



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



### Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session, read all the readings.

1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19

Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10

1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20

John 1:35-42

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Is there a particular reading that appeals to you? Is there a word or image that engages you?

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Read the following **Word in Liturgy** and **Catholic Doctrine** sections. Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need.

### The Word In Liturgy

The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time functions as a bridge in the liturgical cycle between the Christmas season, just completed with the Baptism of the Lord, and the season of Ordinary Time. The gospel of this Sunday is always taken from John, and connects in some way with the mystery of the Incarnation. Yet it also looks forward to the life and ministry of Jesus, a story that develops in subsequent Sundays through the unique perspective of one of the synoptic evangelists, this year Mark. Introducing catechumens and candidates to the logic of the Lectionary can help orient them to the seasons of the liturgical year and deepen their

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understanding of how the Church “unfolds the whole mystery of Christ” (SC 102).

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All three readings today concern vocation, the doctrinal focus of today’s catechesis. Samuel, already placed in service of the Lord from birth (by his mother), experiences a divine call to further dedicate himself. His dialogue with Eli, under whose mentorship he is serving in the temple, illustrates both the persistence of God’s call and the need to discern whose voice indeed is being heard in the watches of the night. The psalm continues to celebrate the obedient listening appropriate for the one who is called. Samuel’s call is to be a prophet, and as a prophet his words display the mission he is given. His words also enjoy complete effectiveness in God’s service. Samuel is regarded by some scholars as a type of Christ; the song of his mother, Hannah, is echoed by the Virgin Mary in the Magnificat.

The call of the first disciples in John, so important to the classic vision of Christian vocation, enjoys a privileged place in the catechumenal journey. It is the gospel assigned for the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, and is remarkable for its synthesis of numerous features of adult conversion: the recognition of the person of Jesus, both directly and through witnesses; a particular call by name and the giving of a new name; the new followers’ invitation to one another to share their discovery; hearing the challenge of “What are you looking for?” and responding to the invitation to abide with and be enlightened by the One who calls. We may read this passage today as a fitting introduction to the entire season of Ordinary Time, in which the invitation to discipleship and to the life and ministry of Jesus are repeatedly offered as the subjects of our prayer, action, and reflection.

Central to the drama of call illustrated in this passage is the mystery, never fully elucidated, of who Jesus is. Pregnant with Old Testament and apocalyptic allusions, the phrase “lamb of God” suggests not only the Passover sacrifice whose blood spares the chosen people from death, but also the suffering servant of Isaiah, and the triumphant lamb of apocalyptic literature, who defeats evil. The “lamb of God” image evokes more than it explains, and renders even more necessary the invitation to “come and see,” that is, to explore the mystery firsthand.

## **Catholic Doctrine**

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### ***Vocation***

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The Latin *vocatus* means “a calling” or “a summoning” and is the root word for our English “vocation.” All human beings are created by God for the purpose of knowing and loving the Creator. We believe that we are called by God ultimately to share in the divine life (CCC 356).

In Jesus, the fullness of this revelation is made manifest. The vocation to be his disciple is the basis for the believer’s joy in life and is the foundation of our salvation. Baptism is the sacrament that celebrates this calling in Christ and incorporates one into the life of the Risen Lord (CCC 1694). The invitation to become a disciple of Jesus and a member of the kingdom is extended to every individual on the face of the earth (CCC 543). How is this invitation extended? Through the grace of God, disciples make more disciples. Thus, one aspect of following Christ and living out our vocation is the imperative to share the Good News, to evangelize.

Christ initially sent the apostles forth with the Good News, commanding them to teach and baptize all the nations. In turn, the Church has faithfully handed on the Gospel to succeeding generations. Impelled by the love of Christ, believers act on their vocation and therefore continue to spread the Good News of salvation throughout the world by professing the faith, living it as brothers and sisters to all, and celebrating it in prayer and in liturgy (CCC 3).

In our Catholic understanding, believers experience another aspect of vocation in the structured ways they live out their baptismal commitment. These include, for example, married life, single life, the priesthood, and the consecrated life as a member of a religious community. In living out their individual vocation in these structured ways of life, believers respond to a divinely bestowed option and realize their unique, full potential as members of the kingdom of God.

Whether one is married or single, a priest or a member of a religious order, all believers experience a third aspect of vocation. Whatever walk of life an individual pursues, all believers are called to be holy as Jesus taught us. This holiness of life is made possible with the assistance of the Church. All the activities of the Church minister to people in the expectation that their sanctification might render glory to God (CCC 824).

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It is important to underscore that this calling to sanctity is not the privileged goal of only priests and religious. The Second Vatican Council observed that “. . . all the faithful, whatever their condition or state—though each in [their] own way—are called by the Lord to that perfection of sanctity by which the Father himself is perfect” (LG 11).

Taking an active role in evangelization, coming to know one’s particular state in life, and striving for holiness, all rely on cultivating self-understanding and recognizing one’s personal gifts. Discerning those gifts and then living up to God’s call is seen by Catholics as an ongoing spiritual process. The purpose of this discernment and spiritual progress is always to make use of individual gifts for the good of the whole body, the Church. Thus, the first and last point of reference for those engaged in discernment and the development of spirituality is Christ (CCC 1698). Saint John Eudes (d. 1680) wrote, “I ask you to consider that our Lord Jesus Christ is your true head, and that you are one of his members. He belongs to you as the head belongs to its members; all that is his is yours: his spirit, his heart, his body and soul, and all his faculties. You must make use of all these as of your own, to serve, praise, love and glorify God” (JnETractAJ).

