

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA  
First Sunday of Advent • Year B • November 29, 2020

## Catechist Preparation

### Scripture

**FIRST READING**—ISAIAH 63:16B-17, 19B; 64:2-7

This passage sees the exiles returning but not yet restoring the Temple. The prophet laments this fact and pleads with God to “rend the heavens and come down”, that is, act to rebuild the holy place.

**SECOND READING**—1 CORINTHIANS 1:3-9

This marks the beginning of Saint Paul’s letter to a fractured and difficult community. They are not behaving as they should, as they wait for the coming of the Lord in glory. He begins by thanking them before sternly tackling tough issues.

**GOSPEL READING**—MARK 13:33-37

This passage concludes a section in Mark on the end times. Since no one knows the precise moment of the end, Jesus counsels his disciples to be always alert as they wait.

### Church Teaching

The season of Advent marks the beginning of the Church’s liturgical year. On this First Sunday of Advent, our attention is tuned in to the Scriptures by which we celebrate a new year of grace. We too are called to be alert and watchful for the coming of Christ. He is our hope, the firm foundation of our lives in a shifting worldly landscape of sin and evil. Believers truly celebrate the wonders of our Redemption and the hope of a world made new in Jesus Christ.

### Additional Background

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 669, 1042, 2749

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:** pages 157-158

**Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 133-134, 216

## Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth, a candle, and an Advent wreath.

### Discover

1. Invite everyone to reflect on today’s liturgy quietly for 1-2 minutes. Then have participants respond to these questions:
  - ◆ *What changes, if any, did you notice in the celebration of the liturgy?*
  - ◆ *How would you describe the tone of today’s liturgy?*
  - ◆ *What is the message from today’s readings?*
2. Invite the group to name images and/or phrases they recall from the liturgy. For example:
  - ◆ Harden not your hearts
  - ◆ Rend the heavens and come down
  - ◆ Ear has not heard, eye has not seen
  - ◆ Work of your hands

### Deepen

Proclaim the Gospel: Mark 13:33-37. Then discuss the following points:

- ◆ Waiting for the Master’s return, yet not knowing when he will return
- ◆ Need to be alert and ready while not knowing the precise time for the Second Coming
- ◆ The attitude and disposition needed to be always prepared for what is coming

### Pray

Use the prayer found on the Participant’s Handout.

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## Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

### Sunday Word

Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7

Psalms 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Mark 13:33-37

### 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. Discuss the season of Advent as a time of preparation by using these points:
  - ◆ The color purple indicates a time of preparation and anticipation of three comings of Christ
    - As a remembering of his Birth
    - At the end of our lives
    - At the end of all time (Second Coming)
  - ◆ The Advent wreath is a symbol of rebirth (circle), everlasting (evergreen), and period of time (four burning candles).
2. Invite two or three parishioners to share how they celebrate the season of Advent at home.

### Explore

1. Highlight key points from the Participant Handout's Church Teaching: Awaiting the Kingdom, using these points:
  - ◆ The world we live in is not perfect; we live in a fallen world as the result of Original Sin.
  - ◆ We profess that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, saved us through his life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension. We have hope because this world has been redeemed in Christ.
  - ◆ In Baptism, we are adopted children of God and heirs of Heaven.

- ◆ Advent not only celebrates the first coming of Christ in history—Christmas—it also celebrates the Second Coming of Christ at the end of all time.
  - ◆ Advent is a season of great expectation. At the Last Supper, Jesus promised that we would not be abandoned. He promised the gift of the Holy Spirit, who would be with us until he returns to gather all believers to himself. In the Church we experience the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
  - ◆ This time of waiting for Christ's Second Coming is not a passive time. Rather, we are called to be active in proclaiming the Good News of Salvation in Jesus Christ. We are called to be 'in' the world but not 'of' the world.
  - ◆ We are called to live as people of hope, grounded firmly in Christ Jesus, our Lord, Savior, and Redeemer.
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. Invite catechumens and candidates, with their sponsors, to discuss one way in which they can keep the season of Advent in their home.

### Pray

Sing or play a recording of the Responsorial Psalm.