

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE RCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

Fourth Sunday of Easter • Year B • April 21, 2024

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ACTS 4:8-12

Peter explains a healing miracle to the people. It was done through the name of Jesus Christ.

SECOND READING—1 JOHN 3:1-2

God loves us so much that in Christ, he has adopted us as his very own children. We have an inheritance that outshines any earthly treasure.

GOSPEL—JOHN 10:11-18

The Lord Jesus saves and protects his flock. He is the Good Shepherd, who leads us into pastures of life and wholeness.

Church Teaching: Jesus and His Father Are One

Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to be drawn into the life and the love of the Holy Trinity. Through him we get a glimpse, a foretaste, of the “knowing” between the Father and the Son. Jesus speaks of this in today’s Gospel.

Jesus reveals that as the Good Shepherd, he gives his life for us. The Father’s loving plan seeks to adopt us as children in Christ through the Spirit. This plan unfolds for us in various ways: in the work of creation, in the whole history of Salvation after the Fall, and in the mission of the Son and the Spirit continued in the Church. Our whole Christian life is a communion with each of the Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity. The believer who glorifies the Father does so through the Son in the Spirit.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1820, 1821, 2016

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 8 (The Saving Death and Resurrection of Christ), especially the section entitled “Lift High the Cross,” pages 91–93

Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II: pages 22 and 23

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, a picture of the Lord as the Good Shepherd, and an open Bible or Lectionary.

Discover

Discuss with the children

- What they know about sheep and about the job of the shepherd
- The meaning of the phrase “The Lord is my Shepherd”
- The meaning of the phrase “You are the sheep”

Deepen

1. Proclaim the First Reading, Acts 4:8-12.
2. Invite the children to picture themselves as part of the crowd gathered around the Apostles. Ask them to imagine hearing Peter proclaim that Jesus is the cornerstone and that there is no Salvation through anyone else but Jesus.
3. Remind the children that Peter is the one who denied Jesus three times the night Jesus was captured and was taken to be crucified. Ask:

How has Peter changed?

What do you think helped to change Peter from being afraid to admit that he knew Jesus to the person who stood up in front of the crowd and told people about Jesus?

How has getting to know Jesus changed you?

Pray

Invite the children to close their eyes and talk to Peter. Encourage them to ask Peter to help them not deny Jesus; to help them be strong; to help them be willing to tell others about Jesus.

Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup, you will need copies of the participant handout and supplies for making thank-you cards or a prepared thank-you card for the children to sign (see Challenge #2).

Sunday Word

Acts 4:8-12

Psalm 118:1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29

1 John 3:1-2

John 10:11-18

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 10:11-18.
2. Ask the children to name the most important people in their lives. Then ask:
Why are they important to you?
In what ways are you connected to them? Are they relatives? Teachers? Coaches? Friends?
3. Remind the children that in today's Gospel, Jesus said, "I will lay down my life for the sheep." Ask: What does Jesus mean? (*We are very important to him!*)
4. Jesus also said, "Just as the Father knows me . . . I know the Father." Ask: What does that tell us about how close Jesus and the Father are?
5. Explain that if we know Jesus, we know God the Father; if we know God the Father, we know Jesus. They cannot be separated. Jesus and his Father are one.

Teach

1. Read and discuss Key Teachings from the participant handout. Highlight the following points:
 - There is one God and Three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

- The Three Persons in One God are called the Holy Trinity.
- Each Person in the Trinity has a special mission. The Father so loved us that he sent the Son. The Son showed us the Father's love by his life, suffering, Death, and Resurrection. The Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit to be our helper and guide until the end of time.
- When we pray the Sign of the Cross, we name the One God in Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- The Father adopts us. We become his daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, in Christ through Baptism.

2. Review this week's Faith Words with the children.

Challenge

1. Explain that deacons, priests, bishops, and the pope are the shepherds of the Catholic Church. Like Jesus, their role is to care for the sheep—each one of us. Refer to pages 88 and 89 of *Our Catholic Heritage (Levels I and II)*, or in your own words explain
 - The role of deacons
 - The role of priests, especially the role of the pastor of your parish
 - The role of the bishop of the diocese
 - The role of the pope
2. Invite the children to make a thank-you card for the pastor of your parish (or sign a prepared card). If time allows, do the same for the deacon of your parish.

Pray

Slowly and reverently lead the children in praying the Sign of the Cross. If available to you, pray A Vocation Prayer (on page 138 of *Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II*). Conclude by praying again the Sign of the Cross.