



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



### Junior High Session

Isaiah 55:6-9

Matthew 20:1-16

### Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Generous God, you are kind and merciful and your love is everlasting.

Help us to trust in your constant love.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

### Opening Life Reflection

On a large sheet of poster paper draw two paths. Mark one path "God's way" and mark the second path "wrong way." Invite the young people to reflect on the choices they make. Brainstorm with them what they might experience on the path that follows God's way, some examples can include--peace, happiness, etc. Write down their responses on the path marked "God's way." Then brainstorm with them what they might experience on the wrong path, some examples can include--guilt, sorrow, etc. Write down their responses on the path marked "wrong way." Discuss:

- What helps you to follow God's way?



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- When you do something that you know is wrong, how do you make things right again? ———
- Does God welcome us back every time we go astray?

Allow time for discussion. God is generous and merciful. Even when we do something we know is wrong, God always welcomes us back.

### **Listening to the Word of God**

In the Old Testament reading today, listen to Isaiah urge the people to return to God's way.

Read Isaiah 55:6-9.

Allow for silence.

### **Scripture Discussion Starters**

- What does Isaiah tell the people to do?
- What will happen to those who return to God?
- How is God's mercy shown?

In the gospel, listen to a story about God's generosity.

Read Matthew 20:1-16.

Allow for silence.

- What does Jesus say the kingdom of heaven is like?
- What happens to the laborers in the story Jesus tells?
- Why do some laborers feel like they have been treated unfairly?
- What does Jesus teach about God in the story?

### **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 proclaims the glory of God's forgiveness. God's ways are hard for the people to understand. Isaiah urges the people to turn from their wicked ways and return to the Lord for mercy and forgiveness. In today's passage the message is clear. Do not waste any time. Seek the Lord now and you will find a God of limitless love and mercy.

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In today's gospel, Jesus tells a story about workers in a vineyard. Like many of Jesus' parables, the story ends with a twist to help the listener look at reality in a new way. Jesus called this reality the reign of God.

The landowner in today's parable pays a full day's wage to all his workers, even those who only work for part of the day. This makes some of the workers upset because they think that they should get more. Jesus' parable teaches that God's generosity and unconditional love is extended to all people. The people of Jesus' time found it hard to understand that prostitutes and tax collectors should receive forgiveness without earning it. Today's parable shows that everyone gets what he or she needs to survive because of the owner's compassion, not because they have earned it.

### **Questions for Deeper Reflection**

- What do today's readings teach about God's love?
- How are God's ways different from our ways?
- Can God's love be earned?



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

### **Doctrinal Discussion Starter**

#### ***The Sacrament of Penance***

God's love is unconditional. God loves us even when we find it hard to love ourselves. God's love is constant. From this great love flows the forgiveness of sins. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus open for us the doors to a new and healed life. We are born into this new life at baptism. The Church does not re-baptize those who sin after baptism. Instead, Catholics experience the forgiveness of God in the sacrament of reconciliation.

When we sin, we do things that hurt our friendship with God and with others. In the sacrament of reconciliation we reconcile with God and one another. God always loves us and offers forgiveness. When we are sorry for our sins we are led by God to be reconciled.

Catholics believe there are four parts to the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation. First the believer expresses love for God and true sorrow for sin. Second, the sins are



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confessed. This is done individually to a priest. The priest acts in the name of Jesus. Third, the harm that is done must be repaired. This is known as penance. Fourth, the priest extends his hands over the head of the believer in blessing and prays for our forgiveness. This prayer of absolution expresses that it is God alone who forgives and reconciles the sinner back to God and to the Church. Through the sacrament of reconciliation we receive the strength to live faithfully as God's children.

- What does it mean that God's love is unconditional?
- When do you celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation?
- Who are the people in your life who show you God's forgiving love?

### **Sacrament Connection**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation restores us to the relationship of love with God we entered into at Baptism. When we celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation we return to God and to the Church.

### **The Gospel in Life**

Take some time to reflect on God's unconditional love for you this week?

