



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



Junior High Session

Isaiah 55:1-3

Matthew 14:13-21

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God, thank you for providing us with all that we need.

Help us to share what we have with others.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The theme for today is Eucharist as Meal. For today's session bring in three or four cereal boxes covered with white paper. To begin, divide the large group into three or four small groups. Provide each group with a blank cereal box and markers. Invite the young people to reflect on ways that people can share food with those who are hungry. Have each group design a cereal box that expresses how we can share food with the hungry. Discuss:

- How does God provide us with what we need?
- Why are some people hungry?
- How can we share what we have with others?

Allow time for discussion. God gives us all that we need. We are to share what we have been given with others, especially those who are in need. In the sacred meal of Eucharist, Jesus shares his life with us.

Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading listen to Isaiah promise that God will give the people what they need.

Read Isaiah 55:1-3.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- What does Isaiah promise the people?
- Why is food and drink offered without price?

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- How will God satisfy the hunger of the people?

In the gospel today listen to how Jesus feeds five thousand.

Read Matthew 14:13-21.

Allow for silence.

- Why do the disciples want to send the crowds away?
- How does Jesus feed thousands of people?
- Why does Jesus feed the large crowd?

Scripture Background

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

In the Old Testament reading today the prophet Isaiah calls out for the people to come and let God satisfy their hunger. God cares for the people and will give them what they need. There is no charge; the food and drink from God are free. All are invited without cost, so that God may provide true nourishment.

Today's gospel story of Jesus feeding thousands of people is very important. It is retold six times in the gospels, which shows that the early Church found great meaning in the story. The disciples want to send the people away because they do not have enough food to feed the large crowd. Jesus tells the disciples to feed the people. Jesus looks up to heaven and blesses the five loaves of bread and two fish. He sends his disciples out to share it with the people. Not only is there enough to eat, but there are leftovers.

In today's passage, Jesus feeds a large crowd of people by multiplying five loaves of bread and two fish. The symbolism of the loaves and fish reflects the early Christian community's faith in the Eucharist. For the Church today, the story reinforces that Jesus is the "bread of life," who nourishes us in the Eucharist.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- What do today's readings tell us about God?
- What is the connection between Jesus feeding the crowd and the Church's belief in the Eucharist?
- How are we called to go out and share what we have with others?

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



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Doctrinal Discussion Starter

Eucharist as Meal

Catholics believe that when we gather for the special meal of Eucharist we are connected as brothers and sisters of Jesus. Sharing in the Eucharist unites us with Jesus. This sacramental meal is not like any other act of eating and drinking. Those who eat and drink the sacred meal of Eucharist in faith have a share in the death and eternal life of Jesus. Sharing the Eucharist nourishes our communion with God and with one another.

The Eucharist is spiritual food that helps to strengthen our ability to love others and follow Jesus. At Mass, we believe that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus. Jesus' presence in the Eucharist is our food and drink. The Church encourages the faithful to receive Eucharist every Sunday.

- Why is the Eucharist a very important meal?
- Why is Eucharist spiritual food?
- How does sharing in the Eucharist strengthen our friendship with Jesus and with one another?

The Gospel in Life

How can you share your blessings with others this week?

