



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Second Sunday of Lent, Year B, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



### Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session, read all the readings.

Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18

Psalms 116:10, 15, 16-17, 18-19

Romans 8:31b-34

Mark 9:2-10

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

Although we know in advance that Abraham's call to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac is a test, the horror of the situation is made very real by the text. The fire, the knife, the wood, and the child's own innocent question conjure a vivid picture. Yet it is important to read the story in its historical context. The tale is a very old one, in which two layers of meaning can be discerned. The original purpose of the story was to illustrate the substitution of an animal for the child, and thus to reinforce the practice of Israelite religion, which forbade human sacrifice. The accent falls on God's first intervention, preventing Isaac's death. The angel's

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second intervention, lauding Abraham's faith and renewing the covenant promises, gives the story its definitive form. The narrative therefore illustrates Abraham's awesome obedience to God, in a situation where God's true intentions seem fearfully obscure, and recounts the blessings of the covenant, renewed because of Abraham's faith.

The gospel brings us to another mountaintop, where Jesus is transfigured before Peter, James, and John. Moses and Elijah appear with him. Peter's offer to build three booths probably stems from a current belief that the Messiah would come during the Feast of Tabernacles. Nevertheless, Mark's account frankly avers that Peter and the others are at a loss to know what to do before this remarkable vision. The voice of God from the cloud claims Jesus as Son and commands the disciples to listen to him.

## **Catholic Doctrine**

### ***Sacrifice***

Abraham's total trust in God, his obedience, is a model for us. We Christians who follow Jesus see in Abraham the father of faith. Thus, the sacrifice prefigured by Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son is perfectly realized in Jesus Christ, who freely offers himself to the Father as a ransom for our sins and to establish in his blood the new and eternal covenant.

Nomads of the ancient Near East commonly offered animals or produce of the land to the deity they worshiped. The ancient Israelites pursued such customs as well, and when they settled in the land, they continued to offer sacrifice in the temple in Jerusalem.

However, human sacrifice was forbidden by the religion of Israel, despite its presence in surrounding cultures.

The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of the body of believers, the Church. In celebrating this sacramental action, the body is united to the head, that is, the Church itself is being offered through Christ. The lives of the household of the faithful, whole and entire, are offered to the

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Father through the Son and in the Spirit. All of our praise, sufferings, difficulties, prayer, and good works are united with Christ and his own total offering. The Eucharist transforms our lives, just as the Church prays, offering God "this sacrifice of praise."

