



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



Junior High Session

1 Kings 3:5, 7-12
Matthew 13:44-52

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.
O God,
you have created us to live in happiness with you forever.
Help us work to bring about your kingdom of peace and justice.
In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.
Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The theme for today is the Kingdom of God. Begin today's session with a treasure hunt for symbols of God's kingdom. Scatter and hide symbols around the room that represent happiness, life, peace, justice, and love. Some examples can be a smiley face, flowers, peace sign, and heart. Invite the young people to hunt around the room for symbols of the Kingdom of God. Discuss:

- What is the kingdom of God?
- How does each symbol found in today's scavenger hunt represent the Kingdom of God?
- How do we learn about God's kingdom?

Allow time for discussion. Jesus' life and ministry witnessed to the world that the Kingdom of God is at hand. The kingdom Jesus proclaimed will come about in full when all people and all creation live in eternal happiness with God.

Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading, listen to find out what Solomon asks of God.

Read 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12.
Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- What does Solomon ask of God?
- What is God's reaction to Solomon's request?

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- Why does God bless Solomon?

In the gospel today, listen to what Jesus teaches his followers about the kingdom of God.

Read Matthew 13:44-52.

Allow for silence.

- How does Jesus teach about the kingdom of heaven?
- What is the kingdom of heaven like?
- What will happen at the end of time?

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, God appears to Solomon in a dream. Solomon hears God say, "Ask something of me and I will give it to you." Although he could have asked for anything, Solomon does not ask for riches, long life, or revenge against his enemies. Instead, Solomon asks God for an understanding mind so he can be a good and wise king for God's people. Solomon's request is very pleasing to God. God grants Solomon many blessings.

In today's gospel, Jesus continues to teach about the Kingdom of God with parables. Each of the three stories in today's passage reveals something about God's kingdom. The man who finds the buried treasure must be willing to risk everything he has. The parable of the pearl is similar, but it is not a poor man but a rich man who seeks the treasure. This shows that God's kingdom is available to all, rich and poor alike. The first two parables teach that the kingdom of God is so valuable that one must risk everything for it. The result is complete joy in finding what is most valuable in life.

In the final story of the fishermen hauling in the net, we once again find the presence of those who seem unfit for the kingdom. This parable teaches that God's reign is open to rich and poor, good and bad; but at the end there will be a sorting out of those who are worthless and those who are just.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- Where do you find the treasure of God's love?
- What are you willing to give up in order to follow Jesus?
- What do you value most in life?



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

Doctrinal Discussion Starter

The Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God is the image used in the bible to describe all people and creation living in communion with God. Jesus used parables to teach about the Kingdom of God. Jesus announces, as he works a healing miracle, that the Kingdom of God "has come upon you" (Matthew 12:28 and Luke 11:20).

The Church understands that Jesus' life and ministry witnessed God's saving love to the world. Although Jesus brought about the Kingdom of God and the kingdom is here now among us, it is not fully realized. It will come about in full when Christ comes again at the end of time. The way we live our lives here on earth can contribute to the coming of God's kingdom. When we spread God's love by working for peace, and helping the poor and needy, we prepare for God's kingdom.

- What do you imagine heaven to be like?
- How can our words and actions help to build God's kingdom on earth?
- How can you prepare for the coming of the Kingdom of God?

Correlation to Faith First®

Junior High, Creed and Prayer, Chapter 7 and Chapter 16, pp. 198-199

The Gospel in Life

How can you take a risk this week and stand up for what is right?