



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Holy Family, Year A, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



### Junior High Session

Sirach 3:2-7, 12-14

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

## Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God, bless our families.

Help us to appreciate each other.

Thank you for the gift of our families.

In the name of Christ our Lord we pray.

Amen.



## Opening Life Reflection

The focus for today is family. To begin invite the young people to plan a family meal. Have them choose a time when all family members can participate in a meal together. Then provide paper and pencils and have them plan a menu. Discuss:

- When does your family spend time together?
- What do you treasure most about your family?
- What special talents do you bring to your family life?

Allow time for discussion. This Sunday the Church celebrates the Feast of the Holy Family. Today, the Church stresses that because Jesus was born into a family, family life can be a source of holiness.

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# Listening to the Word of God

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In the Old Testament reading listen to how family life can be a source of holiness when God's commandments are followed.

Read Sirach 3:2-7, 12-14.

Allow for silence.

## Scripture Discussion Starters

- Which of the Ten Commandments is highlighted in the reading?
- How should one's parents be treated?
- How does this reading offer encouragement?

In today's gospel listen to find out about Jesus' family.

Read Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23.

Allow for silence.



- Why is Joseph told to take Jesus and his mother to Egypt?
- What does Joseph do?
- How long does Jesus' family stay in Egypt?
- After the death of Herod, where does Joseph take Mary and Jesus?

## Scripture Background

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

On today's feast of the Holy Family, the Church celebrates that Jesus was born into a family. The birth of Jesus into a family highlights his humanity. The humanity of Jesus makes holy all of humanity and Jesus' life in a family reflects the holiness of family life. The family, made holy by virtue of Jesus' life with Mary and Joseph, becomes a source of holiness for every

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Christian.

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The Old Testament reading today stresses the Fourth Commandment, to honor your father and mother. The Fourth Commandment is crucial to both Jewish and Christian understandings of family life. The author of today's reading is concerned with the kind of relationships that make up family life. We are told that God does not forget when reverence and care is shown for one's parents. This passage encourages families to strive to live in harmony. Family life can be a source of holiness when lived within God's commandments.

Today's gospel brings to light the importance of Jesus' family life. Joseph guides his family with divine help through dangers to safety. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus listen to God's call and they leave Egypt and settle down in Nazareth. In this reading, Matthew identifies Jesus as the new Moses, called out of Egypt. Jesus' human destiny retells the entire history of the chosen people and his upbringing in Nazareth leads to the truth of his identity as Messiah, Son of God and Savior.

Although today's Gospel passage does not emphasize Jesus' reverence toward his parents, we can be sure that Jesus' way to holiness would have included observance of the Fourth Commandment.



## Questions for Deeper Reflection

- Why is it important to recognize that Jesus was born into a family?
- How can family life be a source of holiness for every Christian?
- How do you think Jesus observed the Fourth Commandment?

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

## Doctrinal Discussion Starters

### The Fourth Commandment: Honor Your Father and Mother

The concept of law in the Old Testament comes from an understanding that Israel is chosen by God because of divine love. The commands of God are meant to be a light and guide for the chosen people, not a burden.

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In the New Testament Jesus not only fulfills the law, but also follows it closely. When Jesus is asked which commandment is the greatest, he responds with twofold instruction to love God and to love one's neighbor. His attitude toward the law is one of reverence and respect.

Catholic teaching on the Fourth Commandment recites the duties of family members. Children are to respect and obey their parents and guardians. Parents and guardians are to provide for their children's growth and wellbeing, regarding them as children of God.

- How would you describe the Fourth Commandment?
- What does it mean to honor and obey?
- How do you show respect for the members of your family?

# **The Gospel in Life**

How can you help strengthen your family relationships this week?

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

At Home Family Guide, theme 25

Junior High, Morality, chapter 9

