



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



### Junior High Session

Exodus 22:20-26

Matthew 22:34-40

### Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God, your commandments help us to grow in your love.

Help us to live by your greatest commandment.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

### Opening Life Reflection

The focus for today is the two great commandments. Begin the session with the following “walk a mile in my shoes” activity. Provide sets of shoe prints cut out of poster paper. On each pair of shoe prints write a description of a person’s life situation. Such as, a person who works hard each day and still does not have enough money to buy food and clothes; a foreign young person who is new in school; a young person who sits alone at lunch; etc. Divide the large group into small groups of three or four. Give each group a pair of shoe prints and invite them to imagine and discuss within their group what it would be like to walk in that other person’s shoes. Discuss:

- What did you learn from walking in another person’s shoes?
- Why is it important to treat others with value and respect?
- What does it mean to love one’s neighbor?

Allow time for discussion. Jesus brought to light the greatest commandment: to love God and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. All of God’s commandments depend on these two.

### Listening to the Word of God

Listen to the Old Testament reading to learn how God wants people to treat one another.

Read Exodus 22:20-26.

Allow for silence

### Scripture Discussion Starters

- How are God’s people to treat widows and orphans?
- How are God’s people to treat strangers?



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- How are God's people to treat the poor?
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In the gospel today listen to what Jesus has to say about the greatest commandment.

Read Matthew 22:34-40.

Allow for silence.

- What question is Jesus asked?
- What is the greatest commandment?
- What are the two parts of the great 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 to care for those in need?
- Why are the two commandments, to love God and love our neighbor, the greatest commandment?
- How do you live the great commandment?

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

### Doctrinal Discussion Starter

#### ***The Two Great Commandments***

Jesus takes what had been two separate commandments and places them together. This

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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 does the great commandment teach us how to live in the world?
- What does the first part of the great commandment remind us to do?
- What does the second part of the great commandment remind us to do?
- What does it mean to work for the common good?

### **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**

This week try and walk in the shoes of someone you know who is in need. How can you reach out with compassion to your neighbor this week?