

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Fourth Sunday of Advent • Year B • December 20, 2020

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—2 SAMUEL 7:1-5, 8B-12, 14A, 16

No longer at war with surrounding nations, King David has enough leisure to consider building a temple to house the Ark of the Covenant. Yet God has other plans for David.

SECOND READING—ROMANS 16:25-27

These verses conclude Paul's letter. They form a final doxology or hymn of praise to God. The Lord alone makes our faith firm and unshakable. God graces us so that we might be living witnesses to his Good News.

GOSPEL READING—LUKE 1:26-38

In this passage, a radical activity of God is being announced. A virgin birth will take place through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus enters into the world to be acknowledged as the Son of God. He is the kingly inheritor of David's royal line, the fulfillment of God's plan of Salvation.

Church Teaching

God's love animates us from within, welling up in our hearts because the incarnate Word transforms our humanity. Following Jesus, our Lord, becomes a matter of our love growing deeper and wider because of Christ's love growing within us. We love because God first loved us. His divine love is made visible in the person of Jesus Christ.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 461, 464, 469

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 81-83

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 86-89

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth, a candle, and an Advent wreath with all four candles lighted (if allowed).

Discover

1. Invite everyone to reflect on today's liturgy quietly for 1-2 minutes. Then have participants respond to the following questions individually:
 - ◆ *What word or phrase would you use to describe the mood of today's liturgy?*
 - ◆ *In what way does today convey a sense of anticipation?*
 - ◆ *What is the message from today's readings? Who would be challenged or consoled by this message?*
2. Now pair up participants and have them share their responses to the previous set of questions. Invite volunteers to voice their sharing with the whole group.

Deepen

Have participants discuss their experience of anticipating a new event or recall an experience of fulfillment, such as a graduation, day of the wedding, or first child. Then ask:

- ◆ *What were your thoughts and feelings as the day drew near?*
- ◆ *How did you prepare?*

Pray

Sing or listen to a recording of the Responsorial Psalm.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Sunday Word

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

Psalm 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38

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. Invite participants to close their eyes and reflect on the Gospel as you proclaim John 1:6-8, 19-28.
2. Then have them consider Mary's words, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Ask these questions:
 - ◆ *How would you describe Mary's faith in God?*
 - ◆ *How is Mary an example for us?*
 - ◆ *In what ways can you trust in God that all things in your life may be done according to his Word?*

Explore

1. Highlight key points from the Participant Handout's Church Teaching: The Incarnation, using these points:
 - ◆ After the Fall of Adam and Eve, God promised that he would send a Savior.
 - ◆ God established a special relationship (the Covenant) with Abraham and Sarah. He said that the Messiah would be one of their descendants.
 - ◆ Christmas celebrates the coming of the Messiah; Jesus, Son of God, is born in Bethlehem.

- ◆ The Incarnation is a central tenet of our faith; it begins the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem where he suffered, died, and rose on the third day.
- ◆ All things are possible with God.
- ◆ Jesus, the Word of God, came to show us just how much God loves us. God so loves us that God's very Son came to live among us. Jesus came to save us and to redeem us from sin.
- ◆ Jesus, the Son of God, teaches us how to live. He is the example of God's love and how we are called to live the Commandment of love: love of God and love of neighbor.
- ◆ Jesus, the Word of God, opens the way for us and invites us into relationship with God. Through Baptism, we become the adopted children of God and heirs of Heaven. In the Eucharist, Jesus gives us himself as spiritual food for the journey.

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 one or two sponsors to share their understanding of the words of the Nicene Creed that profess belief in the Incarnation.

Pray

Pray the Nicene Creed.