



a Kendall Hunt Company

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, Primary - RCLB Lectionary



Primary Session

Matthew 18:15-20

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Loving God, thank you for always forgiving us and making us new.

Help us to change and grow to be all you want us to be.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.



Opening Life Reflection

The theme for today is conversion. To begin, place pieces of pottery on a table in the center of the room. Explain to the children that a potter is someone who makes pots and bowls and all kinds of things out of clay. Provide each child with a ball of play dough and invite the children to make anything they would like out of it. Explain that they can start over if they make a mistake. Discuss:

- Did anyone make a mistake with the play dough and have to start again?
- How is God like a potter?
- What happens when you make a mistake?
- When you make a mistake, who helps you try again?

Allow time for discussion. God is like a potter. God helps us to grow and change. Sometimes we make mistakes. God forgives us and helps to make us new.



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Listening to the Word of God

In the gospel today, listen to how Jesus wants his followers to give people who make mistakes a chance to try again.

Read Matthew 18:15-20.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- What does Jesus want his followers to do with people who make mistakes?
- Who will welcome the people who listen back into the church?
- What will happen to the sinful people if they refuse to listen?
- What does Jesus say will happen when two or three are gathered in his name?

Scripture Background

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

In today's gospel we find the early Church trying to live out Jesus' command to love one another. Jesus wants his followers to make every effort to give another chance to the people who do things that are wrong. If they listen, Jesus wants them to be welcomed back into the Church family. If the wrongdoers refuse to listen the first time, other members of the Church should be called upon to help.

Today's passage shows that a change of heart is always possible. People can change their ways and the Church family should help those who make mistakes. God forgives the sinners and offers them a new start. Jesus makes the point that prayer is important because conversion is a gift from God.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- Why does God want his followers to give sinners a chance to change?
- Why is it sometimes difficult to love others?
- Why is prayer important?



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

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

Conversion

In the gospels we hear Jesus' command to "repent" right from the start. Although we are created to be good and to live in friendship with God, too often we turn away from God's love for us. Sometimes we make choices that do not respect others or ourselves. This was the case in Jesus' time as well. Jesus' preaching and ministry called for a turn around of the person, a call to let go of old ways and to live a life of love. Conversion is turning our hearts back to God's love.

Catholics understand that we grow in friendship with God throughout our lives. Conversion is an ongoing journey. We do not make this journey alone. All members of the Church family support and challenge one another to grow in faith. The entire body of the Church is called to conversion. The sacraments help us to live as children of God. In the sacraments, God's love heals us and we become closer to God.

We don't always do the good things that we should do. As God's children, we are called back to friendship with God and God's people, the Church. Our faith tells us that God will forgive us and make us like new.

- Why do we need to turn our hearts back to God?
- What is conversion?
- How does our Church family help us to change and grow?

Sacrament Connection

Jesus gave his Church the power to forgive sins. When we sin, we have the opportunity to be reconciled with God and the Church through the sacrament of Reconciliation. Reconciliation restores our relationship of love and friendship with God.

The Gospel in Life

How can you turn your heart back to God this week?