

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE RCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph • Year B • December 31, 2023

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—GENESIS 15:1-6; 21:1-3

God promises Abram that his descendants will be as numerous as the stars. Abram puts his faith in the Lord. Sarah becomes pregnant and bears a son, Isaac.

SECOND READING—HEBREWS 11:8, 11-12, 17-19

The key choices and events in the lives of Abraham and his family are recalled through the lens of faith. Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac put their faith in God.

GOSPEL—LUKE 2:22-40

Simeon and Anna waited many years for the Savior to come. When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple to present him to God, Simeon and Anna immediately recognized Jesus as the long-awaited Salvation of God's people.

Church Teaching: The Family

The Christian family is a communion of persons whose members point to and become an image of the union among the Holy Trinity. When a family functions virtuously and harmoniously, its members reflect God the Father's work of creation in the procreation and proper education of children, mirror the prayer and sacrifice of Christ himself in their caring and concerned submission to one another, and parallel the Holy Spirit's missionary impulse in their own outreach to the poor and needy.

Faith, hope, and love fuel the domestic Church, as do daily prayer, reading the Word of God together, being an active part of the parish community, and sharing in acts of Christian witness and service.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2201–2231

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 377–379

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set up the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a white cloth, a candle, an open Bible or Lectionary, and a crèche with Nativity set figures, including the infant Jesus.

Discover

1. Since this will be the children's first gathering since the Fourth Sunday of Advent, take the time to ask them about their families' celebrations of Christmas.
2. Invite volunteers to share their observations about the environment of the Church for this Christmas. What did they notice? What did they like? Did anything surprise them? Why?

Deepen

1. Gather the children around the prayer table. Ask them what is different about the Nativity set today. *(The figure of the infant Jesus is in the manger.)*
2. Sing or play a favorite carol that mentions the Holy Family, such as "Angels We Have Heard on High."
3. Proclaim the Gospel, Luke 2:22-40 (or the shorter form, Luke 2:22, 39-40).
4. Invite everyone to be seated.
5. Highlight the following discussion points:
 - Today the Church is celebrating the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.
 - Invite the children to share the names of their family members.
 - Ask volunteers to share what makes their families holy.

Pray

Gather around the prayer table and invite the children to echo you as you lead them in prayer: *Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, / pray for our families. / Help our families to be holy families too. / Amen.*

You may wish to conclude by again singing a favorite Christmas carol.

Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup, you will need copies of the participant handout, card stock or paper for making cards (or Christmas season thank-you cards), crayons or markers, and pencils or pens.

Sunday Word

Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3

Psalms 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19

Luke 2:22-40 (or Luke 2:22, 39-40)

Welcome

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

Invite

1. Share an example of something your family does to show faith in God or to grow in holiness as a family. Invite volunteers to share similar examples from their own families.
2. Gather the children around the prayer table and sing a song highlighting the Holy Family (such as "Angels We Have Heard on High").
3. Proclaim the Gospel, Luke 2:22-40 (or the shorter form, Luke 2:22, 39-40).
4. Ask how the Holy Family demonstrated faith in God. What are some ways we can imitate them in our families?

Teach

1. Invite the students to be seated.
2. Review and discuss the Key Teachings and Faith Words with the children. These may be found on the participant handout.
3. Continue the discussion, highlighting these key points:
 - Jesus was born into a family, the Holy Family, whose feast we celebrate today.
 - No matter who makes up one's family, all family members are called to respect each other and to help each other grow in love of God and neighbor.
 - We learn how to be disciples of Jesus in our families at home and in our Church family too.

Challenge

1. Allow time for the children to honor their families by creating thank-you cards or writing thank-you notes to their parents or to other family members.
2. Encourage the children to think of other families this week by donating food, clothing, toys and games, or money to a local outreach ministry or food pantry.

Pray

Gather the children around the prayer table. Invite them to quietly picture each member of their families and extended families and to ask God to bless each one in a special way. Then pray together the prayer on the front of the participant handout.