



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



### Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session, read all the readings.

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9

1 Corinthians 7:32-35

Mark 1:21-28

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?

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 rich and complex role of Moses within the people of Israel cannot be reduced to "lawgiver," although he brings God's law to the community created by the covenant. Moses is, rather, a prophet, the one who, through speaking God's living and powerful word, preserves the vital link between the people and their God. Moses mediated the presence of God to the people, for whom a direct theophany was too frightening to contemplate. Today's first reading does not promise the presence of any one prophet, but simply assures the reader that prophecy such as Moses provided will always be available to the community. As time passed, however, the passage was read to portend the coming of one particular, eschatological prophet. The early Christian community identified this prophet with Christ (see Acts 3:22, 7:37). Deuteronomy 18:15-20 therefore sets the stage for today's gospel, which describes the powerful work of Jesus as prophet, teacher, and Lord.

Today's gospel details Jesus' first miracle, according to Mark. In what is presented as a typical day in the life and ministry of Jesus, we see him engaged in two activities that are intertwined, both of which may be seen as part of his prophetic identity: teaching and casting out demons. Because in Mark's gospel Jesus is engaged in combat with evil throughout his public ministry, it is fitting that this first miracle is not only one of healing but is also exorcistic in nature. Moreover, Jesus' display of power over evil spirits is a sign of his identity as a prophet, who speaks the Word of God. The authority of his teaching is not to be confused with oratorical gifts and a persuasive style, but is demonstrated rather by the potency of the works that accompanied his teaching. Jesus had the power to change the lives of those with whom he came into contact.



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### **Catholic Doctrine**

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#### ***Jesus as Prophet, Teacher, and Lord***

The term "prophet" can be used to describe Jesus. Like Moses, he mediates between God and humanity. As prophet, his words and works have effects by divine power. However, unlike Moses and other Old Testament prophets who communicated God's Word to people, Jesus Christ is the eternal Word of God made flesh among us. In fact, we believe that although there are many words that make up sacred Scripture and communicate God's message to us, there is only one single Word, one Utterance in whom God fully expresses self to humanity: Jesus, the Christ (CCC 102). For this reason Catholic teaching underscores that "Jesus Christ is not merely the greatest of the prophets but is the eternal Son of God, made man.

Because he is the Son and eternal Word who became flesh in order to fully express and reveal God to humanity, Jesus Christ can also be described as "teacher." His own disciples and others during his ministry addressed him as such. But Jesus is unlike any other teacher. He teaches with an authority that must be obeyed. Jesus did not teach in a classroom but in the midst of people who flocked to hear his words and witness what he did. His teaching, while having a specific content is more than a series of lessons, parables, and preaching. The teaching of Jesus is comprised of his entire life, his ministry among us. The words and deeds of Jesus, his entire life and ministry, teach us that God loves us, reconciles us to himself, offers us a share in the divine life of the Trinity, and proposes to us a model of holiness (CCC 457-60).

Jesus can be described as "Lord." This, too, was a form of address used by his disciples and others who encountered him. By addressing Jesus as "Lord" the disciples, the early Christians, and believers today acknowledge his divinity. By attributing this title to him, believers indicate that the power, honor, and glory due to God the Father are due also to Jesus (CCC 449).

Through his prophetic and teaching roles, Jesus unfolds his reign as Lord over all and throughout the world. His place among us has not changed even though he has now ascended to heaven. Catholics profess that his reign extends through all time and is planted in every heart that confesses belief.