



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, Intermediate - RCLB Lectionary



### Intermediate Session

Jeremiah 20:10-13

Matthew 10:26-33

### Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God, we trust that you never leave us alone in our suffering.

Help us reach out to others who need help.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

### Opening Life Reflection

The theme for today is persecution and suffering. Provide newspapers, newsmagazines and scissors. To begin, divide the large group into small groups of four or five. Give each small group news articles and invite the children to cut out articles or pictures that depict persecution or suffering. Discuss:

- Where does suffering exist in our world today?
- When is it hard to live as a follow of Jesus in the world?
- How does God help you in times of pain and suffering?

Allow time for discussion. Pain and suffering are part of the human experience. Our faith tells us that God's love is stronger than evil and Jesus is with us in our suffering.

### Listening to the Word of God

In the first reading from the Old Testament, listen to how God never leaves Jeremiah alone in his suffering.

Read Jeremiah 20:10-13.

Allow for silence.

### Scripture Discussion Starters

- How is Jeremiah suffering?
- How is God with Jeremiah in his suffering?
- Where does Jeremiah find strength?

In the gospel today, listen to find out why Jesus tells his followers not to be afraid.

Read Matthew 10:26-33.

Allow for silence.



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- Why does Jesus tell his followers to have no fear?
- Who will protect Jesus' disciples?
- How does Jesus let his followers know that they are valuable in God's sight?

### **Scripture Background**

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

In the Old Testament reading today, the prophet Jeremiah follows God's call with assurance that God will protect him. Jeremiah endured years of rejection and persecution as a result of delivering God's message. In today's passage Jeremiah cries out with grief because even his friends plot against him. Attempts are being made on his life in order to silence him. Jeremiah keeps speaking God's word despite the obstacles. The prophet knows that God is with him and he trusts that his enemies will get what they deserve. Jeremiah praises God for having power over evil.

In the gospel today Jesus encourages his disciples to have no fear because God is with them. Jesus' words acknowledge the reality that many of his disciples will face suffering and death because they are his followers. Jesus uses the comforting image of sparrows being watched over to assure his disciples that God watches over them. They are so valuable to the Father that every hair on their heads has been counted.

### **Questions for Deeper Reflection**

- Why does Jeremiah put his trust in God?
- Why are the followers of Jesus targets of persecution and death?
- How does Jesus assure his friends that God is with them?

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

### **Doctrinal Discussion Starters**

#### **Persecution and Suffering**

All human beings experience pain and suffering. Although we may feel overwhelmed by the suffering in the world, our faith teaches us that God does not cause pain and suffering. We may never fully understand why suffering touches the lives of so many undeserving people. However, with the understanding that suffering is linked to the misuse of free will, we can be more aware of the choices we make and how they affect the world around us. One thing that we can rely on is that God does not abandon us in our suffering. The saving hand of God is often experienced as a loving presence to the faithful in their suffering. And with trust in God, much personal growth can come out of one's struggles. When we suffer, we are joined with Jesus who suffers with us. Jesus became a human being and endured what we ourselves endure, that is, suffering and death, to save us from our sins.



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Believers who stand up for gospel values may find themselves persecuted for their beliefs.——  
Martyrs are people who give their lives in faithfulness to the God who loves us. Through their sacrifice they strengthen the faith of all believers.

- What can we learn from the suffering of Jesus?
- How can we reach out to others who are suffering?
- Who are some present day martyrs?

### **The Gospel in Life**

What is one thing that you can do this week for someone whom is suffering?

