

God speaks to us in many ways, including through the Sunday Scripture readings. We hope the Family Connection provides useful background and activities to better understand the Sunday's Scripture readings, helping you to connect the Scripture to daily life in a meaningful way and grow in faith as a family.

First Reading

Exodus 22:20-26

The Lord teaches that compassion ought to be shown to the alien and to the poor.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 18:2-4,47,51

The Lord is our strength.

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10

Paul tells the Thessalonians that their conversion to the Lord has been an example to all believers.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 22:34-40

The Pharisees continue to test Jesus with a question about the greatest commandment.

Background on the Gospel Reading

This week's Gospel follows close behind the Gospel read last Sunday. It is the last of three questions put to Jesus by Jewish religious leaders who are trying to trick him into saying something that might get him arrested. This reminds us that the context for today's reading is the mounting tension between Jesus and the religious leaders in Jerusalem.

The Herodians and the Pharisees asked the first question, which was about taxes. The Sadducees asked the second question, which was about the Resurrection. The third question, considered in today's Gospel, is asked by a Pharisee who asks Jesus about the greatest of the commandments.

The question requires Jesus to interpret the Law of Moses. The Mosaic Law consists of the Ten Commandments and many additional rules, numbering over six hundred. Adherence to the Mosaic Law, for a devout Jew, is an expression of faithfulness to God's covenant with Israel. The ranking of the Commandments was regularly debated among the teachers of the Law.

Jesus answers the Pharisees' question with a two-fold summary. Jesus says that all of

the commandments can be summarized in two commandments: love God and love your neighbor. Both of these were central elements of the religious tradition Jesus learned from his Jewish community. Indeed these continue to be central aspects of contemporary Jewish religious understanding. Jesus' response to his questioners proposed an integral connection between these two aspects of the Jewish Law. Love of God finds its expression in our love for our neighbor.

Family Connection

Children learn about love from real, concrete examples witnessed in family life. We can help children to love God and love their neighbors by showing everyday acts of love, generosity, and kindness—our own expressions of our love for God. These acts, small and large, are the expression of what Jesus identified as the two greatest commandments: love God and love neighbor.

Make a poster together as a family. Write the words *Love God* in the center of the poster and write the words *Love Neighbor* near each of the four sides of the poster. Read together today's Gospel, Matthew 22:34-40. Talk about how Jesus taught us that our love for God is revealed in the love that we show to other people. On the poster, use pictures and words to show some of the ways that your family shows their love for other people. Pray together that your family will continue to express your love for God by loving others.

Pray the Act of Love

O my God, I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul, because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and I ask pardon of those whom I have injured.

Amen.