

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA  
Second Sunday of Advent • Year B • December 6, 2020

## Catechist Preparation

### Scripture

**FIRST READING**—ISAIAH 40:1-5, 9-11

In this section, Isaiah proclaims that Israel's exile is soon coming to an end. It is not just a message meant exclusively for the exiles but for the whole world, as a Revelation of the great power of God at work to save his people.

**SECOND READING**—2 PETER 3:8-14

Peter explains the traditions surrounding the end times. He develops the argument that believers must stand prepared, placing hope in God, versus the unbelievers who place their hopes in this passing world.

**GOSPEL READING**—MARK 1:1-8

This Gospel account begins by introducing Jesus through John the Baptist and moves very quickly to the Lord's public ministry. John's life and preaching are to direct the believer to encounter Jesus.

### Church Teaching

God unceasingly draws all men and women to himself. That some actively ignore God's call and others are passively indifferent does not mean that the activity of God to draw us to himself ceases. It simply means that some people choose another direction for their lives. By exercising our free will, we are able to choose or reject God. We do have the ability to accept and respond to God's call. His graced call, issuing forth out of divine love, continues to hold us in existence. This is a humbling understanding, for none of us can live without God's love because his love enables and sustains our very being.

### Additional Background

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 27, 31, 153-154

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:** pages 2-3

**Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 2, 6, 25

## 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 with the two purple candles lighted (if allowed).

### Discover

- Invite everyone to reflect on today's liturgy quietly for 1-2 minutes. Then have participants close their eyes and listen to these phrases:
  - ◆ Comfort my people
  - ◆ Speak tenderly to Jerusalem
  - ◆ A voice cries out
  - ◆ Prepare the way of the Lord
  - ◆ Fear not; here is your God
  - ◆ In his arms he gathers the lambs
- Now invite the group to respond to the following questions:
  - ◆ *What thoughts or feelings do these words and phrases evoke in you?*
  - ◆ *What is the image of God you have now?*
  - ◆ *How does God care for his people?*

### Deepen

Proclaim the First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11. Then discuss the following questions:

- ◆ *What is the "way of the Lord" for which we are called to prepare?*
- ◆ *What changes would you have to make in order to prepare the way of the Lord?*
- ◆ *What costs are you willing to pay to be involved in such changes?*

### Pray

Sing or play a recording of the chant: "Prepare the Way of the Lord" (Berthier/GIA Publications).

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## Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

### Sunday Word

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Psalm 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14

2 Peter 3:8-14

Mark 1:1-8

### 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. Elicit prior knowledge of the participants by asking them what they already know about John the Baptist and his message.
2. Proclaim the Gospel: Mark 1:1-18. Then discuss the following questions:
  - ◆ *Knowing that some people who sought out Jesus were first followers of John the Baptist, how can we seek out Jesus?*
  - ◆ *Knowing that some people who listened to John were preparing for the Messiah, how can we recognize Jesus as the Messiah?*
  - ◆ *How are we called to be a "voice in the desert" to announce Christ to the world?*

### Explore

1. Highlight key points from the Participant Handout's Church Teaching: Desire for God, using these points:
  - ◆ Our happiness will only be complete when we are with God in eternity.
  - ◆ God placed a longing within each of us that only he can fill.
  - ◆ From the beginning of time, humanity has searched for God. The Scriptures tell the story of the Covenant.

- ◆ God established the Covenant with Abraham: "I will be your God and you will be my people."
- ◆ God invites all people into the covenantal relationship with him. Each person is free to respond to his invitation. Some people choose to ignore it, others are indifferent to it, and still others refuse it. Hopefully most will answer the call of God to be loved and to love.
- ◆ God is persistent and readily welcomes every person who seeks him. Those of us who have said yes to God are then asked to go out and announce God's call to others. In a particular way, part of God's plan is dependent upon his faithful spreading of the Gospel message so others may encounter Christ.

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 participants to think of someone who has helped them to know God. Have them ponder the manner in which that person helped them. If that person is living, invite them to contact that person this week to thank them for their witness.

### Pray

Sing or play a recording of today's Responsorial Psalm.