

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Second Sunday of Lent • Year B • February 25, 2024

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—GENESIS 22:1-2, 9A, 10-13, 15-18

The major theme of this dramatic, suspenseful episode underscores Abraham's faith. He withstands the test of God and becomes the patriarch of a covenant people.

SECOND READING—ROMANS 8:31B-34

The rhetoric of Paul gives greater emphasis to the power of God's presence in our lives. Divine power evident in the Father offering his Son for the Salvation of all peoples is beyond all earthly power.

GOSPEL—MARK 9:2-10

As the Transfiguration scene concludes, the disciples see that Jesus is now alone. This conveys to them and to the reader the sense that Christ fulfills the Law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah).

Church Teaching

Outward sacrifices must be aligned with inward spiritual sacrifices. Our exterior sacrificial acts are to come from an interior act of the will that faithfully adheres to the Covenant. In this way, we align our hearts with the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

As our sacrifices imitate that of Christ's, we recognize that nothing can be done without God's loving grace. God calls us into being and sustains us in this world as his people. Our calling comes from on high, and the object of our devotion takes us out of ourselves, widening our vision and inviting us to stretch ourselves. Indeed, Christian sacrifice means that we pursue the covenant bond of love through the gift of self.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 583, 606, 608, 613

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 220–222

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 119, 280

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth, a candle, 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 question:

What image, word, phrase, tone, or feeling comes to your heart upon reflecting on today's liturgy?

Deepen

1. Invite those present to close their eyes and take a few deep breaths. Then lead them in a guided meditation with these or similar words:

Picture in your mind a beautiful place where you are at peace, a place in which you like to be alone. PAUSE.

Imagine the Lord coming to speak to you. At first, you are nervous and afraid, but the Lord assures you to be not afraid. The Lord invites you to talk about your life—the people who surround you, your hopes, your dreams, and your fears. PAUSE.

The Lord asks whether you trust him. How do you respond? PAUSE.

What would it take for you to sacrifice to God your only child as proof of your faith and trust in God? PAUSE.

2. After a few quiet minutes, invite everyone to open their eyes and to share their responses to the last question.

Pray

Use the prayer from the participant handout.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Sunday Word

Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18

Psalms 116:10, 15, 16-17, 18-19

Romans 8:31b-34

Mark 9:2-10

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 First Reading, Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18, and highlight the following points:
 - ◆ This passage presents a very difficult choice for Abraham, yet he willingly gives all to God.
 - ◆ Abraham's faith is an example for us all to follow. We too are called to do as the Lord directs—to trust God and his promise without fully understanding.
 - ◆ To live a holy life means to say, "Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will."
2. Proclaim the Gospel, Mark 9:2-10, and then point out the following:
 - ◆ Jesus is transfigured before Peter, James, and John. He becomes dazzling white—pure, without sin.
If you were present, how would you have responded to this event?
 - ◆ The cloud (the Spirit) surrounds them, and the voice (the Father) proclaims that this is his beloved Son in whom he is pleased.
Why do you think Jesus told them not to tell anyone about this until later?

Explore

1. Highlight key points from the participant handout's Church Teaching: Sacrificial Offering.
 - ◆ Sacrifice is a constitutive element of every relationship—a willingness to give up something for the sake of another.
 - ◆ Sacrifices in the Old Testament were offered as worship to God; burned offerings were considered the highest form of praise and thanksgiving and later as expiation for sin.
 - ◆ The highest sacrifice one can give is to lay down one's life for another.
 - ◆ God shows us the perfect sacrifice when Jesus, the Son of God, willingly sacrifices his life on the Cross for our sins.
 - ◆ Followers of Jesus Christ are encouraged to offer their time, talent, and treasure in order to spread the Good News of Salvation to others.
2. Highlight the Key Terms and Voices of Faith sections.

Apply

Explain that Lent is a time for us to step back and examine how we have lived our relationship with God since last Easter. It is a time for us to sacrifice—to offer up something or to do something to deepen our commitment to the Gospel way of life. Consider what you could do this week as a sacrificial offering to God.

Pray

Pray the Prayer of Blessing 97C in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.