



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, junior high - RCLB Lectionary



### Junior High Session

2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14

Luke 20:27-38

## Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Loving God,

thank you for the gift of everlasting life.

Help us to build your kingdom on earth.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.



## Opening Life Reflection

The focus for today's session is heaven and hell. To begin, write the words "heaven" and "hell" across the top of a large sheet of paper or chalkboard. Invite the youngsters to brainstorm their understanding of each word. Write down their responses. Discuss:

- What is eternal life?
- How does your understanding of heaven influence the way you live your life?
- How does your understanding of hell influence the way you live your life?

Allow time for discussion. Heaven is eternal life with God. Hell is eternal separation from God. God's loving plan is for the salvation of all. We freely choose whether or not to live in union with God.

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# Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading today listen to how seven brothers and their mother give their lives for their faith.

Read 2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14.

Allow for silence.

## Scripture Discussion Starters

- Why are seven brothers and their mother willing to give their lives for their faith?
- How does the family remain faithful to their beliefs?
- How does their belief in eternal life help them to face death?

In the Gospel today, listen to what Jesus tells his followers about eternal life.

Read Luke 20:27-38

Allow for silence.

- What do the Sadducees ask Jesus?
- Why do they ask him about the resurrection?
- How does Jesus answer them?

## Scripture Background

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

In today's Old Testament reading a family of seven brothers and their mother are persecuted for their beliefs. They courageously defend their faith in the face of torture and death. What is notable about this passage is that the last brother professes belief in a resurrection from the dead. This is significant because at the time, belief in an afterlife was a relatively new idea.



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It is their belief in an afterlife that gives this family the strength and conviction to die for their faith. As it is presented in this passage, the wicked will perish and only the just will be raised.

In the Gospel today some Sadducees question Jesus about the resurrection. They want to discredit Jesus in front of the people. The Sadducees, a religious group who accepted only the Torah, did not believe in the resurrection of the dead.

The question they ask Jesus is about the marital status of seven brothers in the next life. According to the Law of Moses, the brother of a man who dies is to marry his widow in order to have a child to carry on his family line. The Sadducees try to trick Jesus into going against the Torah. Jesus gives his answer, and his argument comes from the Torah in favor of belief in the resurrection. He skillfully turns the question from a legal riddle to a question of the works of God. Jesus affirms the belief in life after death.

## **Questions for Deeper Reflection**

- What do you believe about life after death?
- How does the belief in an afterlife help us to live as followers of Jesus?
- When do you stand up for what you believe?

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

## **Doctrinal Discussion Starters**

### **Heaven and Hell**

We believe that death is not an end to life. When we die our lives change. We pass into a new existence beyond our lives on earth. Catholic teaching holds that in the next life there are three modes of existence, heaven, purgatory and hell. Our focus for today is heaven and hell.

Hell is the everlasting separation from God. We believe that we are united with God when we freely choose to love God and others. We can choose to separate from God. When we sin we separate from God by our own free choice. Jesus warns that if we do not love our neighbor and care for the needs of others we will be separated from his presence. God is a loving God and acts to save all, but some choose to reject God. Hell is the inheritance of all who



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knowingly turn away from God's love.

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Heaven is eternal life and happiness with God. We believe that those who die in friendship with God live in union with God forever. By his saving death and resurrection Jesus Christ has opened the gates of heaven for us. Union with God is accomplished through Christ. Eternal life with God fulfills our deepest desire for happiness

- What happens when we sin?
- How can we choose to love God and others?
- Why does living in friendship with God make us happy?

# **The Gospel in Life**

How can you grow in friendship with God this week?

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

At Home Family Guide, theme 6

