

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA  
First Sunday of Lent • Year B • February 18, 2024

## Catechist Preparation

### Scripture

**FIRST READING**—GENESIS 9:8-15

The flood is God's judgment upon a sinful humanity corrupting all creation, hence the destruction of all life but righteous Noah and his family. God's promise to Noah shows divine mercy and faithfulness beyond the flood.

**SECOND READING**—1 PETER 3:18-22

The theme of this passage is stated immediately in verse 18. Christ's suffering draws all to God. The Greek original for the verb in "lead you" (*prosagein*) was also used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament for bringing sacrifice to the Temple.

**GOSPEL**—MARK 1:12-15

The forty days Christ spends in the wilderness echoes the forty days of the Flood and Israel's forty years in the desert. It also parallels the forty days of fasting by Moses.

### Church Teaching

In Lent the Church enters the retreat-like season of forty days in preparation for Easter. Each year of the Lectionary cycle highlights a different aspect of this preparation. In Year B, the present year, the Church meditates on the theme of covenant and renewal of covenant. The First Reading of each Sunday of this Lent presents the development of the Covenants of the old dispensation, from Noah (Lent 1) to Abraham (Lent 2) to Moses (Lent 3) to Israel's infidelity and punishment (Lent 4) to the promise of a new Covenant (Lent 5). In all of this, we see the commitment of God to a humanity that he loves.

### Additional Background

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 56, 59, 62, 66, 1094

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:** pages 183–184

**Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 7–8, 252–253

## Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth, a candle, a dish of ashes or sand, and a space to place the Lectionary or Bible.

### Discover

Invite everyone to reflect on today's liturgy quietly for one to two minutes. Then have participants respond to the following questions:

*What does the environment of the church say about the Lenten season?*

*How might you bring a sense of Lent into your daily living?*

### Deepen

1. Proclaim the First Reading, Genesis 9:8-15. Then discuss using these questions:

*What is the message of the First Reading?* (God establishes the Covenant with Noah and all of creation, as symbolized by the rainbow.)

*What is the Covenant made with Noah?* (God promises to Noah that there will never be another flood to devastate the earth.)

*What questions does the message of the First Reading raise for you?*

2. After a few quiet minutes, pass around the dish of ashes or sand. Explain the significance of these Lenten symbols.
  - ◆ Ashes remind us that our earthly life is temporary; we come from the earth, and in death, we shall return to the earth.
  - ◆ Sand reminds us of the desert, the place where the Israelites wandered and Jesus was tempted. The desert is a place of purification, away from distraction, in order to fast and pray.

### Pray

Use the Responsorial Psalm from today's liturgy.

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA  
First Sunday of Lent • Year B • February 18, 2024

## Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

### Sunday Word

Genesis 9:8-15

Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:12-15

### 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, Mark 1:12-15, and highlight the following points:

- ◆ Lent lasts forty days, reflecting the forty days Jesus spent in the desert before his ministry.
- ◆ Lent is a time to spend in prayer, to renew and deepen our relationship with God.
- ◆ Lent is a time to work on our relationship with others through doing Works of Mercy.
- ◆ Lent is a pre-baptismal retreat for those preparing for Baptism at the Easter Vigil.
- ◆ Lent is a time for the baptized to prepare to renew their baptismal promises at Easter.

2. Brainstorm with the group the types of contracts they have made in their lives, asking:

*What does it mean to sign a contract?*

*What do you consider before signing a contract?*

*How might you respond to a broken contract?*

### Explore

1. Highlight key points from the participant handout's Church Teaching: The Covenant.
  - ◆ God initiated the Covenant with the people
    - Through Adam and Eve—God promised to send a Redeemer.

—Through Noah—God promised that never again would the earth be destroyed.

—Through Abraham—God promised to be the one true God to Abraham and his descendants, and they were to be God's Chosen People, who would be as numerous as the stars in the sky.

—Through Moses—God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments.

#### ◆ In the Covenant

—God is the Creator, and he reaches out to us to establish a sacred relationship.

—God keeps the Covenant with us despite our failings and sinfulness.

—God calls us to surrender in faith and to obey his Word so we can honor our relationship with him.

#### ◆ In Baptism we enter into the Covenant with God that Christ made possible and fulfilled.

#### ◆ Baptism imparts a permanent spiritual mark on our souls. Baptism makes us the family of God, the People of God.

2. Highlight the Key Terms and Voices of Faith sections.

### Apply

Invite the catechumens and candidates to complete these statements and share responses with partners:

*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 . . .*

### Pray

Use the prayer from the participant handout.