



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



Junior High Session

Isaiah 56:1, 6-7

Matthew 15:21-28

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God, let your healing power come upon us.

Help us to bring your healing presence to others.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The theme for today is the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. On a large sheet of poster paper list some harsh realities that exist in our world such as, child abuse, gang violence, terrorism, drug addiction and aids. Give the young people a few minutes to reflect on their thoughts and feelings about such realities. Brainstorm with the young people where they see signs of God's healing presence in the world. Write down their responses. Discuss:

- Does God care about the harsh realities that exist in our world?

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- Where is Jesus' healing power most needed in the world today? _____
- Does Jesus offer healing to all people?

Allow time for discussion. God cares about what is going on in our world. God sent Jesus into the world to bring healing and fullness of life to all people.

Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading listen to how God's saving love is for all people.

Read Isaiah 56:1, 6-7.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- Is God's message for the Israelites alone?
- How are God's people to live?
- Who is welcome in God's house of prayer?



In the gospel today listen to hear how a woman shows her faith in the healing power of Jesus.

Read Matthew 15:21-28.

Allow for silence.

- Who asks Jesus for help?
- Why do the disciples want to send the woman away?

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- How does the woman show her faith in Jesus?
- Why does Jesus heal the woman's daughter?

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 Isaiah helps the Israelites understand that they are not the only people favored by God. The prophet knew that the people of Israel were in danger of thinking of themselves as the privileged chosen people. Today's passage makes clear that God's message is not for the people of Israel alone. God's house has room for everybody. All are welcome in God's house of prayer.

In today's gospel, a Canaanite woman persistently asks Jesus for help. Matthew wrote this passage at a time when the Jewish people in his community disliked the Canaanites. The disciples want to get rid of the woman because she is bothering them. At first Jesus' response is unsettling. He tells the woman that he has only come to save Israel. But the woman continues to ask Jesus to help her daughter. She does not give up.

Jesus cures the Canaanite woman's daughter of a demon. Jesus holds up the woman's faith as reason for the healing. By this miracle Jesus shows that faith in him is most important. With his act of healing, Jesus teaches his followers that God's saving love is for all people. The healing miracle in today's gospel is also a sign of the coming of God's kingdom.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- What does it mean that God's house has room for all people?
- What does Jesus teach his followers about God's saving love?
- Why is it important to have faith in Jesus? [If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the **Gospel in Life**.]

Doctrinal Discussion Starter

Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick

God sent Jesus into the world to heal the sick. Sickness is not a punishment from God. Throughout his life Jesus reached out to people in need with God's healing touch. This ministry of healing continues in the Church today through the Sacrament of Anointing of the

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Sick. The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick helps to strengthen our faith in Jesus when we are ill. We receive the grace to face our sickness or dying with courage and hope.

The Church celebrates Anointing of the Sick with any Christian who experiences the difficulty of physical or mental illness, old age or is facing death. To administer the sacrament, a bishop or priest prays over, lays hands upon, and anoints those who are sick with holy oil. The sacrament should be preceded by the Word of God (except in an emergency) and be celebrated with the sick person surrounded by family, friends, and other believers.

Dealing with serious illness and facing death can cause us to feel alone and afraid. Our faith teaches that we are not alone. God is with us. In the sacrament for the sick we hear the comforting prayer, "Father in heaven, through this holy anointing grant N. comfort in her suffering. When she is afraid, give her courage, when afflicted, give her patience, when dejected, afford her hope, and when alone, assure her of the support of your holy people" (PC125).

- Why is faith in Jesus important when we are sick?
- How does Jesus' ministry of healing continue in the Church today?
- How does the Anointing of the Sick bring about healing and comfort?
- How does Jesus help you deal with suffering in your life?

Sacrament Connection

The Church calls the sacraments of Anointing of the Sick and Reconciliation, Sacraments of Healing. These Sacraments continue Jesus' ministry of healing and forgiveness in the world today. The Sacraments of Anointing of the Sick and Reconciliation celebrate God's healing power in times of sin, suffering, illness and death.

The Gospel in Life

How can you reach out to help someone who is sick or in pain this week?