



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Fourth Sunday of Lent, Year C, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



### Junior High Session

Joshua 5:9a, 10-12

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

## Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

God our Father and Creator,  
help us to admit our faults, ask forgiveness,  
and celebrate our return to you.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.



## Opening Life Reflection

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On this fourth Sunday of Lent we focus on the call to conversion. To begin today's session invite the young people to reflect on whether or not they are able to recognize their faults. Discuss:

- Why is it important to recognize our faults?
- Once we admit that we have done something wrong, what is the next step?
- What is your understanding of conversion?
- What does conversion have to do with saying that we are sorry?

Allow time for discussion. During the season of Lent we are called to conversion. We prepare to renew our baptismal promises as we move toward the new life of Easter.

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

In the Old Testament reading listen to how the Israelites celebrate their arrival in the Promised Land.

Read Joshua 5:9a, 10-12.

Allow for silence.

## **Scripture Discussion Starters**

- What does the Lord say to Joshua?
- What happened on the day after the Passover?
- How do the Israelites celebrate their arrival in the land of Canaan?
- Why did they eat the crops that year instead of manna?

In today's Gospel Jesus tells the parable of the Prodigal Son. Listen for the layers of meaning.

Read Luke 15:1-3, 11-32.

Allow for silence.

- Who were coming to listen to Jesus?
- What were the Pharisees and Scribes saying?
- In the story of the Prodigal Son, what does the younger son do?
- What is the reaction of the Father when his son returns to him?
- What is the reaction of the older brother?
- What point is Jesus trying to make with this story?

## **Scripture Background**

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

In the Old Testament reading today the Lord tells Joshua that the disgrace of Egypt has been rolled away from the people of Israel. The disgrace of living in slavery is taken away and the Israelites are given new life in the Promised Land. The Passover meal marks that they no longer need the gift of manna that had kept them alive in the desert. The Israelites eat the produce of the land. Today's first reading hints of celebration as the people of Israel establish themselves in the Promised Land.

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Jesus tells the parable of the Prodigal Son in today's gospel. It is no mistake that this story is told while sinners are coming to listen to Jesus. The presence of sinners has the Pharisees and Scribes grumbling.

The story that Jesus tells in this Gospel is rich with layers of meaning. The young son's journey reveals the process of conversion. The forgiving Father shows us the unconditional nature of God's forgiving love even before we say that we are sorry. The reaction of the older brother warns against self-righteous attitudes, yet the Father's response to him is reassuring. Each of these three figures in the story provides us with an important message.

Jesus tells this story of forgiveness and conversion to teach that God is just as willing to welcome us back home, as is the father in this parable.

## **Questions for Deeper Reflection**

- Who do you think the father represents in the parable of the prodigal son?
- How do you celebrate your return to God after you have done something wrong?
- Who are the people in your life that show you God's forgiving love?

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

## **Doctrinal Discussion Starters**

### **Conversion**

Everyone who has been baptized still experiences human weakness and the inclination to sin. The newness of life received by those who are baptized can help to overcome the tendency to sin. This turning away from sin requires the ability to recognize one's faults and change. We call such change conversion.

Throughout his public ministry Jesus preaches conversion. He calls us to repent and believe in the Good News. This change of one's life in accord with the Gospel is ongoing throughout a person's faith journey.

- Can you think of a time when you made a conscious effort to change?



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- Why is the process of conversion ongoing?
  - How do you examine your life in light of the gospel?

# **The Gospel in Life**

Think about the changes that you would like to make as you prepare for Easter and include them in your prayer this week.

## **Connecting to Faith First® Legacy Edition**

At Home Family Guide, theme 26

Junior High, Church history, chapter 8

## **Blest Are We**

Grade 7, chapter 17

Grade 8, chapter 9

