



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



Junior High Session

Isaiah 45:1, 4-6

Matthew 22:15-21

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God, You are our God and there is no other.

Help us to understand the free gift of your love.

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 place several items such as a dollar bill, a contemporary CD, a magazine with famous people on the cover, and a crucifix on a table. Invite the young people to examine the items and reflect on how important these things are to them. Discuss:

- What do you believe is most important in your life?
- What do you think young people want most in their lives today?
- How important is God in your life?

Allow time for discussion. Throughout our lives we search for life's meaning and direction. Our faith teaches us that we can put our trust in the one true God whose love is constant and

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unchanging.

Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading listen to what the people of Israel learn about their God.

Read Isaiah 45:1, 4-6.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- How do the people learn that the Lord God is the one true God?
- Who does God grant power to defeat his enemies?
- How does God show favor to the people of Israel?

In today's gospel the Pharisees ask Jesus a trick question. Listen to find out how Jesus answers.

Read Matthew 22:15-21.

Allow for silence.

- What trick question do the Pharisees ask Jesus?
- Why do they show Jesus a coin?
- What is on the coin?
- How does Jesus answer the question about paying taxes?



Scripture Background

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

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



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of all. Jesus scores a point against the Pharisees merely by the fact that they carried such an idol-worshipping image. Jesus tells them to “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 the message that God is the one true God mean to you?
- What keeps you from putting God first?
- How can you give God everything?

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

Doctrinal Discussion Starter

“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.

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 can not 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.

- What is God trying to tell us in the first commandment?
- How can we respond to the first commandment?

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- Why does Jesus link loving God to loving one's neighbor?
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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

Young people can become overly concerned about what to buy, what to wear, and who to be friends with. How can you put all your concerns in God's hands this week?

