



a Kendall Hunt Company

Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



Junior High Session

Malachi 1:14-2:2, 8-10

Matthew 23:1-12

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God, guide the leaders of our church today.

Help these leaders to focus on serving all your people.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.



Opening Life Reflection

The topic for today is the role of the Magisterium. To begin, divide the large group of young people into small groups of three or four. Provide paper and pencils and invite each group to list on one side of the paper, leaders whom they admire and why, and on the other side, list leaders who disappoint them and why. Discuss:

- What are some qualities of good leaders?
- How can leaders lead people astray?
- Who are the leaders that you admire today?

Allow time for discussion. Good leaders do not thrive on status and prestige; rather they are concerned about serving others. The term Magisterium refers to the leadership and teaching



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function of the hierarchy of the Church—the Pope and bishops. The role of the Magisterium is to serve the people of God and guide us in living our faith.

Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading Malachi has harsh words for leaders who lead people astray. Listen to what he has to say.

Read Malachi 1:14-2:2, 8-10.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- What will happen to the leaders who cause others to stumble?
- Who should the leaders serve?
- How are the people reminded that God is their creator?

In the gospel today listen to Jesus remind the religious leaders to be at the service of others.

Read Matthew 23:1-12.

Allow for silence.

- Why does Jesus tell the people to do what the religious leaders say, but not what they do?
- How are the religious leaders concerned with prestige and status?
- What does Jesus teach about good leadership?

Scripture Background

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

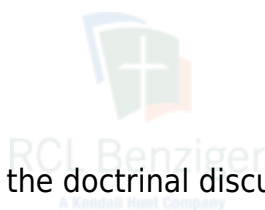
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In today's Old Testament reading, the prophet Malachi directs his wrath against religious leaders who are self-serving. Malachi gives a message to the priests that they have a special responsibility to serve the people, and if they lead the people astray, God's judgment against them will be harsh. This passage reminds us to put God first and place our trust and hope in God alone.

In today's gospel Jesus tells his listeners to do what the religious leaders say, but not what they do. Jesus accepts the teaching authority of the religious leaders, but at the same time he points out that their words do not match their actions. Many of the scribes and Pharisees were overly concerned with power and prestige. Jesus tells his followers to forget about status and concentrate on serving others.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- How do people lead by example?
- What can distract leaders from serving people?
- How do good leaders lead?



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

Doctrinal Discussion Starter

The Role of the Magisterium

The term “Magisterium” is used in the Church to refer to the teaching authority of the hierarchy, that is, the pope and bishops. When the pope and the bishops act together as the college of bishops, they exercise full teaching authority over the Church.

The pope is supreme pastor and teacher. As successor of Peter and head of the college of bishops, the pope has a special authority in the Church. Infallibility is the charism of the Holy Spirit given to the Church that guarantees that the official teaching of the pope, or the pope and bishops, on matters of faith and morals is without error.

The purpose of the Magisterium is to guide people in faith and morals. We are required to accept the teaching authority of the Church leadership today, just as Jesus accepted the teaching authority of the religious leaders of his time. Leaders in the Church have a great responsibility to guide the people and not lead them astray. The teaching authority is to be of service to Christ's flock—the people of God.



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- Who has full teaching authority in the Catholic Church? _____
- What is the purpose of the Magisterium?
- Why do Church leaders have a great responsibility?

Sacrament Connection

In the sacrament of Holy Orders, bishops, priests, and deacons are ordained to serve the people of God. They serve the Church by proclaiming and preaching God's Word, leading us in celebrating the sacraments, and guiding us in living the Gospel.

The Gospel in Life

How can you learn more about our pope today and how he serves the people of God?

