



a Kendall Hunt Company

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



Junior High Session

Zechariah 12:10-11

Luke 9:18-24

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Dear Jesus,
you are the Messiah.
Thank you for allowing us to know you
as our Savior and our friend.
Be with us as we live each day as your disciples.
Help us to remember that, even when we are hurting,
you are with us.
Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

Invite the young people to think of a situation where they were asked to do something very difficult, and, in the end, the result was good and worthwhile. If they are struggling to come up with a situation, some suggestions could include running or conditioning for a sports team, learning a difficult task or skill, or doing a task they dislike for someone else, who was pleased with their efforts. Ask them to share their scenario with a partner. Reflect on:

- How did you feel when you began the task? Did you know it would be difficult when you started or did you discover that it was difficult as you got into the task?
- How did you stay motivated to see the task through to the end?
- When did you realize that doing the task would be worthwhile? Did that change how you approached the task?

Listening to the Word of God

In the First Reading from the Old Testament listen to how the prophet reassures the people of Israel.

Proclaim Zechariah 12:10-11

Allow time for silent reflection.

Scripture Discussion Starters



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- What does the prophet say will happen?
 - What is the reassurance in this passage?
 - What other story from Scripture has a similar message?

In the Gospel reading, Jesus tells us what those who wish to follow him must do. Listen. Proclaim Luke 9:18-24.

Allow time for silent reflection.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- How does Peter answer Jesus' question, "But who do you say that I am?"
- What does Jesus predict will happen to him? Why do you think he says this after Peter declares that Jesus is the Christ of God?
- Jesus says his followers must "take up their cross daily." What do you think this means?
- How are the First Reading and the Gospel similar?

Scripture Background

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings.

The First Reading comes from the second half of the book of Zechariah. The theme of this section, believed to have been written more than three hundred years before Jesus' birth, is reassurance to the people of Israel that deliverance will come, but it will come through suffering. This section of the Old Testament is often used by the New Testament writers to explain Jesus as the Messiah.

In Luke's Gospel, Peter and the other disciples identify Jesus as the Messiah (*Christ* means "Messiah" or "anointed"). Understanding who Jesus is and choosing to follow him meant that the disciples would share in the suffering Jesus describes. By saying that those who wish to follow him must take up their cross daily, Luke is expressing that suffering will be a regular part of the Christian life.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- After Peter identified Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus told him and the other disciples that, if they wish to follow him, they must take up their cross. Why do you think he told the disciples after they understood his identity?
- What do you think Jesus means by "take up [your] cross daily"? In what ways do disciples of Jesus suffer?
- In the First Reading, the prophet is reassuring the people that God will pour out a "spirit of grace." What reassurance do you have to follow Jesus, even though it will be difficult?



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

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

The Cross in the Life of Jesus' Followers

Jesus tells his disciples that he will suffer, die and be raised. He then tells them that, to follow him, they must also take up their cross. Jesus' Cross is a symbol of great suffering; it is the instrument of his torture and death. Jesus' Death on the Cross, though, is how God defeated evil, so the cross is also a symbol of God's victory.

Being a disciple means that we will have times when we suffer and are hurt. Being a disciple means doing the right thing, even if it is not popular. Because we can connect our suffering with Jesus' suffering, God can work through our suffering to help us grow in holiness and grow closer to God.

Being a disciple means doing what Jesus asks of us, even if it isn't easy, trusting that he is with us and loves us. When we join our suffering to Jesus' suffering - when we stay close to Jesus, because we know that he understands what it is like to suffer - we become more like Jesus, and our suffering can also be transformed into a sign of God's victory.

The Gospel in Life

This week, be intentional about living as a follower of Jesus, even when it is difficult. When you are hurt or struggling, remember to go closer to Jesus, who understands and transforms your hurt.