



a Kendall Hunt Company

Feast of the Holy Family, Year B, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



Junior High Session

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

Luke 2:22-40

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Gracious God, bless our families.

Help us to value and respect all of our family members.

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, invite the young people to quietly reflect on the unique gift of family. Provide paper and pencils and invite each person to compose a title for an imaginary popular song that describes their family. Have volunteers share their song titles with the large group. Discuss:

- What unique contribution do you bring to your family?
- How do you show gratitude for the gift of 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 listen to find out how important it is to honor family members.

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

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- How does the Lord want children to treat their parents?
- What will happen to persons who honor their father and mother?
- What kindness will not be forgotten?

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

Read Luke 2:22-40.

Allow for silence.



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

Scripture Background

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

The Feast of the Holy Family highlights that Jesus was born into a family, which in turn reinforces Jesus' humanity. This feast celebrates that through Jesus Christ, all human nature is sacred, including family life.

The first reading from the Old Testament 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 continues to grow 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?
- How can young people show respect for their parents?
- What does the Holy Family teach us about family life?

[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 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.



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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 love and respect for the members of your family?
- How has your family grown through times of crisis?

Sacrament Connection

Through the Sacrament of Marriage, a 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

What is one thing that you can do this week to show love and respect for a member of your family?

