



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



### Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session, read all the readings.

Joshua 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b

Psalms 34:2-3, 16-17, 18-19, 20-21, 22-23

Ephesians 5:21-32 or 5:2a, 25-32

John 6:60-69

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

Today's reading from Joshua details the covenant ceremony in which the people participated upon their entrance into the Promised Land. The ceremony functions as a conclusion to the whole Pentateuch, as well as to the Book of Joshua itself, and it likewise serves as a preface to the rest of the biblical narrative concerning the life of the people in their land. It is therefore a very important passage, which aptly sets the stage for today's doctrinal focus on faith.

As in the first reading, the drama of decision stands in the forefront of today's gospel passage. When confronted with the difficulties of believing in Jesus, those who encounter him are forced to decide whether to follow or abandon this troublesome figure. The evangelist tells us of disciples who were unable to believe that Jesus "came down from heaven," and consequently could not accept his mission of redemption, or his eventual ascension and glorification ("return to the Father"). Their desertion of Jesus illustrates the difficulty of discipleship, which proves too challenging for the faint-hearted or the merely curious.

The Twelve, on the other hand, with Simon Peter as their spokesman, decide in faith to follow Jesus. The passage makes clear that these were able to commit themselves not on their own power, but because of the generous action of God, who freely draws them into a relationship with Jesus and thus with God's very Self. This relationship is one of faith. The Twelve believe the "words of life" that Jesus has spoken, and can therefore be caught up in the life he came to bring.

### Catholic Doctrine

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### **Faith**

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Although it would seem on first glance that the decision to believe (which may actually be a whole series of decisions and not just one particular moment) rests solely with the individual, Catholic doctrine is clear that believing begins with God's revelation. We cannot know God without God's self-revelation to us.

Desire for the almighty is written into our very being. However, the desire for the Almighty may be ignored or rejected. An unbelieving stance may result from the inability to reconcile evil in the world with a good God. Or it may result from religious ignorance and indifference. It may also result from a misplaced fascination with worldly things, or it may result from the scandal of bad example of Christians. Finally, the unbeliever may hide from the Almighty by willfully turning away in sin, refusing divine love.

Those who actively seek God, who place their trust in the divine, see life differently and are affected by the very faith that makes them stand within the community of believers. While faith affects relations-our communion with God and with one another-it also, by those relations, opens us to a fruitful life guided by the Holy Spirit as members of the body, the Church, which participates in the mission of Christ.

Finally, faith offers us surety. In a broken world there is much that can confuse us and turn us away from a God-centered life. Faith is our lifeline in a world beset by darkness, a light shining forth for us to follow. But it is not a weak or tenuous light. It has a specific content, radiating out from the person of Jesus Christ.