

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE RCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

The Ascension of the Lord • Year B • May 12, 2024

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ACTS 1:1-11

For forty days, the Risen Lord appears to the disciples. He lifts up the hearts of his chosen ones, promising to send the power of the Holy Spirit upon them.

SECOND READING—EPHESIANS 1:17-2

Our calling is to an eternal hope, the inheritance of the holy ones. Fullness of life fills those who are members of Christ's Body, the Church.

GOSPEL—MARK 16:15-20

The Risen Lord commands the disciples to go throughout the world and proclaim the Good News. The Lord then ascends to Heaven.

Church Teaching: The Ascension

For forty days after his Resurrection, Christ ate and drank with his disciples and continued to teach them about the Kingdom of God. He appeared to them bodily, and yet the Resurrection, radiating glory, had transformed this body of his.

As Jesus himself teaches, only the One who came from the Father can return to the Father (see John 16:28). It is thus only in Christ—the One who unites Heaven with earth in his Paschal Mystery—that believers can find passage from earth to Heaven.

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a white cloth, a white candle, an open Bible

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 659, 661, 663

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 8 ("The Saving Death and Resurrection of Christ"), especially the section entitled "The Ascension into Heaven," pages 96–97

Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II: page 28

or Lectionary, and an item that reflects the Easter environment of the church.

Discover

1. Ask the children these or similar questions:

When you look at clouds, do you ever see shapes?

What shapes have you seen?

Have you ever flown through the clouds?

How did you feel? What did you see?

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

3. Discuss:

What did the cloud in this reading do?

Who do you think the two men in white are?

How would you answer their question: "[W]hy are you standing there looking at the sky?"

Where was Jesus taken?

What do you think Heaven will be like?

Deepen

1. Continue the discussion of the reading, highlighting these points:

- The Acts of the Apostles is addressed to Theophilus.
- *Theophilus* is a Greek word meaning *Friend of God*.
- The beginning of the Acts of the Apostles tells us about what Jesus did from his Resurrection until his being taken up into Heaven.
- The challenge is to be patient and wait for the "promise of the Father" to be fulfilled.

2. Ask:

If you had been one of the disciples, how would you have responded to Jesus' words to wait for "the promise of the Father . . ." to be fulfilled?

What was the "promise of the Father"? (What are the disciples waiting for?)

Pray

Pray the Collect from today's liturgy.

Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup and copies of the participant handout, you will need a flip chart or whiteboard, markers, and pencils or pens.

Sunday Word

Acts 1:1-11

Psalm 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9

Ephesians 1:17-23 or Ephesians 4:1-13 or 4:1-7, 11-13

Mark 16:15-20

Welcome

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

Invite

1. Proclaim the Second Reading, Ephesians 1:17-23.

2. Ask:

Where does the reading say that Christ now sits? (at God's right hand in the heavens)

What does the reading say that Christ is the Head of? (the Church)

What does the reading say is another name for the Church? (the Body)

3. Remind the children that we proclaim in the Apostles' Creed:

[H]e ascended into Heaven,

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;

from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Teach

1. Read and discuss the Key Teachings section of the participant handout.
2. Continue the discussion, highlighting the following points:
 - The Ascension celebrates Jesus' bodily ascent into Heaven.
 - Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come upon the disciples and strengthen them. This same Spirit will remain with disciples of Jesus until the end of time.
 - Jesus told the disciples to go out to the world and tell everyone about him.
 - The disciples did as they were commanded; they worked many miracles (signs), and many came to believe and be baptized.
 - We continue the work of the disciples, the mission of Jesus in the world today. We too are called to tell everyone about Jesus.
3. Review with the children this week's Faith Words, listed on the participant handout.

Challenge

- Remind the children that in the reading, they heard Paul pray that the followers of Jesus may know hope.
- Invite a volunteer to read again the definition of the word *hope*.
- Give the children quiet time to think of someone they know who needs hope, and to think of a way they will offer hope to that person this week. Then invite them to write the name of the person and what they will do in the Hope box on the participant handout.

Pray

Use the prayer found on the participant handout.