



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



### Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session, read all the readings.

Proverbs 9:1-6

Psalm 34:2-3, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15

Ephesians 5:15-20

John 6:51-58

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

The contents of the Book of Proverbs, the oldest of the wisdom literature, may date from as far back as Solomon's court, but the book did not reach its final form until about the third century B.C. Each proverb or saying in it expresses wisdom about life, but usually in a form that requires the reader to puzzle over its meaning. Today's passage personifies wisdom as a woman giving a banquet and inviting guests to partake of it. Wine mixed with fragrant herbs marked special occasions, and meat suggests a festive dinner. The passage conveys the idea of the desirable bounty that wisdom offers to those who answer her call. To grasp the full significance of the passage, however, it is important to remember that in Proverbs folly is also personified as a woman-not a lady, but a harlot. Folly too invites guests to a meal, and does so in a similar manner, but serves only bread and water, rather than the festive wine and meat prepared for wisdom's banquet. In light of these contrasts, the text is also about significant decisions made along the path of life. How we "eat" depends upon whose invitation we choose to accept.

John's gospel is remarkable in that it makes no mention of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. Some have speculated that the "bread of life" discourse of John 6 may have originally served this purpose, but was moved up to provide an extended commentary on the miracle of the loaves. Be that as it may, the passage in today's liturgy speaks of the gift of Jesus' flesh and blood as the means of receiving eternal life, and compares Jesus to manna in the desert.

The vivid words of Jesus must have sounded scandalous in a world where cannibalism and the drinking of any kind of blood were completely taboo. But as usual in John's gospel, the

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exchange between Jesus and his hearers operates on more than one level. In a Catholic perspective, the way in which Jesus' followers eat his flesh and drink his blood is through consuming the Eucharist, which is truly his flesh and blood, a gift, and the means of attaining everlasting life. The continuing presence of Jesus in the Eucharist is therefore the doctrinal focus of today's catechesis.

### **Catholic Doctrine**

#### ***The Continuing Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist***

The Second Vatican Council identified four distinct modes of Christ's Eucharistic presence, declaring: "[Christ] is present in the Sacrifice of the Mass not only in the person of his minister...but especially in the Eucharistic species...He is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in Church. Lastly, he is present when the Church prays and sings, for he has promised, "'Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I, in the midst of them'" (Matthew 18:20).

This broad appreciation does not lessen the significance given to the bread and wine as the Lord's body and blood. Rather, it provides the proper context for this particular mode of presence to be appreciated and understood. The term "transubstantiation" indicates our belief that this bread and wine truly become Jesus' body and blood, and they remain his body and blood even after the sacramental celebration is over. In addition, Catholics hold that Christ is sacramentally present under each form. Receiving only the consecrated host or the consecrated wine, it is possible to experience every effect of Eucharistic grace.