



a Kendall Hunt Company

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B, Intermediate - RCLB Lectionary



Intermediate Session

Isaiah 35:4-7a

Mark 7:31-37

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

God of care and compassion,

Open our ears to the cries of the sick and suffering. | You hear the prayers of those in need.

Thank you for the love and care you give us.

In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

Invite the children to close their eyes and imagine a world without suffering and pain, without violence and evil.

- Describe what you think that perfect world would look like.
- What does your *dream world* look like?
- What would it be like to live there?

When we imagine a world without suffering and evil, we see a world healed by the presence of God.

Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament today, we hear that God has come to put an end to suffering and evil.

Read Isaiah 35:4-7a.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- Why are the "fearful of heart" told to be strong?
- What has God come to do?

In the gospel today, listen to how Jesus cares for someone who is suffering.

Read Mark 7:31-37.

Allow for silence.

- Why did the man who was brought to Jesus need healing?
- How did Jesus cure him?

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- What did Jesus say to the people who saw him work a miracle?
 - Did the people listen to Jesus?

Scripture Background

In the reading from the Old Testament we are given a glimpse of God's mercy and compassion. We hear how God has come to take away all the suffering and evil in the world. God has come to save us.

God's plan to save us continues with God sending Jesus into the world. In the gospel today, Jesus heals a deaf man who has trouble speaking. The story describes how Jesus takes the man aside and sticks his fingers into the man's ears, then he spits on his tongue and says the word "Ephphatha," which means "be opened." Immediately after this, the man's ears are opened and he is able to speak plainly. The healing in this story is not magic, but it is a miracle pointing to God's saving presence on earth. Jesus brings God's presence into the world.

The people who saw Jesus cure the man were amazed. Jesus did not want them to tell anyone about what they saw. But the people could not keep it a secret. They were so excited about seeing a miracle that they went out to spread the news.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- What are some miracles that you have heard of?
- Can Jesus heal people today?
- Were you ever so excited about a secret that you just had to tell someone?

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

Doctrinal Discussion

Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic social teaching helps to direct us toward God's desire to save the world. This teaching includes the directive to view all of God's creation as a gift to treasure. And we are to treat all human beings with dignity and value. God also entrusts us with the natural environment to respect and care for. The purpose of Catholic social teaching is to help us live the values and teachings of Jesus in our daily lives.

Jesus had a special concern for the poor. Therefore, an important part of Catholic social teaching is that we too must be concerned for the poor. We need to look at how the poor live their lives, and look at how we live our lives. This leads us to work with the poor to make things better.



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- • What does it mean when we say that, “the gift of the earth is for the whole of humanity?”
- How can you get to know the poor in your community?
 - Give some examples of how you respect and care for the environment.

The Gospel in Life

Write to a club or organization that works to alleviate poverty or to protect the environment. Ask what your parish might do to help.

