- What does the fruit of the tree show?

### **Scripture Background**

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the gospel using the Catechist Background section.

The first reading is from Jewish Wisdom literature, which is concerned with teaching the basis of moral behavior. The advice is clear: one's speech is a sure guide that reveals the inner character of the person.

In today's Gospel reading, listen to Jesus describing ways to live a good life.

Read Luke 6:39-45.

Allow for silence.

- How can every disciple be like the teacher?
- How do you know that a tree is good?
- How can one "see clearly?"



The Gospel reading is from the Sermon on the Plain—two parables that make the 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. The second example is the absurdity of an unnoticed plank hanging from one's eye. The basis of Christian morality is the teaching and example of Jesus. Each of us is called to show others the way by listening to Jesus and putting his words into action.

### **Questions for Deeper Reflection**

- Discuss the image of the potter and the mold in the furnace.
- Discuss the absurd comparison of the splinter and the wooden beam.
- Discuss the verse "from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks."



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### **Doctrinal Discussion Starters**

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Using our free will responsibly leads to true freedom. And to do otherwise leads us down the "wrong path." We might choose to live on "cruise control," that is, to be inattentive to the choices we make and indifferent to the consequences of our actions. We might choose to live irresponsibly.

Likewise, we might assume a "herd mentality" and do something simply because everyone else is doing it. We might relinquish the control of our decision-making power to public opinion and the whims of the crowd.

We might also deliberately choose to act irresponsibly by disregarding our good sense and God's wisdom. We might ride roughshod over the needs of others. We might indulge in disloyalty, disrespect, greed, avarice, gluttony, pride—you name it—to satisfy whatever it is we think we need. In short, we are free to sin if we choose to do so.

- When has my conscience compelled me to be at odds with the voice of public opinion?
- What are some of the unpopular Gospel positions facing people today?
- Discuss the phrase "using our free will leads to true freedom."



### **Sacrament Connection**

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It is important to take part regularly in the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. An important dimension of celebrating Reconciliation is an examination of conscience and a quiet yet honest review of one's moral actions.

### **The Gospel in Life**

This week think of what you can do to follow your conscience and lead a good life.