



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



### Junior High Session

Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18

Luke 18:9-14

## Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

God of all creation, open our hearts to you.

Help us to pray with honesty and humility.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.



## Opening Life Reflection

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The theme for today is humility in prayer. Begin with a walking prayer activity. Create three prayer centers around the room. At the first center post directions for the youth to kneel and pray a silent prayer asking God for forgiveness.

At the second prayer center place a basket containing small strips of paper. Prepare the strips of paper ahead of time by writing a mantra (a chant, a word or phrase that helps draw one into prayer that is repeated while praying) on each strip. For example, a mantra could be the word "trust," or "believe," or "I am with you." Post directions to pick one strip of paper from the basket read the mantra and hold on to it.

At the third prayer center, post directions for the youth to sit quietly and reflect on how God loves them unconditionally.

After every young person has visited each prayer center, gather together and discuss:

- Which prayer center did you like the best? Why?
- When do you pray for forgiveness?
- How can you use a mantra to help you pray throughout the day?

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- How do you approach God in prayer?

Allow time for discussion. Prayer helps deepen our relationship with God and helps us to grow in faith.

# **Listening to the Word of God**

In the Old Testament reading, listen to how God hears and answers prayers that are sincere.

Read Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18.

Allow for silence.

# **Scripture Discussion Starters**

- How are we to come before God in prayer?
- Does God accept bribes?
- Does God hear the prayers of those who have been wronged?

In the Gospel listen to Jesus tell a story about humility and prayer.

Read Luke 18:9-14.

Allow for silence.

- Who does Jesus tell the parable to?
- What is the story about?
- What does the story teach about humility and prayer?

# **Scripture Background**

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

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Today's first reading offers direction to God's people on how to pray. First, praying with generosity is stressed, because God is generous. Then we find a reminder that God cannot be bribed. The passage goes on to stress that God hears and answers sincere prayer.

This Old Testament reading also emphasizes the concern that God has for those who have been wronged—the weak and powerless. God is on the side of the lowly who cry out for help.

Today's gospel passage continues the theme of prayer with the story of the self-righteous Pharisee and the tax collector who addresses God with deep humility. Jesus tells this parable to teach his followers about humility in prayer. The Pharisee comes before God boasting about his own greatness. He lists for God all the good things he has done and while still in prayer he belittles others. On the other hand the tax collector speaks to God with humility. Aware of his own sinfulness, he comes before God pleading for mercy. The tax collector does not compare himself with anyone. Instead, he brings himself honestly before God. The sincere prayer of the tax collector is heard and answered by God.

## **Questions for Deeper Reflection**

- What do the readings today stress about prayer?
- What is sincere prayer?
- How does one pray with humility?

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

## **Doctrinal Discussion Starters**

### **Humility before God in Prayer**

Prayer helps to deepen our relationship with God. It is important to examine how we come before God in prayer. Prayer is a God-centered activity, not a self-centered activity. Believers pray from the depths of a humble heart. All prayer is rooted in humility before the awesome love of God. Our Catholic tradition teaches the necessity of humility in two forms of prayer, meditation and contemplation.

In meditation we express what is in our heart silently and with humility. Our mind, heart and



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imagination help us listen to God's call in our lives. In meditation we focus our attention on—  
scripture, spiritual writings, prayers of our church, or images to help deepen our conversation  
with God and strengthen our ability to follow Christ.

In contemplative prayer, we silently spend time in the loving presence of God. This type of  
praying requires a humble surrender to the will of God. Contemplative prayer is a gift given  
by God to those who pray with faith and trust in God's love.

- How can you pray with humility?
- What is false humility?
- How is meditation different from spoken prayer?

# **The Gospel in Life**

How can you include a prayer of meditation in your life this week?

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

At Home Family Guide, theme 17

Junior High, Church and Sacraments, chapter 4