



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



Junior High Session

Isaiah 55:10-11

Matthew 13:1-23

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God, your word is like a seed planted in our hearts.

Make our hearts ready to hear your voice.

Let your word take root in us.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The topic for today is sacred Scripture. For today's session select several scripture passages that speak to the life experiences of young people. Some suggestions are: Making decisions - Matthew 12:33-37; Feeling lonely - Psalm 139:1-14; Wanting something - John 16:23-34; Feeling sad or depressed - Psalm 102:1-2; Anger - Psalm 37:5-8; Feeling worthless - 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Love - 1 John 7:8. To begin, list the life experiences on a large sheet of poster paper. Divide the large group into small groups of three or four and hand each group a scripture passage that relates to one of the life experiences listed. Invite each group to read their passage and choose which life experience it speaks to. Have a member of each group read their passage to the large group and share how it relates to a life experience. Discuss:

- Did you hear a personal message in any of the scripture passages?
- Why do we call the scriptures the Word of God?
- How does God speak to us through the scriptures?

Allow time for discussion. Scripture is God's own Word to us. It is important that we open our hearts so that we hear God's voice.

Listening to the Word of God

In today's Old Testament reading, listen to how the prophet Isaiah describes God's word.

Read Isaiah 55:10-11.

Allow for silence.



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Scripture Discussion Starters

- How does Isaiah describe God's word?
- Why is God's word compared to rain?
- What does rain do for the earth?
- What does God's word do for those who hear it?

In the gospel today listen to the story of the sower and the seed.

Read Matthew 13:1-23. (Shorter Matthew 13:1-9)

Allow for silence.

- What parable does Jesus tell?
- What do the seeds represent?
- What does the good soil represent?
- What does Jesus teach about hearing God's word?

Scripture Background

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

In the first reading from the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah reassures the people that God will protect and care for them. According to Isaiah, Israel can trust in the continuing power of God's Word to deliver them from exile. Isaiah compares God's word to life-giving water. Rain and snow fall from the sky and water the earth, providing good soil for seeds to grow. The word of God is like rain, sent to enliven the faith of the people.

In today's gospel, the word of God is spoken through Jesus' parable. Jesus told stories to help people understand the Kingdom of God. Today's parable about the sower and the seed shows the challenges of hearing God's word and letting it bear fruit. The author of today's passage provides an interpretation of the story. The seed is the word of God. The challenge for the listener is to be like good soil and allow the word of God to take root. Today's parable makes clear our call to hear the word of God and live it.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- Why is it hard sometimes to truly hear God's word?
- How can we allow God's word to take root in us?
- What does it mean to hear the word of God and live it?

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



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Doctrinal Discussion Starter

Sacred Scripture

We Catholics believe that God is the author of sacred scripture. The Old and New Testaments contain inspired writings. While human beings composed the texts, they were written under the inspiration of God. We believe that Jesus Christ; the living Word of God is present in the sacred Scriptures. Jesus opens our minds and hearts so that we may understand the truth of the written word.

The Church helps us interpret the Word of God with the guidance of the Spirit. To discover the meaning of God's Word, the Church teaches that we first must understand why God speaks to us. The purpose is for our salvation in Jesus Christ. When interpreting scripture we also must try to understand the style of writing that a particular author used to communicate God's message. When we understand what the human author was trying to do, we can better understand what God is trying to say to us. The word of God nourishes our faith and gives us strength. All members of the Church are urged to hear God's word and carry the good news to others.

- How are you nourished by God's Word in the sacred scriptures?
- Why is God's Word part of the Mass?
- What does it mean to carry the good news to others?

Correlation to Faith First®

Faith First Junior High: Creed & Prayer,
Chapter 2, pp. 22-29

The Gospel in Life

How can you make listening to the Word of God an important part of your life?