

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Pentecost Sunday • Year B • May 19, 2024

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ACTS 2:1-11

By naming the geographic origins of all the diaspora Jews living in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost, Luke paints a vivid symbolic picture of the worldwide proclamation of God's great works in Jesus Christ.

SECOND READING—1 CORINTHIANS 12:3B-7, 12-13 (OR GALATIANS 5: 16-25)

This passage develops the theme of the Spirit's diverse but united gifts. First, however, it points out that the Holy Spirit mediates the individual believer's confession of faith in the exalted Lord.

GOSPEL—JOHN 20:19-23 (OR JOHN 15:26-27; 16:12-15)

This passage draws our attention to the reversal of the disciples' fear to joy and their transformation from frightened followers to apostolic witnesses (*apostle* means "one sent"). At the heart of this amazing transformation are the presence of the Risen Lord and the giving of the Holy Spirit.

Church Teaching

Christ appears to the disciples. He passes through the locked doors of the room. He also penetrates the disciples' hearts, which have been locked up and stymied by fear and shame: fear that the authorities will arrest them and shame at abandoning Jesus during his arrest and Crucifixion. The Lord commands the disciples to go forth and spread his Good News. The breath of the Holy Spirit is communicated to the disciples so they might be fearless witnesses of the Risen Lord, carrying on his mission of peace, love, and forgiveness.

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. Pentecost closes the Easter season. On a small table, place a red cloth, a candle, and a vessel containing the Sacred Chrism.

Additional Background

Links – Biblical Story of the Tower of Babel

Names of the Holy Spirit

The Jewish Feast of Pentecost

Music – "Come, Holy Ghost", attr. to R. Maurus, GIA, OCP, WLP
"Send Us Your Spirit", D. Schutte, OCP

Discover

Invite participants to share what they observed as they entered the church on this Pentecost Sunday. Then ask the following questions and invite participants 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?

Invite several participants to share their reflections with the large group. With the whole group, continue with the following:

What does Pentecost celebrate?

Deepen

Share stories of an experience of strong wind.

When did this experience take place?

Where were you?

What was the sound?

How did you respond?

Proclaim the First Reading, Acts 2:1-11.

Encourage participants to put themselves in the crowd gathered in Jerusalem. Invite them to consider the following questions:

How would you have responded to the noise like a strong driving wind?

In what way would you too have been confused to hear these people speaking in various languages and understand what they were saying?

What do you think the "mighty acts of God" were that they spoke of?

Retell the story of the Tower of Babel (see Genesis 11) as the way in which confusion of language came to be and explain that today's First Reading is the opposite of Babel.

Pray

Sing or listen to a recording of today's Responsorial Psalm, "Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth," or a similar hymn.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Sunday Word

Acts 2:1-11

Psalm 104:1ab, 24ac, 29bc-30, 31, 34

1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13 or Galatians 5:16-25

John 20:19-23 or John 15:26-27, 16:12-15

Welcome

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

Engage

Proclaim the Gospel, John 20:19-23, followed by a pause. Summarize:

- The setting is the locked room; the disciples are afraid.
- Jesus stands in their midst and greets them with peace, and the disciples rejoice to see him. They do believe it is the Lord—risen from the dead.
- Jesus sends them out to tell the Good News of his Resurrection and to forgive sins.
- Jesus breathes on them the Holy Spirit—the same action found in the story of creation.

In small groups, discuss:

In what ways do we, as disciples of Jesus today, allow the Holy Spirit to work through us to be agents of peace and forgiveness?

What are the challenges that we face in this endeavor?

Gather feedback. Offer some summary statements and conclude with these or similar words:

We are called to be ambassadors of peace and reconciliation throughout our lives. We are to remember it is the Holy Spirit who works through us, and perhaps our biggest challenge is not to get in the way of what the Spirit wants to do.

Explore

- Pentecost is celebrated on the fiftieth day of Easter. It concludes the Easter season.

- The birth of the Church is celebrated on Pentecost. It is the day the disciples, having received the gift of the Holy Spirit, go out and make bold proclamation about Jesus Christ. Many come to believe in Christ.
- The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. We profess our belief in the Holy Spirit every time we make the Sign of the Cross or pray the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed.
- The Spirit is the sustaining presence of God in the Church and in our lives. The Gifts of the Spirit are present in many ways.
- The Spirit acts as the guiding force to those who ask for direction and guidance. The Spirit is the life force of the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church.

Highlight key points from the participant handout's Catholic Teaching: The Holy Spirit. 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...

Explore the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Invite the catechumens/candidates and their sponsors to choose one of the gifts and spend time this week discussing how this gift could help them in their lives as disciples.

Pray

V. Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.
R. And kindle in them the fire of your love.
V. Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created.
R. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Leader: Let us pray.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise, and ever enjoy his consolations, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.