



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



### Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session, read all the readings.

Amos 7:12-15

Psalms 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14

Ephesians 1:3-14 [or (short form) 1:3-10]

Mark 6:7-13

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

Amos, a native of the southern kingdom of Judah, prophesied at the sanctuary of Bethel in the northern kingdom of Israel during the middle years of the eighth century. His message was one of rebuke and warning, condemning the decadence that he found among his comfortably wealthy neighbors to the north. His reproach is directed at the elite class, including even the king, Jeroboam II, a fact that prompts the priest Amaziah to remind Amos that Bethel "is the king's sanctuary and a royal temple." As the king's spokesman, Amaziah contemptuously orders Amos to return home ("Off with you, visionary; flee to the land of Judah!"). Defending himself against Amaziah's innuendo that he was motivated by desire for financial gain, Amos asserts that he is not a professional prophet and that his sole motive was to obey the command of Yahweh. In fact, it is Amos's fierce insistence on the divine origin of his call that links this reading to today's gospel and to our doctrinal focus on election and mission.

Today's gospel follows immediately upon Mark's description of the rejection of Jesus in Nazareth. Jesus' response is to send his followers out on a mission to expand his own ministry, replicating exactly the works that have been used to describe him: preaching repentance, casting out demons, and healing (1:14-15; 1:32-39; 3:7-12). The specific instructions he gives them regarding what to take with them, where to stay, and how to deal with rejection would all have been commonplace admonitions for itinerant preachers of the day. The success they meet is meant to reassure the community for whom Mark wrote that the work of the Lord continues in his disciples. The Church in every age is called and sent; and, whatever resistance they might meet, the word and power of the Lord himself is with them and ensures their ultimate success.

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### **Catholic Doctrine**

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#### ***Election and Mission***

Theologically, election has nothing to do with the democratic process; it is not a matter of winning a majority of votes. The prime decision-maker in divine election is God. The subject of election, theologically, is God, and the object of the election is God's choice. What is meant by God's chosen is also expressed as God's anointed and God's people.

Jesus is the elect one, the anointed one, the Christ, the long-awaited Messiah foretold by the prophets and for whom Israel has been preparing. Early Christians envisioned themselves in this way, as the continuation of God's holy and elect people. They believed themselves constituted as such by the love of God shown to them in Christ (1 Peter 2:9). As faithful disciples of Jesus, Christians are therefore described as the new elect made up of people of every nation. Just as in Hebrew scriptures, the New Testament literature makes the point that election requires a response of faithful obedience and entails obligations on Jesus' followers to live a holy and fruitful life.

What does this mean? Those who have heard and responded to God's living Word must now act upon it. They must bear witness to the world of the Lord's saving love in Christ. The believer cannot be elected by God and then do nothing. Those who experience God's love and grace are impelled to participate all the more in preparing for and building up the kingdom of God.

However, an individual believer does not have to feel as if he or she has to witness without support. The Church as a whole shares in the missionary endeavor to spread the Good News of salvation.