



The JOY of the GOSPEL

Five Lessons for September 2018

September 2, 2018 – Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 9, 2018 – Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 16 2018 – Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 23, 2018 – Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 30, 2018 – Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Tradition of the Elders (Upper and Middle Elementary)



September 2, 2018 – Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage, Jesus teaches us that it is what is inside of us that truly leads us to sinfulness rather than what comes from outside of us. Jesus warns us that what matters most is what is in our hearts. In this lesson, students will reflect on the movement of the liturgical seasons and the Good News of the Gospel.

Directions

1. Have students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions. You may have students answer them on their own or you may discuss them together as a class.
2. Review and discuss the answers to the focus questions.
3. Have your students read **The Joy of the Gospel** essay and respond to the reflection questions.
4. Consider conducting a class discussion using the reflection questions.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. The Pharisees noticed that some disciples were eating with unwashed hands. This upset them because of the tradition of all Jews carefully washing their hands before eating. (Note: this washing was a ritualistic practice and not really about removing dirt and germs from their hands)
2. Quoting Isaiah, He said that they followed the traditions of man without following the Commandments of God. Therefore, their traditions were hollow or meaningless and not done to worship God.
3. From within ourselves, instead of from outside of ourselves.

4. Evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, and folly.

Sunday Readings

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23: The Tradition of the Elders

When the Pharisees with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, they observed that some of his disciples ate their meals with unclean, that is, unwashed, hands.

—For the Pharisees and, in fact, all Jews, do not eat without carefully washing their hands, keeping the tradition of the elders. And on coming from the marketplace they do not eat without purifying themselves. And there are many other things that they have traditionally observed, the purification of cups and jugs and kettles and beds. — So the Pharisees and scribes questioned him, “Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders but instead eat a meal with unclean hands?” He responded, “Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written:

This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts. You disregard God's commandment but cling to human tradition.”

He summoned the crowd again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile.

“From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. All these evils come from within and they defile.”

Focus Questions

1. What did the Pharisees notice that some disciples were doing? Why were they upset about this?
2. Why did Jesus call the Pharisees hypocrites?
3. From where does Jesus teach us that the things that defile (to make unclean or impure) us come from?
4. What are two examples of things that Jesus says defile us?

The Joy of the Gospel

Directions: Read the essay below. Then, answer the reflection questions.

Welcome back to a brand new school year! Hopefully, you had a fun and relaxing summer vacation. Year after year we live this same cycle: summer ends, a new school year begins, we work hard and learn, we spend time with friends both old and new; Fall, Winter, and Spring come and go, and then, before we know it, the school year ends and summer vacation begins again. Each year, we grow and learn, and become more and more the person that God made us to be.

The Church, too, lives a cycle in which we worship God, learn about the life of Christ and God's saving actions in human history, experience the community of the faithful, and grow more and more in holiness. We call this ebb and flow of the Church's life the liturgical seasons.

In a special way, we can mark the movement of the liturgical seasons with the Sunday Gospels for each week of the year. The Gospels are the four books at the beginning of the New Testament in the Bible that tell the story of the life of Christ. We hear a different reading from one of the Gospels proclaimed at every Mass. In the Gospels, we not only hear the Word of God, but we actually *meet* the Word of God, who is Jesus Christ.

The word "gospel" means "good news." The Good News is that God loved us so much that He sent His only Son into the world to become one of us, to live among us and show us God's love, and to die on the Cross for us to save us from sin so that we might have eternal life with God in Heaven. That new is so "good" that we celebrate it every Sunday Mass (and at every Mass every day, all over the world).

So, this school year, reflect on the Good News of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ died for your sins and invited you to know Him and to love Him, so that you too can enjoy eternal life. And share the Good News with others – by telling them about Jesus, and by showing them by your own example how the Good News of salvation has changed your life.

Reflection Questions:

1. What is one thing you are most looking forward to this school year?

2. What is one thing you most want to learn about Jesus and His Church this school year?

3. What are two ways this school year that you can show and tell others about the Good News of the Gospel?

4. Think about this Sunday's Gospel reading. Jesus taught us about the different things that come from within us that make us unclean or impure, or, in other words, cause us to sin. What is one thing that you can do this school year to follow Jesus more closely?

The Healing of a Deaf Man (Upper and Middle Elementary)



September 9, 2018 – Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage Jesus heals a deaf man who also has a speech impediment. Jesus touches the man to heal him and says, "Be opened," and the man is healed. Students will contemplate how Jesus touches us and opens our ears and eyes so that we too might be healed and confident to serve the Lord.

Directions

- A. First, have students complete the **My Strengths** chart.
- B. Have students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions. You may have students answer them on their own or you may discuss them together as a class.
- C. Review and discuss the answers to the focus questions.
- D. Then have students read Exodus 3:7-10; 4:10-12 from **The Call of Moses**, or read it aloud to your students. Then have them complete the focus and reflection questions.
- E. Review and discuss the answers to the focus and reflection questions.
- F. Conclude by having students complete the **Jesus is Lord Chart**.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. He was brought to Jesus by other people.
2. Jesus put His fingers into the man's ears and spit on his tongue. He said "Be opened!"
3. The deaf man could immediately hear and speak plainly.
4. Jesus ordered the people not to say anything about what they had seen. They told everyone.

The Call of Moses

1. The suffering of His people in Egypt in slavery.
2. To go to pharaoh and lead God's people into the Promised Land.
3. He is not eloquent and is slow of speech and tongue. In other words, Moses likely had a speech impediment.
4. God chastised Moses by telling him that it is He who gives people the power to speak or not. God tells him to go and do as He commanded and that He will be with him and assist him.

Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 7:31-37: The Healing of a Deaf Man

Again Jesus left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis. And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "*Ephphatha!*"— that is, "Be

opened!" — And immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly. He ordered them not to tell anyone. But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. They were exceedingly astonished and they said, "He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Focus Questions

1. How did the deaf man come to meet Jesus? What was asked of Jesus?
2. What physical actions and materials did Jesus use to heal the deaf man? What words did Jesus use?
3. What was the result of Jesus' actions and words?
4. What did Jesus order the people who witnessed the healing to do? What did they actually do?

The Call of Moses

Directions: Read about God’s call of Moses from the book of Exodus. Then, answer the focus and reflection questions.

Exodus 3:7-10, 4:10-12

But the LORD said: I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry against their taskmasters, so I know well what they are suffering. Therefore I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them up from that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Hivites and the Jebusites. Now indeed the outcry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen how the Egyptians are oppressing them. Now, go! I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt. Moses, however, said to the LORD, “If you please, my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and tongue.” The LORD said to him: Who gives one person speech? Who makes another mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go, I will assist you in speaking and teach you what you are to say.

Focus Questions:

1. What caused God to reveal Himself to Moses?

2. What did God call Moses to do?

3. What excuse did Moses give to God?

4. How did God respond to Moses?

Reflection Question:

How is Moses similar to the deaf man Jesus heals in the Gospel of Mark? How are you similar to him? What do Jesus's words to the deaf man and God's words to Moses mean for us and our own insecurities and weaknesses?

Jesus is Lord

Directions: Before reading this week’s Gospel reading, complete the **My Strengths Chart**. Then, after reading the Gospel reading and completing the **Call of Moses** activity, complete the **Jesus is Lord** chart.

My Strengths Chart

Three of My Strengths	Three Things I Can Improve
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Jesus is Lord Chart

Three Things I Can Do to Proclaim Jesus is Lord in My Everyday Life
1.
2.
3.

Peter's Confession about Jesus (Upper and Middle Elementary)



September 16, 2018 – Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage Jesus asks His disciples an important question about His identity, "Who do you say that I am?" The disciples' answers reveal uncertainty about who Jesus is. Jesus makes it clear, however, what we must do to be His disciples. We must take up our cross daily and follow Him. In this lesson, students will explore Jesus' identity and consider the conditions for discipleship.

Directions

1. Have students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions. You may have students answer them on their own or you may discuss them together as a class.
2. Review and discuss the answers to the focus questions.
3. Have students read the brief reflection on the Gospel from "**Who Do You Say That I Am,**" and respond to the reflection question.
4. Then, have students complete the "**Who Do You Say That I Am?**" Chart. You may choose to have students work individually or arrange students into groups and assign each group one title to look up and report their findings to the rest of the class. The necessary *Catechism* references have been provided as a handout on *Catechism of the Catholic Church* nos. 430-451

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. "Who do the people say that I am?" John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets.
2. "But who do you say that I am?" The Christ.
3. Peter's response reveals that Jesus is the Savior, the Son of God.
4. Jesus taught about how he would have to suffer, die, and rise again on the third day.

5. A follower of Jesus must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Him.

Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 8:27-35: Peter's Confession about Jesus

Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They said in reply, "John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets." And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said to him in reply, "You are the Christ." Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him.

He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. He spoke

this openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it."

Focus Questions

1. What was Jesus' first question to the disciples? How did they respond?
2. What was Jesus' second question to the disciples? How did Peter respond?
3. What do you think Peter's response reveals about his faith in Jesus?
4. What did Jesus teach after His discussion with the disciples?
5. What must a follower of Jesus do to "come after" Him? Why?

“Who Do You Say that I Am?”

Directions: Read the reflection below. Then answer the reflection question.

In Jesus’ time, much like today, there were many ideas about who Jesus was. Some believed He was a prophet, or even Elijah returned from the dead. Some, like Peter confessed Him to be the Christ, the savior. In everything that Jesus did and taught, He continually defied expectations. He went beyond simple categories and labels. Jesus is so much more than what the people said of Him – then, and today! The important question for us today is the same as it was to the disciples then, who do we say that He is? Do we believe that Jesus is our Lord and Savior, the Christ?

One thing is for certain, Jesus very clearly told us what it means to follow Him. In simple terms, it means to become more Christ-like in our own lives. That means bearing our own crosses with patience and with joy. The things of this world will not save us. But Jesus already has saved us by His Cross and Resurrection. We must accept the gift of life that Jesus offers us and take up our own crosses and follow Him.

Reflection Question

Who is Jesus? What does He mean to you?

“Who Do You Say that I Am?” Chart

Directions: Read the given *Catechism* passages and complete the chart.

Jesus (CCC 430-435)		
Definition and Origin	What does it reveal about Jesus?	What does it mean for us today?

Christ (CCC 436-440)		
Definition and Origin	What does it reveal about Jesus?	What does it mean for us today?

Son of God (CCC 441-445)		
Definition and Origin	What does it reveal about Jesus?	What does it mean for us today?

Lord (CCC 446-451)		
Definition and Origin	What does it reveal about Jesus?	What does it mean for us today?

Catechism of the Catholic Church nos. 430-451

I. JESUS

430 Jesus means in Hebrew: "God saves." At the annunciation, the angel Gabriel gave him the name Jesus as his proper name, which expresses both his identity and his mission. Since God alone can forgive sins, it is God who, in Jesus his eternal Son made man, "will save his people from their sins". In Jesus, God recapitulates all of his history of salvation on behalf of men.

431 In the history of salvation God was not content to deliver Israel "out of the house of bondage" by bringing them out of Egypt. He also saves them from their sin. Because sin is always an offence against God, only he can forgive it. For this reason Israel, becoming more and more aware of the universality of sin, will no longer be able to seek salvation except by invoking the name of the Redeemer God.

432 The name "Jesus" signifies that the very name of God is present in the person of his Son, made man for the universal and definitive redemption from sins. It is the divine name that alone brings salvation, and henceforth all can invoke his name, for Jesus united himself to all men through his Incarnation, so that "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

433 The name of the Savior God was invoked only once in the year by the high priest in atonement for the sins of Israel, after he had sprinkled the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies with the sacrificial blood. The mercy seat was the place of God's presence. When St. Paul speaks of Jesus whom "God put forward as an expiation by his blood", he means that in Christ's humanity "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."

434 Jesus' Resurrection glorifies the name of the Savior God, for from that time on it is the name of Jesus that fully manifests the supreme power of the "name which is above every name". The evil spirits fear his name; in his name his disciples perform miracles, for the Father grants all they ask in this name.

435 The name of Jesus is at the heart of Christian prayer. All liturgical prayers conclude with the words "through our Lord Jesus Christ". The Hail Mary reaches its high point in the words "blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." The Eastern prayer of the heart, the Jesus Prayer, says: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Many Christians, such as St. Joan of Arc, have died with the one word "Jesus" on their lips.

II. CHRIST

436 The word "Christ" comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Messiah, which means "anointed". It became the name proper to Jesus only because he accomplished perfectly the divine mission that "Christ" signifies. In effect, in Israel those consecrated to God for a mission that he gave were anointed in his name. This was the case for kings, for priests and, in rare instances, for prophets. This had to be the case all the more so for the Messiah whom God would send to inaugurate his kingdom definitively. It was necessary that the Messiah be anointed by the Spirit of the Lord at once as king and priest, and also as prophet. Jesus fulfilled the messianic hope of Israel in his threefold office of priest, prophet and king.

437 To the shepherds, the angel announced the birth of Jesus as the Messiah promised to Israel: "To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." From the beginning he was "the one whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world", conceived as "holy" in Mary's virginal womb. God called Joseph to "take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit", so that Jesus, "who is called Christ", should be born of Joseph's spouse into the messianic lineage of David.

438 Jesus' messianic consecration reveals his divine mission, "for the name 'Christ' implies 'he who anointed', 'he who was anointed' and 'the very anointing with which he was anointed'. The one who anointed is the Father, the one who was anointed is the Son, and he was anointed with the Spirit who is the anointing." His eternal messianic consecration was revealed during the time of his earthly life at the moment of his baptism by John, when "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power", "that he might be revealed to Israel" as its Messiah. His works and words will manifest him as "the Holy One of God".

439 Many Jews and even certain Gentiles who shared their hope recognized in Jesus the fundamental attributes of the messianic "Son of David", promised by God to Israel. Jesus accepted his rightful title of Messiah, though with some reserve because it was understood by some of his contemporaries in too human a sense, as essentially political.

440 Jesus accepted Peter's profession of faith, which acknowledged him to be the Messiah, by announcing the imminent Passion of the Son of Man. He unveiled the authentic content of his messianic kingship both in the transcendent identity of the Son of Man "who came down from heaven", and in his redemptive mission as the suffering Servant: "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Hence the true meaning of his kingship is revealed only when he is raised high on the cross. Only after his Resurrection will Peter be able to proclaim Jesus' messianic kingship to the

People of God: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

III. THE ONLY SON OF GOD

441 In the Old Testament, "son of God" is a title given to the angels, the Chosen People, the children of Israel, and their kings. It signifies an adoptive sonship that establishes a relationship of particular intimacy between God and his creature. When the promised Messiah-King is called "son of God", it does not necessarily imply that he was more than human, according to the literal meaning of these texts. Those who called Jesus "son of God", as the Messiah of Israel, perhaps meant nothing more than this.

442 Such is not the case for Simon Peter when he confesses Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God", for Jesus responds solemnly: "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven." Similarly Paul will write, regarding his conversion on the road to Damascus, "When he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles..." "And in the synagogues immediately [Paul] proclaimed Jesus, saying, 'He is the Son of God.'" From the beginning this acknowledgment of Christ's divine sonship will be the center of the apostolic faith, first professed by Peter as the Church's foundation.

443 Peter could recognize the transcendent character of the Messiah's divine sonship because Jesus had clearly allowed it to be so understood. To his accusers' question before the Sanhedrin, "Are you the Son of God, then?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am." Well before this, Jesus referred to himself as "the Son" who knows the Father, as distinct from the "servants" God had earlier sent to his people; he is superior even to the angels. He distinguished his sonship from that of his disciples by never saying "our Father", except to command them: "You, then, pray like this: 'Our Father'", and he emphasized this distinction, saying "my Father and your Father".

444 The Gospels report that at two solemn moments, the Baptism and the Transfiguration of Christ, the voice of the Father designates Jesus his "beloved Son". Jesus calls himself the "only Son of God", and by this title affirms his eternal pre-existence. He asks for faith in "the name of the only Son of God". In the centurion's exclamation before the crucified Christ, "Truly this man was the Son of God", that Christian confession is already heard. Only in the Paschal mystery can the believer give the title "Son of God" its full meaning.

445 After his Resurrection, Jesus' divine sonship becomes manifest in the power of his glorified humanity. He was "designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his Resurrection from the dead". The apostles can confess: "We have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

IV. LORD

446 In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the ineffable Hebrew name YHWH, by which God revealed himself to Moses, is rendered as Kyrios, "Lord". From then on, "Lord" becomes the more usual name by which to indicate the divinity of Israel's God. The New Testament uses this full sense of the title "Lord" both for the Father and - what is new - for Jesus, who is thereby recognized as God Himself.

447 Jesus ascribes this title to himself in a veiled way when he disputes with the Pharisees about the meaning of Psalm 110, but also in an explicit way when he addresses his apostles. Throughout his public life, he demonstrated his divine sovereignty by works of power over nature, illnesses, demons, death and sin.

448 Very often in the Gospels people address Jesus as "Lord". This title testifies to the respect and trust of those who approach him for help and healing. At the prompting of the Holy Spirit, "Lord" expresses the recognition of the divine mystery of Jesus. In the encounter with the risen Jesus, this title becomes adoration: "My Lord and my God!" It thus takes on a connotation of love and affection that remains proper to the Christian tradition: "It is the Lord!"

449 By attributing to Jesus the divine title "Lord", the first confessions of the Church's faith affirm from the beginning that the power, honor and glory due to God the Father are due also to Jesus, because "he was in the form of God", and the Father manifested the sovereignty of Jesus by raising him from the dead and exalting him into his glory.

450 From the beginning of Christian history, the assertion of Christ's lordship over the world and over history has implicitly recognized that man should not submit his personal freedom in an absolute manner to any earthly power, but only to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Caesar is not "the Lord". "The Church. . . believes that the key, the center and the purpose of the whole of man's history is to be found in its Lord and Master."

451 Christian prayer is characterized by the title "Lord", whether in the invitation to prayer ("The Lord be with you"), its conclusion ("through Christ our Lord") or the exclamation full of trust and hope: Maran atha ("Our Lord, come!") or Marana tha ("Come, Lord!") - "Amen Come Lord Jesus!"

The Greatest in the Kingdom (Upper and Middle Elementary)



September 23, 2018 – Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage Jesus corrects His disciples when they argue about who among them is the greatest. Jesus points to the innocent joy of a child as the model for entry into the Kingdom of God. In this lesson, students will consider what it means to be the greatest in the Kingdom and create rules for greatness in the Kingdom of God.

Directions

- A. First, have your students complete the **Before Reading the Gospel** chart from the **Who is the Greatest?** handout.
- B. Next, have students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions. You may have students answer them on their own or you may discuss them together as a class.
- C. Review and discuss the answers to the focus questions.
- D. Then, have students complete the **After Reading the Gospel** chart from the **Who is the Greatest?** handout.
- E. Conclude by having students work with a partner to create a list of three rules for membership in the Kingdom of God.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. Jesus taught about how He would have to suffer, die, and rise again on the third day. This is the second prediction of His Passion and Resurrection. He taught the same thing in last week's Gospel.
2. The disciples were arguing about which of them was the greatest.
3. "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all."

4. Jesus uses a child as an example, showing that the innocence, awe and wonder, joy, and peace of a child is more desirable in the Kingdom of God than ambition and pride. When we accept these qualities in others and in ourselves, we accept Christ, and we accept the Father.

Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 9:30-37: The Greatest in the Kingdom

Jesus and his disciples left from there and began a journey through Galilee, but he did not wish anyone to know about it. He was teaching his disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise.” But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him.

They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But

they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.” Taking a child, he placed it in the their midst, and putting his arms around it, he said to them, “Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me.”

Focus Questions

1. What was Jesus teaching His disciples about as they travelled to Galilee? How is this similar to what Jesus taught His disciples in last week’s Gospel? (Mark 8:27-35)
2. What were the disciples arguing about?
3. What is Jesus’ answer to the disciples’ argument?
4. How does Jesus use a child as an example?

Who Is the Greatest?

Directions: Before reading the Gospel for this week, complete the **Before Reading the Gospel** chart. Then, after reading the Gospel and answering the focus questions, complete the **After Reading the Gospel** chart.

Before Reading the Gospel...

With a partner, list 5 ways that a person might know that he or she has “made it” or is “the greatest”.

Without reading the Gospel yet, what do you think Jesus teaches about who is “the greatest” in the Kingdom of God?

After Reading the Gospel...

What were three things that were important to you when you were younger?

What are three things that are important to you today?

How have your priorities changed? Do you think they will change again as you grow and mature?

Based upon what you have learned and what you know about Jesus and being Catholic, write three rules for greatness in the Kingdom of God.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Temptations to Sin (Upper and Middle Elementary)



September 30, 2018 – Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week's Gospel passage Jesus says whoever is not against Him is for Him, while laying out a difficult teaching on the nature and consequences of sin. Jesus' teaching is simple in concept, but it is difficult to be His disciple in practice. In this lesson, students will explore Jesus' teaching on sin and analyze scenarios of sin to apply Jesus' teaching.

Directions

- A. Have students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions. You may have students answer them on their own or you may discuss them together as a class.
- B. Review and discuss the answers to the focus questions.
- C. Have students respond to the reflection question and complete the sin scenarios from the **For or Against** handout. You may choose to have student work individually or with a partner.
- D. Review and discuss the sin scenarios when finished.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. Jesus explains that anyone who performs a mighty deed in His name cannot at the same time speak ill of me. He says whoever is not against Him is for Him.
2. It is sinful to intentionally cause someone else to sin, even if you are not sinning directly yourself. The *Catechism* explains "we have a responsibility for the sins committed by others when we cooperate in them" (CCC 1868). Jesus says "it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea."
3. Gehenna is the consequence for our sins.
4. Jesus' teaching about sin reveals that the spiritual realities of Heaven and Hell and even angels and other supernatural beings are eternal and therefore even *more* "real" and lasting than the physical reality around us, which will fall away. Our souls are eternal and

will live forever. Hence, it is better for us to lose our lives in this world to avoid sin than it is to spend eternity in Hell because of our sin.

For or Against

Reflection Question:

Most students will answer that it is not easy to be a follower of Jesus. Sin is often very attractive (if sin were not attractive, no one would sin!) and it is difficult to resist the temptation to sin. Also, the world around us views things very differently and we could be made fun of for being a follower of Jesus. We still sin because we might not understand the consequences for sin or we ignore them completely, or in moments of weakness we get confused or give in to temptation. Hence, it is important to stay vigilant and protect ourselves against temptation.

Sin Scenarios:

A.

1. Dave's sin is stealing the sweater.
2. Dave should have put the sweater back and left the store. He could save up his money to return later and buy the sweater. Or he could decide he already has enough clothes—much more than most people in the world have—and he really doesn't need another sweater.

B.

1. Elizabeth sinned by calling Jane names. Helen is sinning too, by witnessing what happened, knowing it was wrong, but not acting to stop Elizabeth's bullying. This is a sin of omission.
2. Helen should have stood up to Elizabeth and asked her to stop calling Jane names. She could have made an effort to be especially kind to Jane so that others could see her and know what it looks like to be a friend. Helen and Jane could have stopped playing with Elizabeth and found something else to do.

C.

1. Both Jose and Carl are sinning. Jose is stealing money from his mom, while Carl, who is not directly committing a sin, is sinning by cooperating with Jose's sin. Both are also sinning by knowingly using stolen money to buy the movie tickets.
2. Carl should have refused to help Jose steal the money. He could have also suggested they find something else to do other than see the movie.

D.

1. Both Lindsay and Brianna are sinning. Lindsay sinned knowingly not going to Mass on Sunday when she was capable of going. Lindsay also is directly causing Brianna to sin by asking her lie for her.
2. Lindsay should have gone to Mass. She could have realized what she did was wrong and found a later Mass to go to. Given that she did not go, she should have told her parents and not lied, nor pressured her younger sister to lie.

Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48: Temptations to Sin

At that time, John said to Jesus, “Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us.” Jesus replied, “Do not prevent him. There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me. For whoever is not against us is for us. Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ, amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward.

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. If

your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off.

It is better for you to enter into life crippled than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, where ‘their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’”

Focus Questions

1. Why did Jesus tell John to not prevent the person from driving out demons in His name?
2. Do you think it is a sin to cause someone else to sin? What does Jesus teach about leading someone else to sin?
3. Gehenna is the ancient Jewish equivalent of hell. According to Jesus’ teachings, what is Gehenna the consequence of?
4. What does Jesus’ teaching about sin in this Gospel reveal to us about Heaven and Hell and the spiritual realities all around us?

For or Against

Directions: First, respond to the reflection question. Then, read each sin scenario and answer the questions.

Reflection Question:

Jesus boldly states “whoever is not against us is for us.” while in the next moment He gives a challenging teaching about the consequences of sin. Do you think it is easy to be “for” Jesus and follow Him? Why or why not? If the consequences for sin are so great, why do we still sin?

Sin Scenarios

A. Dave is shopping at a department store. He sees a sweater that he really likes. Dave cannot afford to buy the sweater. Looking around to see if there are any store employees watching, Dave puts the sweater in his shopping bag and walks out of the store without paying for the sweater.

1. How is Dave sinning in this situation?

2. What should Dave do?

B. Helen and her friends are playing on the playground. As they are playing, one of Helen's friends, Elizabeth, keeps calling another friend, Jane, a loser. It's obvious that Jane does not like being called this name. Helen knows that Jane doesn't like it, but is afraid if she says something to Elizabeth, she'll be called names too. Helen does not say anything.

1. Who is sinning in this situation? How?

2. What should Helen do?

C. Jose and Carl want to go see a movie, but don't have the money for tickets. Jose knows that his mom keeps some money in her purse. Jose asks Carl to keep watch for his mom at the doorway to her room while he takes the money from her purse. Carl agrees and stands at the doorway watching for Jose's Mom.

1. Who is sinning in this situation? How?

2. What should Carl do?

D. Lindsay is Brianna's older sister. Lindsay doesn't like going to Mass on Sunday because she says it's boring. One Sunday morning, the girls' parents had to work and told Lindsay to take Brianna with her to Mass. Lindsay agreed, but that morning, stayed home instead. Brianna had no way of getting to Mass on her own. Lindsay told Brianna that she had to lie to their

parents and tell them they went to Mass so she didn't get into trouble. Brianna reluctantly agreed not to tell.

1.) Who is sinning in this situation?

2.) What should Lindsay do?
