

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Feast of the Baptism of the Lord • Year B • January 10, 2021

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ISAIAH 55:1-11

God's invitation to come to the water of life is for all. Salvation is offered, freely and without price, to all people and to all nations who seek him and who call upon his name.

SECOND READING—1 JOHN 5:1-9

Through faith in Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, we will know victory over the world. We must remain faithful in keeping God's Commandments, most especially the Commandment to love.

GOSPEL—MARK 1:7-11

John the Baptist recognizes Jesus' messiahship but gives in to his request for baptism. The voice from heaven and descent of the dove are signs of divine approval. A theme central to Matthew's Gospel is that prophecies of the Messiah are fulfilled in Jesus.

Church Teaching

Through the waters of Baptism, God fills us with new life as his very own adopted children. From all who are baptized in water and the Holy Spirit, God forms one people, united in his Son, Jesus Christ. Set free from sin, hearts filled with the Spirit of God's love, Christians live in peace. This is not simply a passive peace, but an active doing of the Word, a witnessing to the truth and life of Christ, spreading the Good News of Jesus to people everywhere.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1234, 1265-1267

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 195-197

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 188-190

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Prepare the space by setting chairs in a circle. On a small table place a white cloth and a bowl of water, the Oil of Catechumens and Sacred Chrism, and a baptismal candle. When everyone has gathered, sing a Christmas carol. (This feast officially ends the Christmas season).

Discover

1. Ask the following questions, and invite the group to reflect on them quietly before sharing their responses with one or two other people:

What word, phrase, or image from the readings stays with you?

2. After several participants have shared their reflection with the large group, ask:

Who would be consoled with the words of today's liturgy? Why?

Who would be challenged with the words of today's liturgy? Why?

3. Gather some responses from everyone.

Deepen

1. Invite all present to reflect quietly for a few minutes and then share with another person:

A time when you were present for Baptism. When was it? Who was baptized? What have you observed or heard about the meaning of Baptism?

In what way(s) do you experience God saying to you, "You are my beloved son (daughter); with you I am well pleased"?

Why do you think Baptism is important?

What do you already understand about Baptism?

2. Summarize the key points that arise in their sharing. If necessary, offer some clarification concerning the meaning and importance of Baptism.

Pray

Use the Prayer of Blessing, RCIA 96B.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Sunday Word

Isaiah 55:1-11 1 John 5:1-9
Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6 Mark 1:7-11

Welcome

Begin by welcoming everyone who is present. If possible, go to the parish baptismal font and ask everyone to notice the setting. While standing around the font or pool, invite the participants to reflect on what this place conveys to them about the meaning of Baptism.

Engage

1. Begin by rephrasing one or two questions from the Dismissal Session, and invite the group to share in small groups. Then ask several volunteers to share their reflections with the large group.
2. Proclaim the First Reading—Isaiah 55:1-11.
 - ◆ Invite participants to name aloud what they thirst for, what others thirst for, and what the world is thirsting for today.
 - ◆ Remind them that their journey in the RCIA process will lead them to the water of life in Baptism, or to the renewal of their baptismal promises.
3. Proclaim the Second Reading—1 John 5:1-9.
 - ◆ Highlight the reminder in this reading to love God and to keep God's Commandments.
 - ◆ Invite participants to listen as you read aloud the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20:2-3, 7-17) and the Great Commandment (see Matthew 22:37, 39).
4. Proclaim the Gospel—Mark 1:7-11.
 - ◆ Share that an account of Jesus' baptism is found in all three synoptic Gospels.
 - ◆ All who are baptized in the waters of Baptism become adopted daughters and sons of God.
5. Invite them to share with another person one or two points that they want to remember from the readings for this Sunday.

Explore

1. Offer a presentation including the following points:
 - ◆ Baptism is both gift and responsibility. In Baptism, we are joined to Christ. We are commissioned to be the hands and feet of Christ so we can carry on his mission to go out to the world and proclaim the Good News of Salvation.
 - ◆ Baptism of an infant is based on the faith and the promise of the parents that their child will be raised in the faith.
 - ◆ For an adult, faith must be professed freely.
 - ◆ Baptism is to be celebrated only once.
2. Highlight key points from Catholic Teaching: Baptism and Mission. Also highlight the Key Terms and Voices of Faith.

Apply

1. Explain that Baptism makes one a member of the Church with rights and responsibilities. The Catholic Church recognizes any Baptism that is performed with water and the Trinitarian formula, and is performed with the intention of doing what the Church does (no "accidental" or "mock" baptisms). If there are candidates present, ask them to share about their own Baptism.
2. Encourage the catechumens and candidates to complete these statements:

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 . . .
3. Ask the sponsor to bring his/her catechumen or candidate to a parish celebration of Baptism and talk about it afterwards.

Pray

Invite the participants to reflect on the purity and beauty of water. Share the prayer of thanksgiving from RCIA 222D, using the response "Blessed be God." Omit the concluding prayer. Simply say "Amen."