

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, junior high

Submitted by lectionaryadmin on Sun, 07/21/2013 - 20:00

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.
God of light,
let the light of your goodness shine though our good works.
In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.
Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The topic for today is the social teaching of the Church. To begin, divide the youngsters into small groups of four or five. Provide a large sheet of newsprint paper for each group. Have them use a marker to divide the paper in half and write at the top of one half, "light" and at the top of the other half "darkness." Under the appropriate headings, invite each group to list those things that come to mind when they think of light and darkness. Ask each group to share their remarks with the large group. Discuss:

- Followers of Christ are called to be light for the world. What does that mean to you?
- Where do you see light and darkness in the world today?
- What is the Church's social teaching?

Allow time for discussion. The Church's social teaching reminds us that as followers of Christ we are called to be light for the world.

Listening to the Word of God

In this Old Testament reading, listen to the call to be a light shining in the darkness.

Read Isaiah 58:7-10.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- What are the people called to do?
- What does the word *light* express?
- How will the Lord respond to those who help the hungry and the poor?

In the Gospel reading listen to Jesus tell his listeners to let their light shine.

Read Matthew 5:13-16.

Allow for silence.

- What does Jesus say about being the salt of the earth?
- What does Jesus say about being the light of the world?
- What will happen to those who let their light shine?

Scripture Background

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

The first reading from the Old Testament makes clear how the people of God are to live. The message is to live with a concern for others, especially the poor. Those who do this will be like a light shining in the darkness and the glory of God will be with them. Today's passage stresses the call of God's chosen people to be a force for good in the world. God wants to eliminate the suffering of the poor. God's people are given instruction to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless and clothe the naked.

The theme of light shining in the darkness is also found in today's Gospel. Jesus tells his followers to let their light shine. Jesus' disciples let their light shine by becoming a force for good and love in the world. This Gospel passage encourages followers of Jesus to live with a concern for the poor. When action is taken on behalf of those in need, the light of God's presence shines in the world. God's love transforms the world. Disciples of Jesus are called to spread the light of God's love and make the world a better place.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- How do the readings today call us to reach out to the poor?
- How can followers of Jesus let their light shine?
- What good works can you take part in?

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

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

The Social Teaching of the Church: Preferential Option for the Poor

The Church has always been concerned with the problems and injustices that exist in society. Out of concern for the dignity of the human person and the rights of all human beings, the Catholic Church developed a detailed social teaching.

An important part of the Church's social teaching is the preferential option for the poor. The preferential option for the poor is a commitment to care for the poor and work to alleviate poverty. This teaching calls us to make decisions with the poor and oppressed in mind. The needs and concerns of the poor should be given priority over others.

When we work to eliminate the causes of poverty, and when we take action to improve the living conditions of the poor and oppressed, we truly become salt of the earth and light for the world.

- Why is the Church concerned with the problems and injustices that exist in society?
- What is an important part of the Church's social teaching?
- Where have you seen the needs and concerns of the poor given priority?

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theme 13
chapter 18

The Gospel in Life

How will you keep the poor in mind when you make decisions this week?

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