

Read

Isaiah 49:3, 5-6

Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-8,
8-9, 10

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

John 1:29-34

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 18, 2026



REFLECTION

The title “Lamb of God” refers to the paschal lamb that was offered as a sacrifice at Passover. This practice finds its origins in the Exodus (Exodus 12). Lambs were also sacrificed in the daily temple offering as an atonement for sins. John’s use of the title “Lamb of God” for Jesus transforms these traditions, unveiling Jesus as the Lamb who once and for all brings about redemption. His sacrifice promises a restoration of the sacred bond between humanity and the divine through the freedom gained by the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus, and his way of life, defies our expectations of power. Jesus, as the Lamb, chooses a path of self-sacrifice for humanity’s redemption. This challenges our conventional understanding of strength, revealing a divine love that triumphs not through force but through profound humility—a love that reshapes the very fabric of our existence. May we follow in the path of this Lamb, humbly offering ourselves to God and offering ourselves for others.



ACTION

What are the sins in your life right now that you need to bring to the Lamb of God? This week, spend some time in prayer making an examination of conscience to prepare yourself to go to the sacrament of reconciliation. There are many resources and videos online that can help with this (like the one suggested below). Be sure to also reflect on the specific people in your life that you need to forgive or that you need to seek forgiveness from. It might help to journal about these things—you can even bring your notes with you to the sacrament if you would like. If you aren’t able to go to reconciliation this week, be sure to plan to go soon.



Read and reflect with
“What Must I Do? The
Sacrament of Reconciliation
and Young Adults.”

<https://ltp.org/s/examination>

? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How does the imagery of Jesus as the Lamb of God deepen your understanding of the way Jesus forgives your sins?
- ❖ What are some areas of your life that need renewal and restoration?

Introduction to **ORDINARY TIME** during Winter



The Season

The brief period of Ordinary Time during winter seems like a liturgical breather between the seasons of Christmas and Lent. It is much more than this, however. While short in duration, this season bridges the incarnation with the ministry, teaching, passion, death, and resurrection of the Lord. Through key Gospel narratives, we hear the stories of Jesus' first miracles and teaching and we learn that not everyone is open to his message. These are important lessons for us, particularly teens, as we consider the call of discipleship and its consequences in our lives.

For many, the months of January and February are colder outside; the days are shorter, and the pace of life is perhaps a bit slower. It is appropriate, then, to take this winter time as a gift in which to reflect on our own encounter with Jesus, through reflection on the Sunday readings and prayerful consideration of our openness to the message of Christ.

Celebrating Ordinary Time during Winter with Teens

While the pace of winter may be a bit slower for some of us, for teens, classes, activities, athletics, and relationships continue in their normal routines. This produces an opportunity through which to help your teens develop a regular rhythm of Gospel reflection, prayer, and application of faith in their daily lives. Winter is the perfect time to encourage youth to take the Gospel to heart day by day, week by week. The Gospel passages for this season seem perfect to help teens to take on appropriate faith-driven attitudes and action in their lives.

Preparing the Liturgical Environment

Even though we return to green for this brief season, our environment will often be a bit more sparse, reflecting the shortness of daytime sun, and the dormancy of many plants. Consider using a few stems of evergreen or a small evergreen plant in your prayer environment, reminding your teens that Christ's life and love are eternal. Place a Bible alongside your decoration, and leave it open each week to the Sunday's Gospel passage.



January 18, 2026

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #64A

Isaiah 49:3, 5-6

Psalms 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

John 1:29-34

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Last Sunday, the Church celebrated the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, and we heard the account of that baptism from Matthew's Gospel. In today's reading from John's Gospel, we again hear about that baptism but from a different perspective. Here, John the Baptist recounts what he saw happening, instead of the event being described "in real time" as in Matthew. John the Baptist includes his description as part of his testimony to Jesus' identity as the Messiah. First, we hear John call Jesus the Lamb of God. These are familiar words, heard at every Mass as we prepare to receive the Eucharist. By the end of the Gospel, John calls Jesus something else: the Son of God. Both titles help us better understand Jesus' identity.

Q FOCUS: *John the Baptist points us to Jesus as the Messiah and helps us to better understand who Jesus is.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On January 21, the Church remembers St. Agnes, who was a martyr in the early Church (in about the third century). At this time, there was a great persecution of Christians in Rome. According to tradition, she refused to marry even though she had many suitors. She was condemned to death for holding fast to her Christian faith. On January 24, the

Church honors St. Francis de Sales. He lived during the time of the Protestant Reformation and worked tirelessly to articulate the true teachings of the Catholic faith, helping many Calvinists return to the Catholic Church. He wrote many things, especially for lay people, to help them live a life of holiness in their everyday circumstances. He is a Doctor of the Church.

Church Teaching Connection

"The Baptist cannot hold back the urgent desire to bear witness to Jesus and declares: 'I have seen and have borne witness' (v. 34). John saw something shocking, that is, the beloved Son of God in solidarity with sinners; and the Holy Spirit made him understand this unheard-of novelty, a true reversal. In fact, while in all religions it is man who offers and sacrifices something to God, in the event Jesus is God Who offers His Son for the salvation of humanity. John manifests his astonishment and his consent to this newness brought by Jesus, through a meaningful expression that we repeat each time in the Mass: 'Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world!' (v. 29)" (Pope Francis, Angelus Message, January 19, 2020).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

John 1:29-34

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, ‘A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.’ I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel.” John testified further, saying, “I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God.”

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

At the beginning of Ordinary Time, we hear today's Gospel that tells of the beginning of Jesus' ministry. John the Baptist prepared the people for Christ's coming through a baptism of repentance. Then he directs them to Jesus as the one who truly and completely saves them from their sins. He refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God.

► **When you hear this title of Jesus, what comes to mind? What does this tell us about Jesus?**

The title “Lamb of God” points us to the Old Testament, to the time of the Exodus. We know that during this time the Israelites in Egypt, who were about to flee from Pharaoh, were instructed by God to sacrifice a lamb, eat it, and put the blood of the lamb on their doors so that the angel of the Lord

who was carrying out the tenth plague (the death of all firstborn) would pass over their homes.

This allusion to the Old Testament Passover sacrifice foreshadows what Jesus will accomplish with his death and resurrection. Jesus is the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for the sins of the world, freeing people from sin so that they would be able to follow God. This connection is made even more apparent when, later in John's Gospel, the timeline of Jesus' crucifixion aligns with the timing for when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered for the temple sacrifice.

► **How does this understanding of Jesus as the Lamb of God deepen your understanding of Jesus' sacrifice and who Jesus is?**

Many of John the Baptist's words in today's readings about who Jesus is are not exactly clear. He seems to be speaking from a place of knowledge that no one else has. Still, he wants the people to attend to his words. He says “Behold”—Look! Pay attention! Listen to me! John testifies about all the things that have led him to know who Jesus is, explaining to his disciples how Jesus is the one they have been waiting for. By the end of the reading, we clearly hear the identity of Jesus: “He is the Son of God.”

► **How would you explain who Jesus is to someone?**

► **What are some ways we can make Jesus known to others in our daily lives?**

John knew that his purpose in life was not to bask in the important role he had been given to announce the coming of the Messiah. Instead, he knew that everything he did was supposed to point others to Christ and to prepare them for their encounter with him. As followers of Christ, we are called to do the same.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 120.

Jesus is the Lamb of God, the one who will be sacrificed to save others from sin.

John the Baptist recognized that his purpose was to point others toward Christ.

By our daily witness of faith, we should also point others toward Christ.

Act on the Word

Behold!

For this activity, you will need to prepare ahead of time a list of scenes that teens will be able to depict. See the activity for more details.

Before your gathering, create a list of scenes that the teens will be able to depict in small groups, without using props. Scenes could include things like a pyramid, a doorframe, a table and chairs, the inside of a car, a cruise ship, and an artist painting. Also, before beginning, clear a large open space that allows the teens to move around freely.

Explain the activity to the teens, using the following description. The game begins with the young people walking around the room, mingling with one another as they wait for instruction. You can even play music while they are waiting. When the catechist or youth minister (the "leader") feels the teens have mingled enough, he or she will stop the music and call out a number, like "Three." When they hear the number, the teens should immediately get into groups of three. Once they are in groups with the correct number of people, the leader will call out a scene using the format: "Behold! A . . ." For example, "Behold! An artist painting a picture!" The groups will have to quickly assemble themselves into that scene (the teens can talk with one another as they figure out the best way to portray the scene). The leader will then walk around and look at everyone's scenes. The leader should pick a winning group, the one that gave the best representation, and

then choose someone from that group to be the new leader. (Alternatively, the catechist or youth minister can remain the leader throughout the game without changing the leader.) Once a new leader has been chosen (if desired), teens will once again start mingling until a new number and scene are called out by the leader. The number of people that are in a group should correspond to the number of people you think will be needed to complete the scene. For example, a table and chairs might only need three people whereas a cruise ship might need a larger-sized group.

Once several rounds of play have occurred, have the teens reflect on the different aspects of the activity. How did it feel to be waiting to hear the number and the instruction? What were they thinking as they obeyed the direction of the leader? How important was it to work together to accomplish the task? Remind them that it is important for us on our journey of discipleship to be attentive to what God is saying to us, through the Scriptures, through Mass, and through others. John the Baptist called attention to the coming of Jesus and we also should pay attention to where we see Christ's presence in our lives.

Closing Prayer

O God,
you sent your Son into the world
as the Lamb of God who was
sacrificed for our salvation.
Strengthen our witness of him
so that others may come to recognize
the depth of divine love that you have
for all peoples.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.