



a Kendall Hunt Company

Feast of the Holy Family, Year B, Intermediate - RCLB Lectionary



Intermediate Session

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

Luke 2:22-40

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Loving God, thank you for the gift of our family.

Help us to be a loving family in all we say and do.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The topic for today is The Fourth Commandment: Responsibilities and Gifts of Family Life. To begin, provide construction paper and markers and invite the children to create a family tree. Invite the children to think back and list parents, grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, and so on. Have them write the name of each person on a branch or leaf of the tree. Invite the children to jot down under their name a quality that they might know or remember about the members of their family. Discuss:

- What are you most thankful for about your family?
- What unique contribution do you bring to your family?
- What are your favorite family events or gatherings?

Allow time for discussion. The family is a gift from God. We honor God's gift of family when we follow the fourth commandment to, "Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16).

Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading listen to how God wants children to treat their parents.

Read Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- How does God want children to treat their parents?
- How will God bless those who honor their father and mother?
- What kindness will God remember?

In the gospel today listen to a story about Jesus' family.



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Read Luke 2:22-40.

Allow for silence.

- Where did Mary and Joseph take Jesus?
- Why was Jesus presented to the Lord in the Temple?
- How did Jesus grow within his family?

Scripture Background

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

Today's feast highlights that Jesus was born into a family, which reinforces Jesus' humanity. This feast celebrates that through Jesus Christ all of human nature is sacred, including family life.

The Old Testament reading focuses on God's gift of family. The author is concerned with how family members treat one another. Many scholars consider today's passage to be a commentary on the fourth commandment, to honor one's father and mother. The message is clear, God wants certain qualities to exist in family life—qualities such as care and kindness and holding mothers and fathers in a place of honor. Showing reverence and care for members within one's family leads to many blessings from God.

Today's gospel shows Mary and Joseph's obedience to God and their gratitude for God's gift of family. Mary and Joseph follow the Jewish law of their time by presenting Jesus to the Lord in the Temple in Jerusalem. In the Temple, the Holy Family meets Simeon who proclaims Jesus to be the glory of Israel and Anna who predicts that Jesus will cause conflict and division within Israel. After the presentation in the Temple, Mary, Joseph and Jesus return home to Nazareth. In Nazareth Jesus grows in wisdom within his loving family. This passage shows the grace of God given for all families.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- Why is family a gift from God?
- Why is it important to show family members kindness and respect?
- How does the Holy Family show us how to live as families?

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

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

The Fourth Commandment: Responsibilities and Gifts of Family Life

We believe that the family is a gift from God (CCC 2203). Like all gifts from God, we have a responsibility to use and enjoy the gift of family properly. Church teaching helps to guide



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families to live in God's grace. The fourth commandment: "Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16), is the basis for the Church's teaching on family.

All families experience times of crises or conflict. When faith and love exist in families, family members can grow through such experiences. Families function properly when members express love, compassion and respect for one another. When parents express God's love and when their children return this love, family members learn to care for and take responsibility for one another.

- How can you follow the fourth commandment?
- How do you show care and respect for the members of your family?
- Why does faith in God help families?

Sacrament Connection

Through the Sacrament of Marriage, the married couple becomes a sign of God's own love for humanity and the love Jesus has for the Church itself.

The Gospel in Life

How can you help to bring the qualities of the Holy Family into your family's life this week?

