

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, Year B, Junior High

Submitted by lectionaryadmin on Wed, 01/14/2015 - 19:00

Junior High Session

Isaiah 50:4-7

Mark 14:1-15:47 [or short form Mark 15:1-39]

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

God of Love, you sent your son Jesus to show us how to live as your children.

Help us realize how deeply you love each one of us.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The topic for today is the Gift of Perseverance. For this session bring a small tree branch or palm. Invite the youngsters to gather in a circle. Explain that in Jesus' day, the people would use palm branches to celebrate important events. Palm branches were used to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem. Then invite the young people to quietly reflect on a difficult situation that exists in the world or in their personal life. After a moment, invite them to pass the tree branch or palm around the circle and share how they can welcome Jesus into their lives this holy week. Discuss:

- What difficult conflicts exist in the world today?
- What difficult situations do young people deal with today?
- What helps you get through difficult situations?

Allow time for discussion. Faith in God helps us get through difficult situations. Jesus has shown us the way to persevere and trust in God when things get tough.

Listening to the Word of God

In the reading from the Old Testament, listen to how God's servant perseveres in the face of suffering.

Read Isaiah 50:4-7.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- What burdens does God's servant face?
- How does he persevere in spite of his suffering?
- How does God's servant show faith in God?

In the gospel reading today, listen to the story of Jesus' passion.

Read Mark 14:1-15:47 [or (short form) 15:1-39].

Allow for silence.

- What happens when Jesus is handed over to Pilate?

- How is Jesus put to death?
- What does Jesus cry out before he dies on the cross?

Scripture Background

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

On this Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, the Church's Holy Week begins. In today's celebration we recall Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Upon his entry, the people greet Jesus by placing palm branches in his path. This greeting implies that Jesus is the promised savior.

In today's first reading from the Old Testament, God's servant tells of the great burdens that he must endure. The servant is mistreated and humiliated. What is most striking about this passage however, is the perseverance of the servant. Even in the face of suffering and death, his faith in God does not fail.

In the gospel we hear the story of Jesus' passion. In Mark's account of the passion, Jesus is abandoned, betrayed and denied by his friends. Jesus is handed over to Pilate where he is condemned to death. The horrible method of Roman execution at the time is crucifixion. Pilate follows the wishes of the crowd and gives Jesus over to be crucified. Jesus cries out to God as he hangs on the cross, feeling abandoned even by God as he faces his death alone.

The story of Jesus' passion is not only an account of those who betrayed, condemned, and abandoned Jesus to his death. It is also the account of the Son of God who never faltered in his mission, and who, even in his cry of abandonment on the cross, spoke to God in prayer. The power of Jesus' death shook the world. Through his death, Jesus destroyed the separation between God and God's people forever.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- Where do you find the strength to overcome pain and suffering?
- When do you feel alone and afraid?
- How can crying out to God remind you that you are not alone?

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

Doctrinal Discussion Starter

The Gift of Perseverance

In our life journey we all experience difficulties along the way. While Jesus came to bring God's kingdom among us, it is not yet here on earth in full. Suffering, evil, and sin exist in our broken world. Despite this, we Catholics believe that God is with us, lovingly guiding us through it all. As we experience blessings and trials throughout our lives, it is important for us to remain faithful to God to the very end. This is called "final perseverance." We cannot do this alone. But we can persevere by cooperating with God's grace in every situation.

As believers, we trust that our lives are in the hands of God. The love of God guides us on right paths, even when we are faced with situations of suffering and pain. When we experience suffering, our challenge is to pray in hope for the gift of perseverance. We are a people of hope. Catholics believe that God saves us and guides us through every difficulty that we face. We persevere because Jesus Christ has shown us the way. He is our model, guide, and teacher.



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- What is the gift of perseverance?
- When have you needed perseverance in your life?
- When it comes to perseverance, how is Jesus a model and guide for us?

Sacrament Connection

In the Sacrament of Confirmation we are strengthened by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Our faith in God is made stronger. In times of difficulty we can call on the power of the Holy Spirit to help us persevere.

The Gospel in Life

How can you offer support or words of encouragement to someone who is going through a tough time this week?

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