

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE RCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

First Sunday of Advent • Year B • December 3, 2023

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ISAIAH 63:16B-17, 19B; 64:2-7

The exiles are returning but not yet restoring the Temple. The prophet laments and pleads with God to “rend the heavens and come down,” to act to rebuild the holy place.

SECOND READING—1 CORINTHIANS 1:3-9

The beginning of Saint Paul’s letter thanks the community before sternly addressing some difficult issues.

GOSPEL—MARK 13:33-37

This passage concludes a section in Mark on the end times (all of Mark 13). Jesus counsels his disciples to be alert as they wait.

Church Teaching: The Second Coming

As the season of Advent opens, believers look toward the end of historical time, in which all the moments from the beginning of creation to its fulfillment are achieved in Christ. This forward-looking stance gives meaning to all the days and years of a believer’s life as well as the life of the entire household of the faith, the Christian community.

In the face of such brokenness as war and poverty, believers are not helpless. We work for the coming of the kingdom by seeking to make the world a better place. We know that the fullness of the kingdom will be ushered into this world by the Lord Jesus. And yet we do our part as his alert disciples so that we might stand ready for his Second Coming.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 669, 1042, 2749

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 13 (Our Eternal Destiny), especially the section entitled “The New Heaven and the New Earth,” pages 157–158

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth and an Advent wreath. Light the first candle of the wreath.

Discover

Invite volunteers to share what was different about the liturgy today. (Help them recall sounds, sights, prayers, and symbols.)

Ask the children to close their eyes and listen as you read phrases from today’s Liturgy of the Word. Slowly read the following, pausing between each.

- Harden not our hearts.
- Rend the heavens and come down.
- Ear has not heard, eye has not seen.
- We are the clay and you are the potter.
- We are the work of your hands.

Slowly reread the phrases. Then invite the children to open their eyes.

Invite volunteers to say aloud one of the phrases and share what it means to them.

Deepen

Explore the children’s experiences of waiting.

- What do they wait for?
- Whom do they wait for?
- What do they do while they are waiting?

Pray

Use the Collect for the first Sunday of Advent or the prayer on the front of the participant handout.

Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup, you will need the participant handout for each child and a list for each child of Advent activities and opportunities being hosted by your parish.

Sunday Word

Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7

Psalms 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Mark 13:33-37

Welcome

Welcome everyone and invite one or two children to share some of the key points from the Dismissal Session.

Invite

1. Proclaim the Gospel, Mark 13:33-37
2. Highlight the following discussion points:
 - The waiting described in the reading (the return of the master is unknown; be on guard; do not be found sleeping)
 - The message to be ready (Invite volunteers to share for what or for whom they think we should be ready.)

Teach

Read and discuss Key Teaching from the participant handout.

Highlight these key points in today's session:

- Advent is a season of waiting and a season of preparation.
- During Advent, we wait and prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ.
- We celebrate Christ's first coming when we celebrate Christmas.
- We also wait for Christ's Second Coming at the end of all time.

- As we wait for Christ's Second Coming, we are called to proclaim the Good News of Salvation to the world through our words and actions.
- We are to wait for Christ's Second Coming with hope in God.

Faith Words

Review with the children this week's Faith Words: *Advent* and *Second Coming*. Refer to the participant handout for definitions.

Challenge

1. If your parish hosts a family Advent-wreath-making day, encourage the children and their families to take part in the gathering.
2. Explain to the children the meaning and purpose of the Advent wreath.
 - The Advent wreath helps us remember to prepare for the celebration of Christ's coming at Christmas.
 - During Advent we also remember to prepare for the celebration of Christ's coming at the end of our lives and at the end of all time.
 - The Advent wreath has three purple candles and one pink (rose) candle.
 - Purple is the liturgical color for the season of Advent.
 - The pink (rose) candle is lit on the third Sunday of Advent, which is Gaudete Sunday. The word *gaudete* means rejoice.
 - The wreath itself is a symbol of God's never-ending love for us. God's love has no beginning and no end.
3. Provide the children with a list of opportunities at your parish for prayer, service, and celebrations throughout the Advent season. Encourage them to take the list home and to take part with their families in one or more of the activities listed.

Pray

Sing or listen to a recording of "Prepare the Way of the Lord" (J. Berthier/GIA Publications).