



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



Junior High Session

Exodus 17:8-13

Luke 18:1-8

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God, you hear our prayers when we call out to you.

Help us to trust in your answer.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.



Opening Life Reflection

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The focus for today is petition and intercession in prayer. Begin with a collection of rocks, or shells, which ever are more accessible, and display them in the center of the room. Be sure that there are enough for each youngster to have one. Invite the young people to reflect on what they would like to ask God for themselves, or what they would like to ask God on behalf of someone else. Then invite each young person to silently bring their prayer to God and come forward to take a shell or stone from the center of the room. Explain that their rock or shell is a symbol to help remind them that God hears their prayers. Discuss:

- What is a prayer of petition?
- What is a prayer of intercession?
- When do you pray prayers of petition and intercession?
- What helps you trust that God hears your prayers?

Allow time for discussion. God loves and cares for us. God knows our every need. When we pray prayers of petition or intercession we can trust in God to answer our prayers.



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Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading listen to how Moses prays to God on behalf of the Israelites.

Read Exodus 17:8-13.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- What does Moses tell Joshua?
- How does Moses ask God to help the Israelites?
- Who helps Moses to pray?
- Does God answer Moses' prayer for the Israelites?

In the Gospel listen to a story that Jesus tells about the need to pray.

Read Luke 18:1-8.

Allow for silence.

- Why does Jesus tell a story about a judge and a widow?
- What is the judge like in the story?
- What does the widow do?
- How does the judge respond to the widow at the end of the story?
- By telling this parable what does Jesus teach his followers about God?

Scripture Background

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

In the first reading from the book of Exodus the Israelites win a battle, not through their own military strength, but with the help of God. The fascinating thing about Israel's victory is how they obtain divine help. Moses is persistent in prayer on behalf of the Israelites and with the help of his assistants, his prayer is answered and Israel is delivered.

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In this Old Testament passage Moses acts as a mediator between the people of Israel and God. Moses raises his staff, which represents the protection of Yahweh for the people of Israel. When the staff is raised the Israelites prevail. And when Moses becomes weary from raising his arms, his assistants come to his aid. Finally Moses' prayer is answered and the Israelites win the battle.

In today's gospel Jesus helps his followers understand God's willingness to hear and respond to prayers of petition. Jesus tells a parable about a widow and an unjust judge. At the time when this Gospel was written, widows were treated unfairly and were severely disadvantaged. The widow in today's story uses her voice and her persistence to cry out for justice. She continually comes before the judge asking for fairness. The widow wears down the unjust judge and to keep her from bothering him, he grants her justice.

Jesus challenges his listeners to examine their hearts to see how insistent they are in calling upon God, who is a just judge. The point that Jesus makes with today's parable is that if the unjust judge is willing to grant the widow's request, how much more willing is God to answer our prayers.

- How are you like the widow in the story?
- How is God like the judge in the story?
- How is God different from the judge in the story?
- How are you persistent in prayer?

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

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

Petition and Intercession in Prayer

Prayers of petition and prayers of intercession are two basic forms of prayer taught in our Catholic Tradition. Prayers of petition ask God for something for oneself and intercessory prayers ask God for something for another.

As human beings we understand our limitations and sinfulness. We need to rely on the love and goodness that only God can provide. Catholics understand that asking forgiveness for our sins is the first priority in petitioning God in prayer. When we ask for forgiveness we recognize our need for God and God responds with mercy and love.



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Jesus taught us to pray for God's kingdom to come. When we petition God to bring peace, justice and love into a situation or into the world we help make the kingdom of God more visible and we participate in the mission of Jesus Christ.

Intercessory prayer is a special sort of petition. When we petition God on behalf of others we pray as Jesus did. Jesus is the mediator who intercedes for us before God.

Asking God for something in prayer is an act of faith. The Scriptures make it clear that God is willing to hear and answer our prayers.

- When do you ask God for forgiveness?
- When do you ask God to bring peace, justice or love into a situation?
- Do you trust that God will answer your prayers?

The Gospel in Life

Pray a prayer of petition or intercession each day this week. Keep your shell or rock in a place to help remind you that God hears your prayers.

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Connecting to Faith First® Legacy Edition

At Home Family Guide, themes 16 and 17
Junior High, Church and Sacraments, chapter 5