



a Kendall Hunt Company

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



Junior High Session

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

John 6:60-69

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Faithful God, you call us to you and promise to remain with us always.

Give us the grace to keep you at the center of our lives

and help us to be faithful to you in the face of temptation.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

Begin the session by writing the term "false gods" on a large sheet of paper. Invite the young people to brainstorm what obstacles keep them from relying upon God in their daily lives. Ask them to name what they consider to be false gods today. Write down their responses and discuss:

- What obstacles to faith are most prevalent in our world today?
- Can material wealth and possessions draw people away from God?
- How can we become more aware of God's revelation in our daily lives?

The gift of faith helps us to rely on God for all our needs.

Listening to the Word of God

In the first reading from the Old Testament listen to hear how God is faithful to the Chosen People.

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

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- Why do you suppose that God did not abandon his people due to their unfaithfulness in the past?
- Explain the statement, "as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."
- Why did the people choose to serve the Lord with such certainty?

In the Gospel today, listen to the call to discipleship.



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Read John 6:60-69.

Allow for silence.

- Why did so many of the listeners abandon Jesus after hearing his teaching?
- Did Jesus choose the twelve disciples who remained with him or did they choose Jesus?
- Explain Peter's response to Jesus, "Lord to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Scripture Background

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

The book of Joshua marks the conclusion to the Pentateuch, which is the first five books of the Bible. In today's first reading, Israel enters the Promised Land with a great ceremony of covenant renewal. The people are confronted with the decision of whether or not to serve the Lord, and they choose faith in God. God's faithfulness to his people is confirmed and the covenant is renewed.

In today's gospel the people are faced with the decision of whether or not to follow Jesus. After listening to Jesus, many followers are challenged by his message. They find the revelation that Jesus "came down from heaven" hard to accept because this meant that his mission was to heal the world and bring about salvation. Many of the people abandon Jesus, which shows the difficulty of discipleship.

Only the twelve disciples remain and decide to follow Jesus in faith. Simon Peter testifies that "we have come to believe that you are the Holy One of God." Jesus reveals to his followers that their faith is a gift from God.

The gospel reading today makes clear the true cost of discipleship. Putting our faith in God means more than having a security blanket, with God as the ever-present comforter used in times of need. Following Jesus involves accepting his mission of healing and redemption. This includes the challenge to live Jesus' example of non-violence, justice, forgiveness and love. Being a follower of Christ is not always easy, yet Jesus has the words of spirit and life, and faith in him provides the strength and companionship we need to live as disciples. It is comforting to know that we are not alone. We have all the faithful living today, and the disciples who have gone before us as our companions. Together we travel a road that is graced with the presence of God, with confidence that God is ever faithful to those who choose to serve the Lord.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- Why did some people find Jesus' message hard to accept?

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- What do you think is most difficult about following Jesus? _____
- Why choose faith?

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

Doctrinal Discussion Starter

The gift of Faith

For Catholics, when it comes to faith, believing begins with God. We cannot know God without God's self-revelation to us. God freely gives the gift of faith, and it is our decision whether or not to accept it. That decision often is not a single clear-cut choice, but is more like a series of decisions to turn toward God. Choosing faith does not come with a guarantee to eliminate moments of doubt, fear and confusion. But faith gives us the confidence to rely on God to get us through even the darkest times.

The desire for God is written in the human heart. However, that desire can be overcome by the allure of money, popularity, or possessions. Putting faith in these "false god's" can lead to unhappiness and spiritual darkness. On the other hand, having faith in God and growing in relationship with Jesus brings about true happiness and fullness of life.

- Have you ever felt angry with God, or doubted God's existence? Where can you turn for help when dealing with questions of faith?

The Gospel in Life

Ask a friend or family member to share an experience of how faith got them through a difficult situation.