



a Kendall Hunt Company

Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B, Intermediate - RCLB Lectionary



Intermediate Session

Deuteronomy 6:2-7

Mark 12:28-34

Opening Prayer

Let us Pray.

Gracious God, even with our faults and shortcomings, you love us.

Help us show our love for you by loving others.

Especially give us the strength to love those who are difficult.

Help us love the people who don't agree with us; the people who look and act differently from us.

In the name of your loving Son, Jesus, we pray,

Amen.

Opening Life Reflection



Today's gospel reminds us that our mission as Catholic Christians is to love God and others.

Devise a checklist of ways we show love to others. Try to come up with at least 20 items.

Next, think of someone in your life who makes it difficult for you to love. Keeping this person in mind, look back over the checklist. Have you tried any of these things with the person?

Choose two or three items to try this week.

- Why are some people more difficult to love than others?
- How does our love have the power to change people?
- Has someone's love ever changed you?

Allow time for discussion. We know that God loves us and we know God's love through other people. Other people know God's love through us.

Listening to the Word of God

In Deuteronomy we learn of the great Jewish prayer called the *Shema*. In this prayer, Jewish people remember every day to love God.

Read Deuteronomy 6:2-6

Allow for silence.



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Scripture Discussion Starters

- What are the Israelites told to do in this reading?
- In what ways were the Israelites told to show their love to God?
- What did Moses tell the people would happen if they obeyed the command?

Listen to Jesus explain the greatest commandment to a Jewish scribe. We learn that the most important thing we can do is love God. After that we are to love other people as much as we love ourselves.

Read Mark 12:28-34.
Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- What can we know about the scribe in this story?
- What did Jesus tell the scribe was the most important commandment?
- Why was it important that the scribe (and we) follow the two important commands?



Scripture Background

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

The reading from Deuteronomy is known to Jewish people, even today, as the *Shema*. Prayed twice a day, it reminds people to love God with every part of their very being—with their heart, their soul, and all their strength. The love described in this reading is not so much an emotion as it is a way of life. It demands devotion and obedience to God.

In today's gospel, a Jewish scribe asked Jesus what was the greatest commandment. This was an especially remarkable question since there were 613 commandments in the Jewish Torah. Jesus answered the scribe by saying that to love God with all of our being was the most important command. The second most important commandment is to love others as we love ourselves. When the scribe repeated what he understood to Jesus, Jesus told the man that he understood well. We know from Jesus' words that we will be in the Kingdom of God if we follow these two commandments.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

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- How do we love ourselves?
 - What are some things about ourselves and other people that are hard to love?
 - Why would it be easy to follow all the commandments if we followed these two?

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

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

Command to Love God and Neighbor

The two greatest commandments that Jesus outline name what is necessary for us to be Christians. We show God's love to our neighbors which is the same thing as saying we show God's love to all the people of the world. We can bring about peace in our world by loving others and caring for them in the same way we love ourselves and care about ourselves.

If we truly love God, we can only show this by the way we treat and love others. We can only love others if we first love God. It is through our unconditional love of God that we know how to love others unconditionally. And it is through this love that the Kingdom of God begins on earth.

- What does Jesus teach us is the greatest commandment?
- How can we begin the Kingdom of God here on earth and in our own time by following this commandment?
- Why is it necessary for us to love God first before anything or anyone else?

Sacrament Connection

The Eucharist is the primary way we show God's love in the world. When we receive the Eucharist, Jesus becomes a part of us. With Jesus inside of us, we leave mass and go into the world. Jesus is inside of us and we witness Jesus' love to others by serving them, loving them, and caring for them as we love and care for ourselves.

The Gospel in Life

Show someone God's love this week. Reach out to a person that you have previously shown less love to than yourself.



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Connecting to Faith First® Legacy Edition

At Home Family Guide, theme 13

Grade 4, chapter 18

Grade 5, chapter 23

Grade 6, chapter 22

