

# Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE RCIA

## CATECHUMENATE SESSION

First Sunday of Lent • Year B • February 18, 2024

### Catechist Preparation

#### FIRST READING—GENESIS 9:8-15

Noah hears from God a welcome promise: never again shall God in his righteous anger destroy us by another flood. God sets the rainbow in the heavens to remind us of his promise.

#### SECOND READING—1 PETER 3:18-22

Saint Peter teaches us that since the time of Noah and the Flood, God has patiently regarded our wayward behavior. In the fullness of time, he took the initiative to save us in his Son, Jesus Christ.

#### GOSPEL—MARK 1:12-15

The Flood in Noah's day was the result of forty days and nights of rain. Jesus experienced the dryness of the desert for forty days and nights, remaining faithful to his heavenly Father and his mission, resisting temptation.

#### Church Teaching: Baptism and Covenant

There are three main characteristics of covenant as expressed in Sacred Scripture: its origin, its terms, and its expectations. These three characteristics also describe our baptismal Covenant with God in Christ. Through Baptism we enter into a committed relationship with the Lord—a relationship totally owing to God's initiative of grace.

Baptism imparts a permanent spiritual mark or character, the seal of the Lord, on our souls that can never be taken away. It is through Baptism that we gain entrance into the People of God, the Church, and are called to live a life worthy of the Gospel (see Philippians 1:27), rejecting sin and living our

### Additional Background

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 56, 59, 62, 66, 1094

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:** Chapter 15 (Baptism: Becoming a Christian), especially the section entitled "Dying and Rising with Christ," pages 183–184

**Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II:** pages 40, 65, 114–116

faith. Baptism is the gateway providing access to all the other sacraments by giving us a new birth in the Holy Spirit, joining us to Christ and his Church, and propelling us into the exciting life of Jesus' mission.

### Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth, a candle, a dish with sand, and the Lectionary or Bible.

#### Discover

1. Because this is the first Sunday of Lent, begin by asking: *What was different in Church today?* Encourage the children to reflect on sights, sounds, and symbols.
2. Proclaim the First Reading, Genesis 9:8-15.
3. Invite the children to share what they remember about the story of Noah. Be sure to highlight the following points: the ark; Noah and his family; two animals of every kind; rain for forty days and forty nights; the dove returning with a branch; God establishing his Covenant with Noah; God setting the bow in the clouds to never again flood the earth.

#### Deepen

1. Explain that sand represents the desert, the place where Jesus was tempted. The desert was a place where people went to fast and to pray—away from everyday worries and cares and responsibilities.
2. Pass around the dish of sand, and invite each child to hold the dish and quietly think about what she or he will pray for during the season of Lent.

#### Pray

Say or sing together the Responsorial Psalm from today's Liturgy of the Word: *Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.*

## Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

### Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup, you will need the participant handouts. You may also wish to prepare a handout listing parish Lent activities and opportunities (refer to the Challenge section of this session plan).

### Sunday Word

Genesis 9:8-15

Psalms 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:12-15

### Welcome

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

### Invite

1. Explain to the children that this is the first Sunday of the liturgical season of Lent. The season of Lent lasts for forty days.
2. Share that during Lent, Catholics around the world take time to
  - Deepen their relationships with God in prayer
  - Strengthen their relationships with others by doing Works of Mercy or acts of love and kindness
  - Fast from things they enjoy in order to give money to the poor or more time to God and others
3. Proclaim the First Reading, Genesis 9: 8-15.
4. Ask whether anyone knows the meaning of the word *covenant*. Take time to read the definition of the word, which may be found in the Faith Words section of the participant handout.

### Teach

1. Explain to the children that in a covenant, God reaches out to us, and God keeps his Covenant with us no matter how many times we fail to keep our part of the Covenant to live as his people.
2. Review with the children three well-known Covenants in the Old Testament.
  - God's Covenant with Noah to never again destroy the earth
  - God's Covenant with Abraham to make his descendants more numerous than the stars
  - God's Covenant with his people through Moses and the Ten Commandments
3. Explain that in Baptism, we enter into a covenant with God in Christ. In Baptism we become a member of the family of God, the People of God.
4. Share that for those who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil (many of them included!), Lent is a time of retreat, of special prayer and preparation to enter into the Covenant with God through Baptism.
5. For those already baptized, Lent is a time of retreat, of special prayer and preparation to renew their baptismal Covenant with God at the Easter Vigil or on Easter Sunday.

### Challenge

1. Provide and review with the children a handout listing Lenten parish activities.
2. Encourage the children to use the Corporal Works of Mercy page with their families.

### Pray

Pray the prayer on the participant handout.