

# Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE RCIA

## CATECHUMENATE SESSION

The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord • Year B • January 7, 2024

### Catechist Preparation

#### Scripture

**FIRST READING**—ISAIAH 60:1-6

The prophet Isaiah extols the future splendor of a restored Jerusalem. All the nations shall be drawn to her.

**SECOND READING**—EPHESIANS 3:2-3A, 5-6

Saint Paul clarifies for the Christian community that he has received a Revelation from God: the Gentiles are coheirs and copartners of the same Body, the Body of Christ. Salvation is meant for all.

**GOSPEL**—MATTHEW 2:1-12

Wise men (Magi) arrive in Bethlehem from the east to pay homage to the newborn king. They offer him priceless gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

#### Church Teaching: Salvation Is for All

The term epiphany means “showing” or “manifestation.” In the context of the Christmas season, Jesus, the Word made flesh, is shown as the light of all peoples and the Salvation of the world.

Today’s solemnity proclaims that all people are attracted to and find Salvation in God’s light. The Church exists to teach all nations what Christ has commanded, and goes to the ends of the earth telling everyone the Good News of Christ. The wise men (Magi) who journeyed from the east are understood by the Church as the firstfruits of a great harvest to come.

#### Additional Background

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 528, 848, 863, 868

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:** Chapter 10 (The Church: Reflecting the Light of Christ), especially pages 115–116

**Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II:** page 64 (Salvation)

### Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a white candle, a white cloth, and a Christmas crèche (including the figures of the three kings).

#### Discover

1. If this is your first gathering after Christmas Day, invite the children to talk about gifts they gave others and one favorite gift they received for Christmas.
2. Invite the children to gather around the crèche. Sing a verse or the refrain of “We Three Kings of Orient Are” or another familiar Christmas carol.
3. Invite the children to share what they already know about the visit of the Magi. Be sure to highlight the following points:
  - The Magi were from the east (a foreign land).
  - They brought gifts of gold (a gift given to a king), frankincense (a gift offered to God), and myrrh (meant for one who is to die).
  - They found Jesus by following a star.

#### Deepen

1. While still gathered around the crèche, proclaim the Gospel, Matthew 2:1-12.
2. Invite the children to share anything new they learned or heard about the Magi.
3. Invite the children to be seated, and continue the discussion by asking the children:

*What was Mary and Joseph’s response to the visit of the Magi and their gifts?*

*What gifts would you bring to offer to the newborn king, Jesus? Why?*

*What gifts could you offer Jesus right now, today?*

#### Pray

Say or sing together the Responsorial Psalm from today’s liturgy (Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13) or another familiar Christmas season or Epiphany carol.

## Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

### Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup, you will need the participant handouts; drawing paper or card stock; crayons or markers; art supplies for cardmaking; and copies of “The First Nowell” for each member of the group (or a recording of “The First Nowell”).

### Sunday Word

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

Matthew 2:1-12

### Welcome

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

### Invite

1. Remind the children that the Christmas Gospel tells us that Jesus was first visited by shepherds. Sing or listen to verses 1 and 2 of “The First Nowell.”
2. On Epiphany, the solemnity we celebrate today, the Gospel tells us that Jesus was visited by Magi from the east. Sing or listen to verses 3, 4, and 5 of “The First Nowell.”
3. Jesus came to save all people, from everywhere, for all time. Sing together verse 6 of “The First Nowell,” repeating the refrain several times.
4. Proclaim the Gospel, Matthew 2:1-12.

### Teach

1. Read and discuss Key Teachings from the participant handout.
2. Highlight these key points in today’s session:
  - Jesus came to save all people.
  - All people of all time are meant to be part of the family of God.
  - Epiphany is the celebration of the coming of Jesus for all people of all time.
  - God works through people such as Mary, Joseph, shepherds, and the Magi to draw all people to himself.
  - God wants to work through us, too, to share the Good News and to lead others to know Jesus, his Son.

### Faith Words

Review with the children this week’s Faith Words: *Epiphany* and *Magi*. Refer to the participant handout for definitions.

### Challenge

1. Review with the children the Dismissal session, Discover (about the Magi and the gifts they presented to Jesus).
2. Invite the children to write letters or make cards for Jesus and include what they will do for Jesus this coming week as their gift to him.
3. If time allows, invite volunteers to share what they wrote or drew.

### Pray

Sing a Christmas season or Epiphany carol, perhaps one of the children’s choosing.