



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



Junior High Session

Jeremiah 20:10-13

Matthew 10:26-33

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Loving God,

calm our fears as we face the challenges of following your son Jesus.

Help us to always trust in your goodness.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The theme for today is persecution and suffering. To begin, write on one half of a large sheet of poster paper or chalkboard, "Choices that young people can make that cause suffering." Then write on the other half, "Choices that young people can make to help alleviate suffering." Brainstorm with the young people their responses to each heading. Write down their responses.

- How do young people experience suffering today?
- What are some causes of the suffering that young people experience?
- When is it difficult to stand up for someone who is being mistreated?
- How is God present in the midst of pain and suffering?

Allow time for discussion. Pain and suffering are part of the human experience. Our faith helps us to see that God's love is stronger than evil and God's presence is with us in the midst of pain and suffering.

Listening to the Word of God

In the first reading from the Old Testament listen to Jeremiah praise God for having power over evildoers.

Read Jeremiah 20:10-13.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- How is Jeremiah being persecuted?
- Where does Jeremiah find strength?
- How does the Lord help Jeremiah?

In the gospel, listen to how Jesus assures his followers that God will protect them.

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Read Matthew 10:26-33.

Allow for silence.

- How does Jesus assure his followers that God will protect them?
- How does Jesus let his followers know that they are valuable in God's sight?
- What will happen to those who acknowledge Jesus before others?

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 today's gospel, Jesus encourages his disciples to have no fear because God is with them. Jesus' words acknowledge 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 the prophet Jeremiah trust in God even after years of persecution?
- Why are the followers of Jesus targets of persecution and death?
- How does Jesus assure his friends of their value before God?

[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 reality of 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.

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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.

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.

- How does understanding about Jesus' suffering help us carry our burdens?
- How might we be asked to suffer today for our beliefs?
- Who are some present day martyrs?

The Gospel in Life

How can you reach out to someone who is suffering this week?

