



a Kendall Hunt Company

Third Sunday of Lent, Year B, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session, read all the readings.

Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 11

1 Corinthians 1:22-25

John 2:13-25

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?

RCL Benziger
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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 Ten Commandments stand at the heart of the Mosaic covenant: obedience to them embodies the faithful response of the people to their God. Found in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21 with only slight variations, they are considered a gift given by God. They form the foundation of the common life of the chosen people. The long form of today's first reading offers an uncut version; the short form represents the classic enumeration of the Ten Commandments followed by Catholics.



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The ferocious ire of Jesus, as the final verses of the gospel reading suggest, arises from knowing the hearts of those he meets. Rather than the comforting idea commonly associated with the merciful glance of Jesus, “knowing the heart” here means seeing through the lies that we tell about ourselves, the false pretenses of piety and justice that mask an underlying corruption of the covenant with God. The moral life represented by the commandments has its necessary complement in worship, which is represented here by the Temple. Both must be passionate and pure.

Catholic Doctrine

The Ten Commandments

The idea of a law given by God cannot be separated from the idea of God’s election of Israel and his covenant with the people. Out of love, God chose a particular people, set them apart, and entered into a covenant relationship with them. In divine wisdom, God provided the basic terms of this covenant by means of his Law. This Law illuminated for the chosen people what God required for their proper conduct.



Thus, the Ten Commandments lay the foundation for the vocation of Israel, called in freedom by the love of God to be in relationship to the divine and to one another. While the very idea of law to some may seem constricting, it is just the opposite when seen from the perspective of God’s people who have been freed from slavery. God has given the people life and the Ten Commandments spell out the conditions for further life in God. The first three commandments outline Israel’s relationship to God and the last seven spell out relations with one’s neighbor. These “ten words” are words of life, guiding the faithful. Eventually, however, the “Law” that God set forth for the people came to mean not only the Decalogue but the entire first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).

This collection came to be seen as inspired instruction and guidance on how to live a life in compliance with the covenant God had established. The Ten Commandments, a small but significant part of these five books of the Old Testament, symbolize in capsule form the whole thrust of this inspired instruction and guidance.



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From the point of view of Christians, the Decalogue and the entire torah, or Law, is holy, good, and spiritual—and yet it is imperfect. Its perfection is found in the New Law given to us by Jesus Christ, by the example of his life, the content of his mission and teaching, and the ongoing teaching handed down by his Church through the Spirit. In other words, the Old Law found in the Hebrew scriptures is but a preparation for the New Law given in Christ. The former disposes people for the latter and for what is then revealed for our continued holiness and goodness as we live in Christ.

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