

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Second Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy) • Year B • April 7, 2024

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ACTS 4:32-35

This snapshot of the early Church portrays the ideal community formed by the grace of God.

SECOND READING—1 JOHN 5:1-6

This passage focuses on the theme that faith forms the foundation of love. From believing flows our loving, and from our loving flows our righteous deeds.

GOSPEL—JOHN 20:19-31

The Risen Lord appears in the midst of the disciples' confusion, suffering, and fear. He brings joy to them, joy that wells up within them in the use of Christ's first word to the assembly: "Peace!"

Church Teaching

When the bishop, as the main celebrant, greets the assembly in the Introductory Rites of the Mass, it is no accident that his first words echo that of the Risen Lord: "Peace be with you!" Peace is the Lord Jesus' farewell gift to his Church. The chief steward of the mysteries of Christ, the bishop, has as his charge to promote peace, to work for peace tirelessly within and outside of the Church.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1424, 1941, 1990, 2442

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 332–333

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 480–482

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a white cloth, a blooming plant, a candle, and an open Bible.

Discover

Gather participants' responses to today's liturgy with these or similar questions:

What did you observe as you walked into church today?

How was the beginning of this liturgy different from Ordinary Time?

What was the mood of today's liturgy?

What words or phrases stay with you?

After some time of quiet, invite them to share their responses with the large group.

Deepen

Discuss the activities of the early Church described in the First Reading, Acts 4:32-35.

- ◆ The community of believers was of one heart and mind.
- ◆ They had everything in common.
- ◆ There was no needy person among them.
- ◆ The members were taken care of by their fellow members.

Describe the similarities and the differences in the spirit with which we go about our activities.

Pray

Use the Collect from today's liturgy.

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Second Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy) • Year B • April 7, 2024

Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Sunday Word

Acts 4:32-35

Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

1 John 5:1-6

John 20:19-31

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, John 20:19-31. Ask each person to reflect quietly on the following questions and then share with one other person (preferably the sponsor).
2. Consider a time when you acted as Thomas did—you wanted to see with your own eyes and you doubted the testimony of others.

What makes you doubt?

When do you doubt?

How do you resolve your doubts?

What does it take for you to “have faith”?

Do you need proof before you believe?

3. Explain that one of the signs of a community of one mind and heart is peace. Ask:

What would our world be like if we were at peace?

What brings peace?

What destroys peace?

In what way are we called to be instruments of peace?

Explore

1. Discuss the Church’s teachings on peace using the following points:
 - ◆ Peace is more than the absence of conflict. Peace results when there is harmony between people and nations, when the well-being of others is a priority.
 - ◆ *Shalom*, the Hebrew word for peace, best describes total harmony with God, nature, humanity, and self that issues forth justice.
 - ◆ Jesus is the fulfillment of the Covenant between God and people. This peace is the gift of the Risen Christ to his Church.
 - ◆ The Church through the ages has spoken out strongly for peace:
 - Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*
 - Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*
 - The USCCB, *The Challenge of Peace*
 - ◆ Peace in our families, our communities, and our world is based on respect for all human life.
 - ◆ As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to work for justice and peace in all aspects of our lives.
2. Highlight key points from participant handout’s Church Teaching: The Challenge of Peace. Also highlight the Key Terms and Voices of Faith.

Apply

1. 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 . . .

2. Explain the Sign of Peace from the Mass.

Pray

Exchange a Sign of Peace.