



a Kendall Hunt Company

Fifth Sunday of Lent, Year A, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



Junior High Session

Ezekiel 37:12-14

John 11:1-45

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus,

fill us with faith, hope, and love.

Help us to live as your followers.

For you are Lord forever and ever.

Amen.



RCL Benziger

Opening Life Reflection

The theme for today is Jesus' saving event, the Paschal Mystery. To begin invite the youngsters to reflect on what they need to put aside in order to live as followers of Jesus. Provide strips of blank paper and pencils and have them write down the things that get in the way of their living as followers of Christ. Then, invite the young people to get rid of the strips of paper by coming forward and burning them in a large ashtray. Discuss:

- How does it feel to be given a new start?
- How does the season of Lent help us to live as followers of Jesus?
- How do we celebrate the gift of new life at Easter?

Allow time for discussion. On this Fifth Sunday of Lent we remember that Jesus came so that we might have life. We look within our hearts to find and get rid of those things that keep us from living as followers of Jesus.

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Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading listen to how God promises to give the gift of life.
Read Ezekiel 37:12-14.

Allow for silence.


Scripture Discussion Starters

- What does God promise the people?
- What gift will God put within the people?
- How does the prophet's message bring hope?

In the gospel reading today listen to how Jesus brings new life to his friend Lazarus.

Read John 11:1-45.

Allow for silence.

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- What happens when Jesus hears about his friend Lazarus?
 - How does Jesus show his love for Martha, Mary, and Lazarus?
 - Why does Jesus call himself "the resurrection and the life?"
 - How is Lazarus given new life?

Scripture Background

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

In today's Old Testament reading the prophet Ezekiel helps to restore hope for the despairing people of Israel. Ezekiel uses the imagery of dead bodies rising from the grave to announce God's promise of new life to the people. God's promise to "put my spirit in you that you may live" brings comfort and reassurance to the Israelites. Not surprisingly, Christian tradition finds the promise of personal resurrection to every Christian in today's passage.



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In today's gospel Jesus performs his greatest miracle. It is clear that Jesus loves Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, and he is saddened by the loss of his friend Lazarus. However, Jesus knows that his friend will rise again so that the Son of God may be glorified. In raising Lazarus from death to life, Jesus proves what he says in verses 25-26: "I am the resurrection and the life: whoever believes in me, though he should die, will come to life; and whoever is alive and believes in me will never die." Today's gospel focuses on the journey from death into life, and it sheds light on the saving events of Christ's dying and rising, his Paschal Mystery.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- How do today's readings offer hope?
- What do the readings teach about life everlasting?
- What helps you find hope after suffering or loss?

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



Doctrinal Discussion Starters

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The Paschal Mystery in the Sacraments

The Paschal Mystery is the term that encompasses the saving event of Jesus' death, resurrection, ascension and sending of the Spirit. All God's promises of redemption are fulfilled in the Paschal Mystery. The life and saving event of Jesus is passed over to the Church in the celebration of the sacraments. The sacraments communicate God's saving grace to believers today.

When we take part in the liturgy we celebrate Christ's Paschal Mystery. Easter is the prime moment when the Paschal Mystery is celebrated. But it is not only on Sunday and Easter that the Paschal Mystery is made real in the life of believers. The saving event of Jesus is realized every time there is healing after loss and whenever hope overcomes despair.

- What is the Paschal Mystery?
- How do the sacraments communicate God's saving grace?
- When is the Paschal Mystery made real to you?



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The Gospel in Life

How can you bring hope to others this Lenten season?

