

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B, Intermediate

Submitted by lectionaryadmin on Thu, 06/04/2015 - 20:00

Intermediate Session

2 Kings 4:42-44

John 6:1-15

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Thank you, God, for the precious gift of all those who make up our human family.

Help us to care for one another and share what we have with those in need.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

The theme for today is Unity of the Church and Ecumenism. To begin, divide the group into small groups of four or five. Invite the children to role play a situation at school where a person sitting at their lunch table has nothing to eat and no money to buy lunch. Have each small group act out what they would do in that situation. Discuss:

- Why are some children hungry in our world today?
- How can we share our resources with those in need?
- When do you share what you have with others?

Allow time for discussion. As members of God's family, we are to share our resources with others, especially with those who are in need.

Listening to the Word of God

In the first reading from the Old Testament, listen to find out how God cares for those in need.

Read 2 Kings 4:42-44.

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- What happens when food is brought to Elisha?
- How many people need to be fed?
- How is God's love and care shown to the people?

In today's gospel, listen to find out how thousands of people are fed with five loaves of bread and two fish.

Read John 6:1-15.

Allow for silence.

- Why are so many people following Jesus?
- What does Jesus do with the five loaves of bread and two fish?
- How are thousands of hungry people fed?

Scripture Background

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

In today's first reading from the Old Testament, many hungry people are miraculously fed. A man brings the prophet Elisha twenty barley loaves. Elisha tells his servant to share what he has with the people. But his servant questions Elisha because he does not understand how so many hungry people can be fed with so little. The prophet repeats his request and the servant does what he is asked to do. Miraculously, God multiplies the loaves and all the people are fed, with some food left over. In this passage, the fact that there is food left over symbolizes God's abundant love.

Today's gospel also contains a miracle story about feeding hungry people. A large crowd is following Jesus because they have seen him heal the sick and they want to hear his preaching. Jesus wants to give the people what they need and he knows that they are hungry. Jesus asks his disciples to find food for the people. A boy in the crowd offers his five barley loaves and two fish. Jesus miraculously multiplies the loaves and fish, and the hungry people are given more than enough to eat. Before feeding the people, Jesus takes the bread, blesses it and shares it. This symbolically shows that the Jewish feast of Passover is replaced with Jesus who is bread and the giver of bread for the life of the world.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- What do the readings today show us about God?
- How is Jesus bread for the world?
- When do you bring your needs to Jesus?

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

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

Unity of the Church and Ecumenism

We believe that the Catholic Church is characterized by unity. All God's people are bound together spiritually as one body in Christ. Ecumenism is the search to bring all Christians together to form the unity that Christ wills for his Body, the Church, on earth. Unity does not mean conformity. The Catholic Church works to understand and respect other cultures, traditions and expressions of faith.

The division between Christian religions weakens our witness in the world. Therefore, the Second Vatican Council called for a healing of these wounds. The ecumenical movement began among protestant Christians and the Second Vatican Council embraced it as a goal of the Catholic Church.

- What is ecumenism?
- Why is it important to respect other people's differences?
- How can you work toward getting along with people who are different from you?

Sacrament Connection

The miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fish is connected with our belief in the Eucharist. We believe that Jesus is really present with us and nourishes us in the Eucharist. Jesus is the "bread of life."



The Gospel in Life

How can you share some of your gifts and talents with others this week?

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