

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe • Year A • November 22, 2020

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—EZEKIEL 34:11–12, 15–17

In this prophetic writing, God assumes the role of the shepherd. The responsibility to evaluate sheep is a major theme in this passage.

SECOND READING—1 CORINTHIANS 15:20–26, 28

Paul rebuts any denial of Christ's Resurrection and the resurrection of our bodies. As the first fruits, Christ holds out the promise that others will become as he is.

GOSPEL READING—MATTHEW 25:31–46

This section concerning the Son of Man and Last Judgment includes a parable about sheep and goats. The point is intended to be clear: All will be judged according to their acts of kindness.

Church Teaching

In the light of Christ who is our judge, how are we to understand the images about the end times? These images are often difficult to decipher with modern sensibilities. Yet the early Church expressed faith in God through such apocalyptic imagery because of her members enduring trials, persecution, and martyrdom. The message about the fulfillment of God's kingdom points to our final destination, which is firmly anchored in Christ. The Church helps us to stay alert. We are prepared through her Sacraments as we await our own final hour. All the hope of our hearts' desire is found in Christ who is our King.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1038, 1040, 1048

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 156–157

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 214–215

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a white cloth, a candle, and an icon of Christ the King.

Discover

Invite everyone to reflect on today's liturgy quietly for 1–2 minutes. Then have participants respond to these questions:

- ◆ *How would you describe the tone of today's liturgy?*
- ◆ *What changes, if any, did you notice in the celebration of the liturgy?*
- ◆ *What is the message from today's readings?*

Deepen

Proclaim the First Reading (Ezekiel 34:11–12, 15–17). Then discuss the following points:

- ◆ God is the shepherd, who rescues, gives us rest, and seeks us out when we stray.
- ◆ God knows each of us by name, heals us when we are sick, and restores us to new life.
- ◆ We are God's sheep in need of a shepherd.

Pray

Slowly and reflectively pray the Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 23:1–2, 2–3, 5–6). Encourage each person to repeat each phrase silently in their hearts.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Sunday Word

Ezekiel 34:11–12, 15–17

Psalms 23:1–2, 2–3, 5–6

1 Corinthians 15:20–26, 28

Matthew 25:31–46

Welcome

Welcome everyone who is present, including sponsors, team members, and spouses who join the group. Invite one or two people to share some of the key points from the Dismissal Session.

Engage

1. Proclaim the Gospel (Matthew 25:31–46).
Discuss, asking the following questions:
 - ◆ *What images did you hear in this Gospel passage?*
 - ◆ *How would you describe the Last Judgment?*
 - ◆ *Do you fear or welcome the Last Judgment? Why?*
2. On newsprint or whiteboard, brainstorm all the ways in which we can:
 - ◆ Feed the hungry with food for the body and the soul.
 - ◆ Give drink to those who thirst from their lips and their hearts.
 - ◆ Welcome those who are strangers, those who are lonely, and those who are forgotten.
 - ◆ Clothe the naked and protect the vulnerable.
 - ◆ Care for the sick, comforting the illness infecting their bodies and spirits.
 - ◆ Visit the imprisoned, the homebound, and those marginalized by society.

Explore

1. Highlight key points from the participant handout's Church Teaching: Judge the Living and Dead, using these points:
 - ◆ The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe celebrates the belief that Jesus Christ is Lord of Heaven and Earth.
 - ◆ Christ is present in a mysterious way on Earth in the Church. The Church guides and directs us as we continue to grow in grace, wisdom, and age until we meet God at the end of time.
 - ◆ We all wait for the coming of Christ at the end of time. Then he will judge the works and hearts of all.
 - ◆ Christ will judge in light of the Gospel message; he comes not to condemn, but that all might have life and be saved from eternal death.
 - ◆ How we have lived our lives will be our judgment. Christ, who is the Truth, will reveal the truth of each person's relationship with God.
 - ◆ In the end, those who lived righteously will have eternal life with God in Heaven.
2. Highlight the Key Terms and Voices of Faith sections.

Apply

1. Invite the catechumens and candidates to complete these statements, and share responses with a partner:
From the prayer, discussion, and study for this Sunday, I understand the Church's teaching to be . . .
I am challenged to live the message of this Sunday by . . .
2. Review the Corporal Works of Mercy. Invite participants to discuss one way in which they can practice one of these Works of Mercy.

Pray

Prayerfully recite the Nicene Creed.