

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE RCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday) • Year B • April 7, 2024

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ACTS 4:32-35

The early Christian community experiences the great favor of God, bearing witness to the Risen Lord Jesus.

SECOND READING—1 JOHN 5:1-6

The message expressed by Saint John in his letter is simple and profound: love binds us to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

GOSPEL—JOHN 20:19-31

The Risen Lord appears to the disciples. He greets them with words of peace.

Church Teaching: *The Gift of Peace*

While there are many viewpoints in Sacred Scripture on peace, one thread in the Old Testament stands out. Peace is not merely a negative—that is, the absence of conflict. Rather, it is the perfection of the Covenant relationship between God and God's people. The Hebrew word *shalom* refers to a total harmony with nature, God, and self that issues forth in justice. It is experienced in a fruitful land and in a generous people who look after the needy.

The New Testament picks up this strong thread. Jesus ushers in the messianic kingdom. He is the very presence of God among us. He brings to fulfillment what we cannot achieve on our own—the peace of a people covenanted to their Creator. This peace is the gift of the Risen Christ to his Church.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1424, 1941, 1990, 2302, 2442

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 24 (Life in Christ—Part Two), especially the section entitled “Living with Faith and Hope After September 11, 2001,” pages 332–333

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

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

Discover

1. Begin by asking the children who were at the Easter Vigil liturgy to share their remembrances and favorite parts of the celebration.
2. Also invite volunteers to share how their families celebrated Easter Sunday.
3. Then invite the children's responses to these or similar questions:

What did you see when you walked into Church today?

How was the beginning of this Mass different from other Sundays?

What was the mood of today's liturgy? Quiet? Sad? Joyful?

What words or phrases did you hear in today's readings?

Deepen

1. Proclaim the First Reading, Acts 4:32-35.
2. Reflect on the activities of the early Church described in the readings:
 - The community of believers was of one heart and mind.
 - How would a visitor know that the people of our parish are of one heart and mind?
 - What would we be saying? What would we be doing?
 - They had everything in common.
 - What do you think it means to have everything in common?

- How would a visitor know whether the people of our parish had everything in common?
- What would we be saying? What would we be doing?
- There was no needy person among them.
 - How would a visitor know that there were no needy people among us?
 - What would they see here that would help them know this?

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 participant handouts, you will need pencils or pens.

Sunday Word

Acts 4:32-35

Psalms 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

1 John 5:1-6

John 20:19-31

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, John 20:19-31.
2. Invite the children to consider a time when they acted as Thomas did—they doubted the words, or the testimony, of others, and they wanted to see with their own eyes. Then ask each person to reflect quietly on these questions:

What makes you doubt the words of others?

When do you usually doubt?

What does it take for you to have faith?

Do you need proof before you believe?

3. Invite volunteers to share what they think is the meaning of these words of Jesus: "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

Teach

1. Read and discuss Key Teachings from the participant handout. Also highlight the following:
 - Invite the children to name places in our country and in our world that are not at peace. After each place is named, invite the children to pray, *Lord, grant us peace.*
 - Peace in our families, our community, and our world is based on respect for all human life. Invite the children to name ways we show respect for life.
 - As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to work for justice and peace wherever we are. Highlight for the children ways your parish works for justice and peace.
2. Recall with the children that we offer one another the Sign of Peace at Mass. Review with the children the words of the presider and the assembly's response:

Presider: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

ALL: And with your spirit.

Presider: Let us offer each other the sign of peace.
3. Review with the children this week's Faith Words.

Challenge

Invite the children to write in the "Peace" box on the participant handout one way they can be a more peaceful person at home or at school.

Pray

Exchange a sign of peace.