



a Kendall Hunt Company

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



Junior High Session

Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14

Luke 15:1-32 [or 15:1-10]

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Loving and merciful God, you are always willing to forgive us

And you rejoice when we come home to you.

Help us to seek your forgiveness when we go astray.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.



Opening Life Reflection

The theme for today is reconciliation. Invite the youngsters to brainstorm how young people stray from following Jesus today. Write down their responses. Discuss:

- What lures young people away from following Jesus?
- How do you ask for forgiveness after you have done something wrong?
- What helps you stay on the path of following Jesus?

Allow time for discussion. As Christians we sometimes fail to live as faithful followers of Jesus. When we get lost or go astray, God rejoices in our return.



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Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading, listen to how God forgives his people.

Read Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- How do the Israelites turn against God?
- What does God command Moses to do?
- How does Moses respond to God?
- Why does God forgive the people who have gone astray?

In the Gospel listen to Jesus teach about God's mercy and forgiveness.

Read Luke 15:1-32 [or 15:1-10].

Allow for silence.



- Who came to listen to Jesus?
- What do the Pharisees and Scribes say about Jesus?
- What stories or parables does Jesus tell?
- What do the parables teach about God?

Scripture Background

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

In the reading from the Old Testament the people of God go astray. They lose faith and worship the image of a golden calf. The people turn to an idol to replace God even before Moses comes down from the mountaintop. This angers God, but he listens to Moses who pleads for the people. God remains true to the covenant promise that was made with Moses' ancestors and God shows the people forgiveness.

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Today's first reading emphasizes the forgiveness of God. Although the people lose faith and rebel, God remains faithful to them.

The Gospel today continues to stress the forgiveness of God. The passage begins with religious leaders accusing Jesus of welcoming sinners and even eating with them. Jesus responds to these accusations by using parables to teach about God's love. Jesus teaches his listeners that God not only welcomes sinners, but God also rejoices in their return.

In the first parable about the lost sheep the shepherd goes out after the one sheep that is lost until he finds it. When the sheep is found the shepherd carries it tenderly on his shoulders back home. God is like the shepherd who goes after his lost sheep. The story teaches about God's tenderness and love.

In the second parable about the lost coin, the woman takes great care to find what is lost. When the coin is found there is joyful celebration. God is like the woman who searches for the lost coin until it is found. This story reveals how God rejoices in the return of those who have gone astray.

The last parable of the Prodigal Son also teaches about God's love and forgiveness, however the reaction of the elder brother adds something new. The elder brother's jealousy keeps him away from the celebration. It is clear that the religious leaders of Jesus' time are depicted in the elder brother. The point is that God welcomes all to the feast.

In all three parables Jesus teaches the truth about God's love. God rejoices over the reconciliation of sinners. It is the Church's mission to welcome home those who have been lost.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- Have you ever felt lost?
- What helps you find your way back to God?
- Why does God rejoice when a sinner is reconciled?

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



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Doctrinal Discussion Starters

The Church's Ministry of Reconciliation

Jesus came to restore our relationship with God. Therefore the ministry of reconciliation is basic to the Church's life. Jesus reached out to those who were lost and forgotten. He healed those who were broken physically and spiritually. The healing love of Jesus welcomes us all back to our true home with God.

When bitterness and hatred exist between people, within families, and between races there is a need for reconciliation. Many people need help in order to find their way back to God.

Jesus' mission of reconciliation continues in the Church and it is not limited to the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. The entire people of God are called to reach out to those who have lost their way.

- Where does bitterness and hatred exist between people today?
- How can you help others find their way back to God?
- What Sacrament helps to heal people?



The Gospel in Life

Think of someone in need of healing that you can help this week.

Connecting to Faith First® Legacy Edition

At Home Family Guide, theme 9

Junior High, Church and Sacraments, chapter 11