



a Kendall Hunt Company

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, Year B, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session, read all the readings.

(Procession) Mark 11:1-10 or John 12:12-16

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24

Philippians 2:6-11

Mark 14:1-15:47 or (short form) 15:1-39

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

Pilgrims arriving in Jerusalem for great festivals were greeted by strewing palm branches in their path. They came into the holy city singing the psalms of ascent. The Hallel Psalms (Psalms 113-118), known to every pious Jew of Jesus' day, were associated liturgically with Passover and the feast of Tabernacles. Psalm 118:25, cited in Mark 11:9 and John 12:13, expresses enthusiastic messianic hope, and its structure suggests it may have been sung antiphonally as a shout of acclamation or greeting to hail pilgrims or a famous rabbi. The Church's Holy Week begins by recalling this triumphant entry into Jerusalem in the liturgy of Palm Sunday.

The reading from Deutero-Isaiah is taken from the third of the suffering servant songs, written during the Babylonian exile. The identity of the servant is obscure and may have referred to a particular individual or perhaps is meant to be a figure with which all Israel could identify in the burdens of its captivity. Today's reading details the abuse that the servant is subjected to, and in the context of Palm Sunday serves as a vivid image of the suffering Savior whose passion is recalled on this day. Most striking is the perseverance of the servant. Even in the face of a humiliating death, his confidence in God does not fail.

Mark's passion narrative, though similar to the other synoptics, has several distinctive features, such as the young man who runs away naked from the scene of Jesus' arrest (who later appears at the empty tomb fully clothed, perhaps as a figure of the baptized), and the centurion's proclamation of the identity of this enigmatic Jesus (whose secret is finally



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unveiled in the event of his death). In Mark's account of the agony in the garden, Jesus returns to his disciples repeatedly, not to chide them for abandoning him, which he already knows they will do (14:27), but out of concern that if they do not watch and pray they will be unable to bear their own trials when they come.

Catholic Doctrine

The Gift of Perseverance

In our earthly journey we believers experience great blessings. We also experience difficulties and sometimes great trial. While Jesus inaugurated the kingdom of God among us, it is not yet fully realized on earth and this world is yet a broken one. Suffering, human debilitation, sin, evil, and all their attendant obstacles to faith are a reality for humanity. Despite these experiences, we Catholics believe that God is the Master of the world and of its history and that ultimately divine providence will guide all of creation to its sabbath rest.

In the midst of these blessings and trials the aspiration of every believer is to remain steadfast in faith to the very end. On our own we cannot do this. But we can persevere by cooperating with God's grace in every circumstance, continuing to give our assent to all that God is and does in our lives.

Believing that our destiny is in the hands of God, we pursue our hope in Christ. We strive to open ourselves in every situation to the love of God that guides us on right paths, even when our particular circumstances find us sharing in the cross of suffering and pain. We cannot always see beyond the next step. Nor can we discern far in advance how this particular suffering will ultimately lead to God. But in the challenge of today we pray in hope for the gift of perseverance.

Finally, we persevere because Christ has shown us the way. He is our model, guide, and teacher who has gone before us in all things but sin. Through the Spirit we are given a share in the mysteries of Jesus who came not to be served but to serve the needs of all.