

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA  
Fifth Sunday of Easter • Year B • April 28, 2024

## Catechist Preparation

### Scripture

**FIRST READING**—ACTS 9:26-31

The end of verse 31 describes the Church as “[l]iving in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit,” and increasing in number. The first part of verse 31 describes the Church as having peace. Luke suggests elsewhere (see Luke 1:79, 2:14, 7:50, and Acts 10:36) that peace is a premier quality associated with the Good News of Christ.

**SECOND READING**—1 JOHN 3:18-24

Verse 23 offers to the reader the core of the entire letter. Christians must do (or act upon) only two things: believe in the name of Jesus, who is the Christ, and love one another. Belief and love are really all that this first letter of John speaks about.

**GOSPEL**—JOHN 15:1-8

In using the vine imagery, Jesus communicates to his followers that in their relationship with him, they will experience the union that permeates Jesus’ relationship with his heavenly Father. If they abide in Christ, following his Commandments, their loving mutuality will shine forth in great fruitfulness, producing a complete joyfulness.

### Church Teaching

God does not lose or forsake any of his children. That is why Christ was sent from the Father to save and redeem us. That is also why the Church is constituted in Christ to be his Body on earth, continuing his work to bring all people into the embrace of the Father through the work of the Holy Spirit.

### Additional Background

**Links:** Fear of the Lord  
Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy  
The Great Commandment

**Music:** “We Are Many Parts”, M. Haugen, GIA, OCP, WLP  
“I Am the Vine”, S. Warner, WLP

## Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

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

### Discover

Ask the participants to share one word or phrase in the Liturgy of the Word that stays with them. Point to the plant. Discuss with them

- The need of the leaves to be connected to the vine
- The job of the vine
- The elements needed to keep the whole plant alive
- How one leaf can be used to start a new plant (each leaf contains the needed information to generate new life)

### Deepen

Proclaim the Gospel, John 15:1-8. In quiet, encourage participants to reflect on these questions:

*What is the message of the Gospel?*

*What is our connection to the “vine”? To the “vine grower”?*

*In what way is this Gospel a challenge to you? To the world?*

*In what way is it a comfort to you? To the world?*

*What does this “I am” statement say about Jesus’ relationship to the Father? His relationship to us?*

After a few minutes, invite them to share their reflections in a small group. Summarize the sharing. Place the vine plant in the center of the group and slowly and reflectively proclaim the Gospel again.

Ask:

*When you hear the words, “ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you,” how do you feel?*

*What would you ask for? Why?*

*How do you remain in Jesus? How can you strengthen that bond?*

Pause for a few minutes of quiet time for reflection.

### Pray

Use the prayer from the participant handout.

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## Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

### Sunday Word

Acts 9:26-31

Psalm 22:26-28, 31-32

1 John 3:18-24

John 15:1-8

### 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

Discuss with the group

- The various ways in which we use the word *love*
- The meaning of the word *love*
- The relationship of the word *love* to one's actions

Proclaim the Second Reading, 1 John 3:18-24. Discuss

- “Love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action”
- Our understanding of what it means to believe in Jesus Christ
- Jesus’ Commandment to love one another as he has loved us
- “All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them”
- The challenges to love in truth and action
- The obstacles encountered in our attempts to be faithful in love and truth.

Summarize the discussion.

### Explore

Discuss the following points:

- The Church is the People of God brought together through the saving action of Jesus Christ.

- The Church is that gathering place where all men and women are called by God to rediscover their unity and Salvation in Christ.
- In Baptism we become part of the People of God, the Body of Christ, the Church.
- The Church has both human and divine characteristics.
  - It is composed of those who confess faith in Christ
  - Those called by Christ are animated by and gifted with the Spirit.
- The Church exists to carry on the mission of Christ.
- The Church is the instrument of Christ.
- The mission is to go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News of Salvation for all.

Highlight key points from the participant handout’s Catholic Teaching: The Church as the Body of Christ. Also highlight the Key Terms and Voices of Faith.

### Apply

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...*

Discuss the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy as ways the Body of Christ lives the Commandment of love and truth.

Invite the catechumens and candidates and their sponsors to choose one Work of Mercy to do this week.

### Pray

Sing or play a recording of “We Are Many Parts,” M. Haugen.