

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE RCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

Second Sunday of Advent • Year B • December 10, 2023

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ISAIAH 40:1-5, 9-11

The prophet speaks God's message to his people of an impending future when all shall see God's glory. The Lord will tenderly lead his people into pastures where they shall flourish under his care.

SECOND READING—2 PETER 3:8-14

Saint Peter portrays the coming of the Lord Jesus in glory when all will be renewed in him. The Christian community eagerly awaits the new heavens and a new earth.

GOSPEL—MARK 1:1-18

The beginning of Mark's Gospel quotes the prophet Isaiah, applying the prophecy to John the Baptist, the herald who prepared the way of the Lord Jesus.

Church Teaching: *Desire for God*

A person can shut out the desire for God. Religious ignorance and sheer indifference can harden one's heart to God's inner prompting. Worldly riches can blind us and worldly cares can overwhelm us so that we pay no attention to our hearts.

Although there are many obstacles to faith, there are also many ways of coming to know God. Creation can reveal its Maker and raise the human mind and heart to God. Our very openness to truth, beauty, moral goodness, and conscience are also hints of the divine that can lead us to God. These ways, however, are only partial and incomplete. The enlightenment of Revelation as taught by the Church is the prime path by which we can come to know, love, and serve God.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 27, 31, 153, 154

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 1, especially the section entitled "The Universal Desire for God," pages 2-3

Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II: Chapter 1 (Revelation)

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 two candles.

Discover

- Invite the children to close their eyes and listen to the following phrases. Pause between each.
 - Comfort my people.
 - A voice cries out: Prepare the way of the Lord.
 - Every valley shall be filled in.
 - Every mountain and hill made low.
 - Fear not: Here is your God.
 - Like a shepherd, he feeds his flock.
 - In his arms, he gathers the lambs, leading with care.
- Slowly reread the phrases. Then invite the children to open their eyes.
- Ask volunteers to share what the phrases tell us about God.

What is God like?

How does God care for his people?

Deepen

Proclaim the First Reading, Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11.

Discuss as a group the following questions.

What is the "way of the Lord" that we are called to prepare?

What are some ways to prepare the way of the Lord at home, at school, in your neighborhood, or in the world?

Pray

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

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; a flip chart or whiteboard and markers; the activity handout for today's session; and crayons or pencils and pens.

Sunday Word

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Psalms 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14

2 Peter 3:8-14

Mark 1:1-8

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 1:1-8.
2. Invite volunteers to respond to the following questions.

What does the Gospel tell us about John the Baptist?

What is John the Baptist's role as a prophet?

What did John the Baptist tell the people?

In what ways can we tell people about Christ?

Teach

1. Read and discuss Key Teachings from the participant handout.
2. Highlight the following discussion points:
 - From the beginning of time, humans have searched for God.
 - Each of us longs for God. God put this longing in our hearts.
 - God promised Abraham, "I will be your God and you will be my people."

- God promises us the same. It is our choice to say yes to a relationship with God.
- Our greatest happiness will be to be with God forever in Heaven.

Faith Words

Review with the children this week's Faith Words: *prophet* and *Covenant*.

Challenge

1. Draw two columns on the flip chart or whiteboard. Name the first column "Seek the Messiah." Name the second column "Prepare the Way."
2. Invite the children to name ways that people living today seek the Messiah. (*Go to Church; read the Bible; pray; serve the poor; and so on.*) Record responses in the first column.
3. Next, invite the children to name ways that people living today prepare the way of the Lord. (*Live Jesus' command to love; be peacemakers; tell others about Jesus; feed the hungry; and so on.*) Record responses in the second column.
4. Distribute the activity handouts, crayons, and pencils or pens. Invite each child to decide on one way to seek the Messiah in the coming week and one way to prepare the way of the Lord in the coming week. The children may wish to choose from the lists you have just created or to use ideas of their own.
5. Have the children write or draw their ideas on the activity page. Encourage them to decorate their pages and to take them home and hang them where they will be reminders to seek the Messiah and prepare the way of the Lord in the coming week.

Pray

Listen to or sing "Prepare the Way of the Lord" (J. Berthier/GIA Publications).

I Seek the Messiah

I Prepare the Way of the Lord