

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Easter Sunday • Year B • March 31, 2024

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ACTS 10:34A, 37-43

In this passage, Peter proclaims the Good News—Jesus' life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. He proclaims this Good News emphasizing the real, physical nature of the Resurrection.

SECOND READING—COLOSSIANS 3:1-4
OR 1 CORINTHIANS 5:6B-8

Both alternative selections for the Epistle reading declare that the Resurrection provides believers the grounding for their new life in Christ.

GOSPEL—JOHN 20:1-9

A key element in this account is the role of the beloved disciple. He outruns Peter to the tomb yet allows Peter (the "head" of the Apostles) to enter first. The figures of Peter and the beloved disciple are not in competition with one another. But it is the latter who comes more quickly to discern and to believe that Jesus is risen.

Church Teaching

The empty tomb, significant as it is, is not the only basis for Christian belief in the Resurrection of Jesus. The grave could have been robbed of its corpse, as Mary initially assumes.

John's account, like the other Gospels, shows that the disciples do not expect the Resurrection, are surprised by it, and find it hard to believe until the Risen Lord himself appears to them. Our own faith in Christ's Resurrection rests upon their witness to it and upon its saving effect in our own lives.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 640, 642, 645

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 94–96

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 126–129

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a white cloth, a white candle, and an item that reflects the environment of the church (for example, a spring flower).

Discover

1. Invite participants to share what they observed as they entered the church on this Easter Sunday. Then ask the following questions and invite the group to reflect on them quietly before sharing their responses with one or two other people:
What did you see or hear in the Liturgy of the Word?
What word, phrase, or image from the readings stays with you?
2. Invite several participants to share their reflections with the large group.

Deepen

1. Proclaim the Gospel, John 20:1-9.
2. Encourage participants to put themselves in the place of Mary of Magdala. Then encourage them to put themselves in the place of Peter and the other disciple. Ask:
How would you have responded to the empty tomb?
To whom would you go to tell about the empty tomb?
Why?

Pray

Use a musical setting of today's Responsorial Psalm:
"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad."

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Scripture

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

John 20:1-9

Welcome

Welcome everyone who is present, including sponsors, team members, and spouses who join the group. Begin with a discussion of their memories of Easter. Explore what they already know of the meaning of Easter.

Engage

1. Proclaim the First Reading, Acts 10:34a, 37-43. Then discuss what Saint Peter proclaims about Jesus' life.
2. Ask the group:
 - What is the message for Easter?*
 - Who would be challenged by this message and why?*
 - Who would be consoled by this message and why?*

Explore

1. Discuss the Gospel message about Easter using the following points:
 - ◆ Jesus has conquered sin and death forever, just as he foretold.
 - ◆ We are called to believe in the Resurrection as the mystery of God's love.
 - ◆ The Resurrection is a real event; it is foundational to our faith in the Paschal Mystery.
 - ◆ Jesus appears to the disciples to eat and drink with them to prove the resurrection of his body.
 - ◆ In his Resurrection, we come to know more fully the promise of eternal life.

2. Highlight key points from participant handout's Church Teaching: The Resurrection of Christ. 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. The whole of the Easter season is a celebration of the Resurrection of Christ. We are called to sing "Alleluia, he is risen!" Invite the catechumens/candidates and their sponsors to think of ways they will celebrate these fifty days of Easter.

Pray

Pray the Apostles' Creed.