



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



Junior High Session

Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

God of light, you guide us on the path of goodness with the light of your presence.

Help us to search within our hearts to find your love.

Keep us true to the goodness and love that is within us.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

Begin today's session by inviting the young people to think about driving a car. Give the young people a sheet of paper and ask them to list all the rules of the road that they can think of.

- Why do drivers have to follow so many rules of the road?
- Is it o.k. to ignore some of the rules? Why or Why not?
- Look at your list of rules and explain how people benefit from them.

Rules and laws are often for the good and protection of people. God also gives us commands to live by. God's Law can be found within our hearts.

Listening to the Word of God

In the first reading from the Old Testament listen to the commands God gives the people.

Read Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- Why does God ask the people to "listen" to the commands that are given to them?
- How do the people benefit from obeying God's Law?

In the gospel Jesus talks about searching for God's Law within our hearts.

Read Mark 7:1-8.

Allow for silence.



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- Why do the Pharisees criticize the disciples for not following some of the traditional laws? —
- Describe Jesus' reaction to the Pharisees.
- Why does Jesus warn his followers not to get caught up in the outward observance of laws?

Scripture Background

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

The Chosen People had a very positive view of God's laws. They accepted them as a gift to help them stay close to God. In today's reading from the Old Testament, Israel is asked to listen to and obey specific decrees given by God. In doing so, they gain a place of honor among the nations and the blessing of life in the Promised Land.

Over the centuries and up to the time of Jesus, more highly detailed and specific laws were added to the original Law found in the Pentateuch. In today's gospel the Pharisees--because of their rigid observance of these highly detailed laws--disturb Jesus. Jesus condemns these religious leaders for criticizing the disciples for failing to observe the laws of the tradition. Jesus warns against being concerned with the outward observance of laws without paying attention to what is within one's heart. Jesus points out that evil intentions come from within.

In today's gospel we learn that Jesus is more concerned with what is inside a person than how a person outwardly follows laws.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- Do you view obeying God's commands as a burden or a blessing? Explain.
- Describe some ways that people can outwardly practice their faith without paying attention to what is within their hearts.

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

Doctrinal Discussion Starter

Principles of Morality

Trying to live a moral life does not depend on the strict observance of rules and laws, nor does it rely simply on one's own feelings. Catholics understand that we live a moral life when our attitudes and actions are guided by an informed conscience. The preaching of Christ and the Church, sound religious education, an understanding of scripture, spiritual direction, and the witness and example of other believers all help to inform a person's conscience.

As Christians we look to the example of Jesus Christ when it comes to living a moral life.

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Following the example of Jesus leads to a life that is guided by God's law of love. _____

- Name some outside influences that help to inform your conscience.

The Gospel in Life

The ability to look within our hearts in order to determine what is in keeping with God's desire for us is a life long process. We can help the process with a prayer exercise called an "examination of conscience." Take some quiet time this week to examine your conscience. Ask yourself the following questions or come up with some of your own.

- Have I treated the people in my family, my friends and the people at school with respect?
- Have I cared for my body in a healthy way?
- Have I spent time in prayer this week?
- How can I follow the example of Jesus more closely?

