



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



### Junior High Session

Isaiah 5:1-7

Matthew 21:33-43

### Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Lord God, you are the vine and we are the branches.

Help us to bear good fruit.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.



### Opening Life Reflection

The topic for today is divine justice and judgment. To begin, place a bowl of grapes on a table. Invite the young people to take a moment to reflect on their personal qualities and abilities. Pass the bowl of grapes around the room and invite each person to take a grape and share one of their qualities with the group. Explain that when we use our God given abilities, we help make the world a better place; we bear good fruit for God. Discuss.

- What does it mean bear good fruit?
- Who helps you to grow as a person?
- How can you stay close to God who is the true source of life?

Allow time for discussion. God loves and cares for us, giving us all we need. God is the vine

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and we are the branches. As God's children, we are called to bear fruit and share God's goodness with others.

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

In the Old Testament reading, listen to what Isaiah tells the people of Israel about bearing fruit for God.

Read Isaiah 5:1-7.

Allow for silence.

### **Scripture Discussion Starters**

- What story does Isaiah tell the people?
- What happens to the vineyard?
- How does Isaiah warn the people?

In the gospel today, listen to Jesus tell a story about a landowner and his vineyard.

Read Matthew 21:33-43.

Allow for silence.



- What story does Jesus tell?
- How do the tenants care for the vineyard?
- What happens to the slaves and the landowner's son?
- What does Jesus teach about bearing fruit for the kingdom of God?

### **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 uses the example of a vineyard to show how God cares for his people. Isaiah sings about a friend who did all he could for a new vineyard. He picked the best spot. He weeded and cleared the stones. The vineyard owner planted the best vines and he waited for the vineyard to produce good grapes and wine. But only wild grapes grew and the vineyard owner became angry. So he threatened to allow the vineyard to become a wasteland. Isaiah tells this story to show the people of Israel that as God's chosen vines in God's vineyard, they were not bearing good fruit. Therefore, Israel deserved God's anger. God's people were mistreating the weak and powerless. The

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prophet warns that mistreating others will destroy Israel's close relationship with God. \_\_\_\_\_

In today's gospel we also find a story of a landowner and his vineyard. Jesus tells this parable to warn the chief priests and elders of his time that they were destroying the vineyard. He points out that their responsibility was to care for the vineyard and yield a rich harvest. With the example of a landowner and his vineyard, Jesus shows the importance of respecting life and sharing God's goodness. In today's passage all believers are warned that the kingdom of God will be taken away from those who do not care for it and given to people who bear good fruit. God's divine justice and judgment will prevail in the end.

### **Questions for Deeper Reflection**

- How does the first reading warn against mistreating others?
- What actions share God's goodness?
- How are we caring for God's vineyard?

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

### **Doctrinal Discussion Starter**

#### ***Divine Justice and Judgment***

God is our Creator who rules over all things. God is good, and created the world in goodness, beauty, and order. God is always aware of what we do and how it helps or hinders the good that God desires for us. God wants us to make good choices that respect life.

We can grow in our ability to make right choices. Sometimes we make wrong choices. When we choose to turn away from God and commit sin, we hurt our relationship with God and others. God offers us the forgiveness of sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Even when we sin, we can accept the forgiveness that God offers. We were created to live in right relationship with God and one another.

Catholic teaching emphasizes that at the time of our death there is a judgment that takes place. At the time of judgement we either receive heaven, purgatory, or hell. Heaven is eternal union and happiness with God. Purgatory offers an opportunity to purify and grow in our love for God before we enter heaven. Hell is the everlasting separation from God. Divine



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judgement is based on what we have done in our lives. God calls us to live fruitful lives, to respect and care for one another and all of God's creation.

- How do you show respect for others?
- How do you care for God's creation?
- What do Catholics believe about Divine judgement?

### **Sacrament Connection**

Through the sacrament of Baptism, we are called to live as God's children and to bear good fruit as we live our lives.

### **The Gospel in Life**

What can you do this week to bear good fruit for God's kingdom?

