



a Kendall Hunt Company

Fifth Sunday of Lent, Year B, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



Junior High Session

Jeremiah 31:31-34

John 12:20-33

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Loving God, we lift our minds and hearts to you in prayer.

Help us to live each day in faith, hope, and love.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The topic for today is Christian Prayer. To begin, invite the youngsters to quietly reflect on the friendships that they have with others. Brainstorm with them how people become and stay friends. Write down their responses on a sheet of poster paper or chalkboard. Discuss:

- How do you get to know your friends?
- How do you keep your friendships over time?
- How can you grow in friendship with God?



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Allow time for discussion. God desires a relationship with us. Through prayer we get to know God better. Prayer helps us to become and stay close to God.

Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading, hear Jeremiah tell the people that God wants a close relationship with them.

Read Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- What does Jeremiah tell the people?
- How will a new covenant relationship between God and the people be different?
- What kind of a relationship does God want to have with all people?

In today's gospel, listen to how Jesus cries out to God in prayer.



Read John 12:20-33.

Allow for silence.

- What does Jesus tell his disciples about his death?
- How does Jesus cry out to God in prayer?
- What will happen after Jesus dies?

Scripture Background

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

In the Old Testament reading, the prophet Jeremiah speaks the Word of God. He tells the
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people that God desires to live in friendship with them. Jeremiah saw how the people had hardened their hearts to the covenant of Sinai, which was engraved on tablets of stone. Jeremiah speaks of a new covenant, where God's Law is placed in the hearts of each person. The relationship between God and his people will come from an inward sense of knowing the Lord. Jeremiah uses the term "knowing" the Lord to show God's desire to share a deep and personal friendship with the people.

In the gospel, Jesus prepares his disciples for some important events that are about to happen. Jesus announces that his hour has come. The "hour" of Jesus, is a time of both suffering and glory as he returns to the Father through his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. Jesus uses the image of seeds and fruit to show the necessity of death as a means to new life. The image points to the death of Jesus as the seed of new life for those who believe in him. In this passage Jesus boldly cries out to God in prayer. God responds with a sign from heaven, and all people are promised salvation through Jesus' death on the cross.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- How do you let others get to know you better?
- Have you ever cried out to God in prayer?
- Where in nature do you find signs of new life?



[If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the **Gospel in Life.**]

Doctrinal Discussion Starter

Christian Prayer

Prayer helps us get to know God. When we pray, we communicate with God. Prayer comes from the very core of our being where we encounter God. In prayer we acknowledge God's presence and listen for God's voice. We lift our minds and hearts to God in prayer. Prayer is a gift from God because God desires to live in relationship with us. We can pray anytime and any place. We develop a habit of prayer if we pray often.

There are many forms of prayer. Christian prayer includes prayers of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, sorrow, and petition. No matter what form our prayer takes, the Holy Spirit helps us. When we pray, the Holy Spirit is present, uniting us with Jesus. Catholics also pray with Mary, the Mother of God. We believe that Mary asks God the Father and Jesus to help us when we pray. When we pray with Mary, we trust and believe that she listens to us. Mary



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takes our prayer to Jesus and asks Jesus to help us.

- What are the different forms of Christian prayer?
- How do you like to pray?
- What can help you get into the habit of prayer?

Sacrament Connection

In the Sacrament of Baptism we share in God's own life and are reborn as adopted children of God. Communion with God is possible in prayer because we have been united with Christ in Baptism.

The Gospel in Life

How can you grow as a person of prayer this week?

