



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, Intermediate - RCLB Lectionary



### Intermediate Session

Isaiah 45:1, 4-6

Matthew 22:15-21

### Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God, You are the one true God.

Help us to put You first before everything else.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.



### Opening Life Reflection

Today's session focuses on God's message, "I am the Lord, there is no other." To begin write the words, money, friends, family, school, and God on a sheet of poster paper. Distribute blank sheets of paper and pencils and invite the children to rate in order of importance what is listed on the poster paper, from 1 to 5, (1 being the highest). Discuss:

- What did you rate as number 1, most important?
- How important is God in your life?
- Why does God want to be number 1 in our lives?

Allow time for discussion. God's goodness and love is always there for us. We show that we love God in return when we put God first before everything else.

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

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In the Old Testament reading the people are given an important message. Listen to find out what it is.

Read Isaiah 45:1, 4-6.

Allow for silence.

### **Scripture Discussion Starters**

- Who does God grant power to defeat his enemies?
- How does God show love for the people of Israel?
- What important message about the Lord God is given to the people?

In the gospel today listen to how the Pharisees try to trap Jesus.



Read Matthew 22:15-21.

Allow for silence.

- How do the Pharisees try to trap Jesus?
- Why do they present Jesus with a coin?
- What does Jesus tell the Pharisees about God?

### **Scripture Background**

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

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### Background section.

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In the reading from the Old Testament the people are given an important message; the Lord God is the one true God. God calls Cyrus his "anointed," a term used for kings, prophets and priests in Israel. This is a strong statement because Cyrus is a pagan Persian king. The king's ability to defeat his enemies came from God, which shows that God has power over even the strongest earthly rulers. This passage calls believers to have faith in the one true God. "I am the Lord and there is no other, there is no God besides me".

Today's gospel also stresses the importance of having faith in the one true God. The Pharisees try to trap Jesus by asking him whether or not it is lawful to pay tax to the emperor. Jesus knows what they are up to and he asks the pious Jewish leaders for a coin. The coin would have had the image of Caesar on it and an inscription that proclaimed Caesar as ruler of all. Jesus scores a point against the Pharisees merely by the fact that they carried such an idol-worshiping image. Jesus tells them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but give to God what is God's." Jesus' clever response to give back to Caesar his idolatrous coin and to give to God everything is in keeping with the first commandment.

### Questions for Deeper Reflection

- What does it mean that God is the one true God?
- How can you give to God all your cares and concerns?
- What is the first commandment?

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

### Doctrinal Discussion Starters

#### ***"I Am the Lord, There Is No Other"***

Scripture tells us that God freed the chosen people from slavery in Egypt and formed a covenant with them. The first of the Ten Commandments focuses on the loyal relationship that God demands of the chosen people: "You shall not have other gods besides me" (Exodus 20:3). All believers are given the privilege to follow and accept the covenant relationship of love and goodness that God offers in Jesus.



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How are we to respond to the first commandment? What is God trying to tell us? Throughout our lives we search for life's meaning and direction. We long to be loved and to love. God is saying, "I am your God." God offers all people a love that is free. Our first response toward this loving God should be faith, to believe and show that belief through our words and actions.

Second we must hope that God will give us the ability to love God in return. We cannot imagine the great things that God has planned for us. Hope helps us to rely on the goodness of God.

Third, we believe the first commandment calls us to love God above everything and all others. We need to make time for God and put God first in our lives. Jesus showed us how loving God is linked to loving our neighbor. Showing love for others shows our love for God.

- Why is it important to obey the first commandment?
- How do you show your love for God?
- How does loving others show our love for God?

### **Sacrament Connection**

When we are baptized, we become God's very own. From that time on, God is first in our life.

### **The Gospel in Life**

Take your list from the opening exercise and see what you could do to make God #1 in your life.