



a Kendall Hunt Company

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



Junior High Session

Sirach 27:30-28:7

Matthew 18:21-35

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Forgiving God,

you are compassionate and understanding.

Help us to be more understanding and tolerant of one another.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The topic for today is forgiveness. To begin, write down two situations on index cards. Have one express someone in need of forgiveness. Have the other situation express someone who needs to forgive. Invite the young people to role-play each situation. Discuss:

- Can you remember a time when someone hurt you?
- Were you able to forgive the person who caused you harm?
- Why is it important to forgive?

Allow time for discussion. God is forgiving. We are called to forgive as God forgives.

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Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading today listen to Sirach's wise advice about forgiveness.

Read Sirach 27:30-28:7.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- What advice about forgiveness does Sirach offer?
- What will happen to those who hold on to anger?
- Why does Sirach tell the people to forgive the neighbor who has wronged them?

In the gospel today listen to what Jesus has to say about forgiveness.

Read Matthew 18:21-35.

Allow for silence.

- What does Jesus tell his disciples about how often to forgive?
- Why does Jesus tell the story about the king and his slave?
- Why does the king show pity on the slave?
- How does the slave treat his fellow slaves who are in debt to him?
- What happens to the slave who shows no mercy for his fellow slaves?

Scripture Background

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

Today's first reading is part of the wisdom books found in the Old Testament. These writings show how those who are wise can live in harmony with God's plan for the world. Sirach wants to convince his people to rely on God's ways. He teaches about a God whose forgiveness has no limits. Sirach tells his people about the need to forgive others. It is not good to hold on to anger and hatred. Forgiving others allows one to experience God's forgiveness and peace.

In today's gospel Jesus tells his followers that it is important for them to share with others the limitless gift of forgiveness that they themselves have received from God. When Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive someone who hurts him, he understands Jesus' answer. With his answer seventy-seven times, Jesus makes the point that forgiveness should have no limit. Jesus tells the story about a king and an unforgiving slave to teach that we are to forgive one another because God has forgiven us. Today's passage concludes with a stern



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warning to forgive as God forgives.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- Why is it sometimes difficult to let go of anger?
- Why is it important to forgive someone who has hurt you?
- How is God like the king in the gospel story?

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

Doctrinal Discussion Starter

Forgiveness

As human beings we sometimes do things that we know are wrong. We choose to turn away from loving God, others and ourselves. When we do these things we sin. God is forgiving. As believers we confess our sinfulness to God and to one another. When we do this, we experience the mercy and forgiveness of God. Jesus commanded us to forgive one another as God has forgiven us.

We are to forgive those who hurt us. This can be difficult at times. We may feel anger toward the people who harm us. Jesus taught his followers to forgive and love their enemies. Jesus even prayed for his torturers at the time of his suffering and death. Catholics are called to follow the example of Jesus Christ.

The Church teaches that when we forgive those who wrong us we are brought closer to Jesus. In the prayer that Jesus taught us we ask the Father to “forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” When we truly pray this prayer and meditate on the words, God plants the gifts of compassion, gratitude and love within us. The path of forgiveness proves that love is stronger than sin.

- Why does God forgive us when we sin?
- When do you experience the mercy and forgiveness of God?
- What does the Church teach about forgiveness?

Sacrament Connection

In the sacrament of reconciliation we celebrate God’s forgiving love. We confess our sins and

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say that we are sorry. We confess our sins to a priest, who represents the believing community. We are reconciled with God and the believing community.

The Gospel in Life

How can you be more forgiving of others this week?

