a Kendall Hunt Company

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, Intermediate - RCLB Lectionary

Intermediate Session

Exodus 22:20-26

Matthew 22:34-40

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Loving God,

You sent Jesus to show us how to love you and one another.

Help us to follow your greatest commandment.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The focus for today is the two great commandments. To begin, draw two large interconnecting circles on a chalkboard or a sheet of poster paper. Title one circle “Ways I show love for God,” and the other, “Ways I show love for others.” First brainstorm with the children how they show their love for God. Write down their responses. Then brainstorm how they show love for others. Write down their response. Explain that the circles are connected because when we show love for others we are showing love for God. Discuss:

• Why is showing love for God and others an important part of our faith?
• How does loving others show our love for God?

• How can God work through you?

Allow time for discussion. Jesus gave us the great commandment to show us how God wants us to live. The great commandment tells us about loving God and loving others as we love ourselves.

Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament listen to find out how God wants those people most in need to be treated.

Read Exodus 22:20-26.
Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

• Who are the people most in need?

• How are widows and orphans to be treated?

• How are strangers to be treated?

• How are the poor to be treated?

In the gospel today listen to what Jesus teaches the people about the greatest commandment.

Read Matthew 22:34-40.

Allow for silence.

• What question is asked of Jesus?

• How does Jesus reply?

• What are the two parts of the greatest commandment?

Scripture Background

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

In today's Old Testament reading the people of Israel are reminded of how God treated them with compassion in their time of need. Now the Israelites need to reach out to others in need. God's people are given instruction to welcome strangers, care for widows and orphans and show concern for the poor. Concern for the poor and weak is a characteristic of God, and God in turn wants his people to be compassionate toward those in need. Jesus in the gospel will pick up on this teaching by demanding love for one's neighbor.

In today's gospel Jesus sums up all the teaching of the law and prophets in two commandments. A question is put to Jesus about which commandment is most important. Jesus' reply, that first we are to love God, second we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, was not a new teaching for the religious leaders. What was new and important was that Jesus presents both commandments as equal in importance. Today's passage stresses that there is no greater commandment than the two great commandments.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

• How do today's readings teach us how to treat one another?

• How can you show compassion toward those in need?

• How do the two great commandments teach us how to live?

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

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

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The Two Great Commandments

Jesus takes what had been two separate commandments and places them together. This new, single and greatest commandment teaches us how to live in the world. The Church believes that love of God and neighbor cannot be separated.

The first part of the great commandment reminds us that God comes first in our lives. We show our love and respect for God in prayer and worship and by the way that we live our lives. The second part of the great commandment calls us to love one another as God loves us. We show love for others by treating one another with dignity and respect. Catholics understand that we have a responsibility for one another's welfare. The Church teaches that the good of the individual is related to the common good, and working for the common good is based upon respect for the human person. Such respect demands that every person has access to basic necessities, such as food, clothing, housing, freedom, education, family, work, privacy, etc. God calls us to work for the common good and form a society built on love and peace.

- How do you show love and respect for God?
- How do you show love and respect for others?
- How do you love and respect yourself?

Sacrament Connection

The sacrament of Baptism celebrates our response to God's invitation to believe in Jesus Christ and live the Gospel. As Baptized Christians we are called to live the great commandment and be a sign of God's presence in the world.

The Gospel in Life

What one thing can you do this week to show that you are following the greatest commandment?