



a Kendall Hunt Company

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



Leviticus 19: 1-2, 17-18

Psalm 103: 1-2, 3-4, 8,10, 12-13

1 Corinthians 3: 16-23

Matthew 5: 38-48

Opening Prayer

O Lord,
you are kind and merciful.
Like a compassionate father
you do not deal with us
according to our sins
but according to your own holiness.
Help us to strive
To be more like your Son
And to love one another.

Amen.

Opening Reflection



Perfection is a tall order, but Jesus tells his disciples that they are to emulate the perfection of God in their dealings with one another. His followers are to conquer their enemies with love and pray for their persecutors

Listening to the Word of God

Read Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18.

Allow for silence.

The fourth section of the Book of Leviticus is termed the Holiness Code. Its core message is captured in the second verse from today's reading: "Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy."

Scripture Background

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

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Read Matthew 5: 38-48.

Similar to Leviticus, this portion of Jesus' teaching stresses that our relationships are constitutive of our sharing in the holiness of God. Jesus upholds social justice and limits retaliation. He goes further and demands love for enemies, referring to the image of a God whose sun shines upon good and bad alike.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- *What surprises you about the Gospel?*
- *What do you think it means that God dwells in you?*
- *Do you need to change to follow Jesus' way?*

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

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

A universal calling

The call to holiness is universal. The exhortation of Jesus regarding perfection which concludes today's Gospel challenges every member of the Church to live daily as a disciple of Jesus. In the Second Vatican Council, the Church made it clear that *all* believers are called to holiness of life. This teaching appears in the fifth chapter of the Council document *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (1964). The bishops referred to the baptismal inheritance of every believer. Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, each believer is gifted with a share in the mystery of Jesus, the Holy One of God. Thus, holiness is always a grace given from God.

The gift of holiness is showered upon the Church. By his loving sacrifice on the Cross, Christ makes the Church his bride. She is clothed in the Holy Spirit and joined to the Lord Jesus. The entire ecclesial community is called to holiness in the conditions, duties and circumstances of their lives. By partaking of the Sacraments, by listening to and reflecting upon Sacred Scripture, by a devout life filled with faith, hope and charity, by striving for a moral life in accord with the Commandments, and by putting into practice the Beatitudes of Jesus, believers respond together to the promptings of divine grace and seek that holiness which characterizes God.



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The Gospel in Life

God has bound himself to us, first in the Covenant with Israel and definitively in the new Covenant forged with all humanity in the Body and Blood of Jesus. Our relationships with one another are linked in that quest to share God's holiness. Jesus joins together the Commandment to love one's neighbor with the same command to share God's holiness and perfection.

