

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Third Sunday of Lent • Year B • March 3, 2024

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—EXODUS 20:1-17

God clearly is the legislator who delivers these Commandments, or rules, to the people through Moses. Note the intimacy expressed through the use of the second person voice, “*You shall*” (or shall not). Each individual person is called to obey these rules.

SECOND READING—1 CORINTHIANS 1:22-25

In the use of the phrase “stumbling block” as applied to Christ, Saint Paul employs Old Testament imagery found in Isaiah 8:14 and Psalm 69:23-24. Israel’s rejection of the same crucified Christ as also the Risen Lord causes them to experience him as a stumbling block.

GOSPEL—JOHN 2:13-25

The Greek verbs used in this passage for “destroy” and “raise up” (verse 19) can be applied equally well to the demolition and renovation of a building or the destruction and resurrection of a human body. Though (in the next verse) his hearers misunderstand Jesus’ statement, his disciples remember (verse 22) and understand the full significance later.

Church Teaching

The Eternal Father, through his own loving initiative, chooses to raise up humanity to share in his divine life. In spite of our turning away from God in sin, we have not been abandoned but have been given new life in Christ. Jesus points the way to the Father, standing within the traditions of Israel, where he exercised his public ministry. In his mission and his person, Christ supersedes the old and establishes the new Covenant with his Church, to which he draws all men and women.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 52, 64, 2056

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 327–328

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 8–9, 419

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth, a candle, and an open Bible or Lectionary.

Discover

After sitting quietly for a minute or two, invite participants to speak aloud a word, phrase, idea, or feeling from the liturgy just celebrated. Encourage them to pause after each person speaks. Include such phrases as

- ◆ “I, the Lord, am your God”
- ◆ “I am a jealous God”
- ◆ “Blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy”

Ask:

What do you hear in these words, phrases, and images?

How do you respond to them?

Summarize the discussion.

Deepen

Proclaim the Gospel, John 2:13-25.

Discuss:

- ◆ The cause of Jesus’ anger was that the Temple was being misused in the name of worship.
- ◆ The money changers had made the Temple into a marketplace and through extortion and greed were making it hard for a person to offer sacrifice to God.
- ◆ Jesus foretold his own Death and subsequent Resurrection, but the people did not grasp what he was saying.

Ask:

What do you think keeps the people from believing in Jesus’ words?

What keeps us from really believing in Jesus?

In what way(s) are we called to change or repent and believe?

Pray

Sing the Responsorial Psalm from today’s liturgy.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Sunday Word

Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 11

1 Corinthians 1:22-25

John 2:13-25

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

Ask:

What do you think is the role of law in our lives?

Do you ever question a law? In what circumstances?

How do you describe the difference between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law?

Proclaim the First Reading, Exodus 20:1-17.

- ◆ Ask participants to choose one of the Commandments and share what it means to them.
- ◆ Discuss examples of each of the Commandments from the participants' lived experiences.

Explore

Connect the Gospel of this Sunday with last week's—the role of Moses as lawgiver and Elijah as prophet, one who calls the people back to the Covenant.

- ◆ Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law. He is the ultimate lawgiver. In another Gospel, Jesus stated that all the Commandments are summed up in the Great Commandment of love.

- ◆ The Ten Commandments, also called the Decalogue, are found in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy.
- ◆ They tell the Chosen People what God expects of them.
- ◆ The first three Commandments describe how the Israelites are to be in relationship with God. The next seven describe how they are to be in relationship with one another.
- ◆ The first five books of the Old Testament contain not only the Ten Commandments but also judgments, statutes, and testimonies. They offer Israel a guide to living a moral life in accord with the Covenant with God. They prepare Israel to receive Jesus Christ and his embodiment of the Great Commandment.

Highlight key points from participant handout's Catholic Teaching: The Ten Commandments. 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 . . .

Explain what it means to examine one's conscience by using the Ten Commandments. In the Rite of Penance, there are several examples of an examination of conscience. Choose one and lead the group in praying it.

Pray

Use the prayer from the participant handout.