



a Kendall Hunt Company

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, Intermediate - RCLB Lectionary



Intermediate Session

Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13

Matthew 5:1-12

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God, thank you the gift of love that you have placed within our hearts.

Help us to live as your children.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.



Opening Life Reflection

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The topic for today is Christian morality. To begin, invite each child to create a “book of blessings.” Provide multi-colored construction paper for covers and lined paper for the pages inside the booklets. Fill the booklet with ten pages by folding five sheets of lined paper in half from top to bottom. Fold a sheet of construction paper over the lined pages and staple the top. Provide markers for the children to design the booklet covers. Explain to the children that their “book of blessings” can be used to write down how they choose to show their love for God each day. Invite the children to start on the first page by writing one thing that they can do today to show their love for God. Discuss:

- How do we show our love for God by the choices we make?
- How does God want us to live?
- What does it mean to live a good moral life?

Allow time for discussion. Living a moral life for Christians includes showing our love for God by the choices we make. Making good and loving choices helps us to grow as God’s children.



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Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading listen to the prophet offer guidance to the people about how to live.

Read Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- How does the prophet offer guidance to the people?
- How are the people called to live?
- What reward awaits the people who observe God's law?

In the Gospel reading today listen to Jesus teach about those who are blessed.

Read Matthew 5:1-12.

Allow for silence.

- Where does Jesus go to teach the crowds?
- What does Jesus teach about those who are blessed?
- How do the blessed live their lives?

Scripture Background

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings using the Catechist Background section.

In the Old Testament reading today, Zephaniah calls the people of Israel to keep their eyes on God. The prophet stresses the importance of seeking the Lord in all things. His message brings great promise, but it also brings warning. The prophet threatens a "day of the Lord" which will bring down God's wrath upon all evildoers. In Zephaniah's words of promise we hear how the Lord will protect the people who, by their actions, prove themselves faithful to

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God. Today's passage gives God's people guidance so that they may live a moral life.

In today's Gospel Jesus goes to the mountaintop to teach about true happiness. With this setting Matthew portrays Jesus as the new Moses, giving the people the new commandments from the mountaintop.

Jesus begins each statement of the new law with "Blessed are..." The first four commandments declare that the little ones who suffer are "blessed" "in God's kingdom. The next four highlight those who work to bring about the kingdom of God. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount proclaims that happy are the people who keep their life centered on God.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- How do today's readings show us how to live a moral life?
- How does Jesus' Sermon on the Mount help us to live as Christians?
- Where can people find true happiness?

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

RCL Benziger
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Doctrinal Discussion Starters

Foundations of Christian Morality

The Church believes that Catholic morality comes from God's law, which is planted within the hearts of human beings. Natural law is the original sense of right and wrong that God has placed within all people. It helps us to know good and evil.

Christian morality is based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the scriptures, the teachings of the Church, and the living witness of a community of believers. For Catholic Christians, living a moral life goes beyond following laws. Love for God and a desire to please God motivates us to make good and loving choices.

To determine the morality of our actions we look at three things. The object of our act; what we choose to do, the intention; why we choose to do what we do; and the circumstances; the how, who, when and where of the act. For an action to be judged as morally good these three



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elements must be determined as good.

We are free to choose either good or evil. The Beatitudes show us that true happiness is found in our life with God. We are blessed with God's spirit to help us choose to live our lives as followers of Jesus.

- What gift does God give human beings?
- What do the Beatitudes teach us?
- What helps you make good moral decisions?

The Gospel in Life

Use your "book of blessings" to write down each good and loving choice that you make this week.

Connecting to Faith First® Legacy Edition

At Home Family Guide, theme 12
Grade 4, chapter 21
Grade 5, chapters 19 and 22
Grade 6, chapters 2 and 21

