

## **Fifth Sunday of Lent, Year C, catechist - RCLB Lectionary**



### **Catechist Background and Preparation**

To prepare for the session, read all the readings.

Isaiah 43:16-21

Psalms 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6

Philippians 3:8-14

John 8:1-11

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading that 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**

Today's readings conclude a unit of three weeks in year C of the lectionary that have been dealing with the theme of reconciliation.

Today's first reading is from the section of Isaiah (cc 40-55) called the Book of Consolation, written to encourage the Israelites during their exile in Babylon. With imagery that harkens back to the story of the exodus from Egypt, as well as to the creation story of Genesis, the author exhorts his fellow Jews to trust that God will continue to come to their aid, to rescue them and to forgive their transgressions. They are to be mindful of the history of God's kindnesses, not to dwell on their past sins. Rather, they are to anticipate the "new thing" that God is about to do on their behalf. In the midst of their shame and guilt, in the face of their doubts over whether or not Yahweh had given up on them, the oracle asserts that they are still "my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself."

In the Gospel today we are given a story that illustrates in moving fashion the divine love that unconditionally forgives our past sins, freeing us to lead a new life of grace. The scribes and Pharisees who bring the adulterous woman to Jesus personify the harsh judgment of the Law. John further ascribes to them duplicitous motives underlying their self-righteous behavior. The response of Jesus is brilliant. Without condoning her sin, Jesus reveals the hypocrisy of her accusers and at the same time restores to her a sense of self-worth. For the early Christian community of the evangelist, Jesus' admonition to go and sin no more would surely



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have been suggestive of the “born-again” life of the believer who has found in the baptismal waters a whole new way of living. She leaves her encounter with Jesus reconciled to God, to her community and to herself.

# **Catholic Doctrine**

## **Reconciliation**

God’s love for us is complete and unconditional and from this abundance flows the forgiveness of our sins. It is in Jesus that this divine love is shown fully. Church prays:

Jesus’ public ministry began with a call for repentance. He forgave sins. Jesus ate and drank with sinners, a remarkable gesture that graphically illustrates the reconciling nature of his mission. His suffering, death and resurrection represent not only his own Passover into new life but also our Passover with him. Jesus himself is the primordial sacrament of reconciliation. This gift is given to the Church, which by its activities becomes in the world a sign of conversion.

Those who fall into sin after baptism experience the forgiveness of God in the sacrament of Reconciliation. The healing effected by the celebration of this sacrament also restores one’s relationship with the Church. To be reconciled to God means to also be reconciled with God’s Church.

Reconciliation does not mean merely being detached from sin. The healing brought about by the sacrament and the forgiveness experienced in reconciliation works a real change in the person. With the remission of sins, there is, at the same time, the sanctification and renewal of the inner person.