

# Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE RCIA

## CATECHUMENATE SESSION

Fifth Sunday of Lent • Year B • March 17, 2024

### Catechist Preparation

#### Scripture

**FIRST READING**—JEREMIAH 31:31-34

The Lord alone is master of the Covenant. Though the people have sinned, the Lord will forget their iniquity and create a new Covenant, planting it within their hearts.

**SECOND READING**—HEBREWS 5:7-9

Christ obeyed the plan of his heavenly Father even unto death. For that reason, he has become the source of eternal Salvation for all who believe in him.

**GOSPEL**—JOHN 12:20-33

The hour of the Son has arrived, the hour of his glorification on the Cross. As Jesus is lifted up in that saving event, all men and women will be drawn up into the Paschal Mystery.

#### Church Teaching: Christian Prayer

The practice of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of God, whom we acknowledge as Father, Son, and Spirit. Prayer is itself a gift from our Creator God. That is why prayer can sometimes go beyond words or rationality. It can be contemplative, even ecstatic, where we are “swept up” into an experience of God. The Holy Spirit is the artisan of the living tradition of prayer. Whatever form prayer takes (blessing and adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, or praise) and whichever way it is expressed (vocally, meditatively, or contemplatively)—the Spirit is its guide.

#### Additional Background

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 2740, 2742, 2744, 2745

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:** Chapter 35 (God Calls Us to Pray), especially the section entitled “Prayer in the New Testament,” pages 466–468

**Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II:** pages 37, 69, 93, 101, CPP

### Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth, a candle, a Lectionary or Bible, and (if available) a Liturgy of the Hours book and various Catholic prayer books.

#### Discover

1. Ask the children whether anyone knows what it means to “take someone by the hand.”
2. Share with the children a time when someone “took you by the hand.” Explain how the person(s) did so and how that experience made you feel.
3. Invite the children to remember times when someone “took them by the hand.” Invite volunteers to tell about that experience and how it made them feel.
4. Ask the children whether they have ever “taken someone by the hand.” If so, invite them to explain what they did and why they did so.

#### Deepen

1. Proclaim the First Reading, Jeremiah 31:31-34.
2. Invite the children to imagine the passage in Jeremiah being spoken directly to them: “I took you by the hand to lead you from the land of Egypt.” Ask:
 

*What do these words tell you about God?*

*How do these words make you feel? Why?*
3. Now invite the children to imagine these words being spoken to them: “I will place my law within you and write it upon your heart: I will be your God, and you shall be my people.” Ask:
 

*What do these words tell you about God?*

*How do these words make you feel? Why?*

4. Finally, invite the children to imagine these words being spoken to them: “I will forgive your evildoing and remember your sin no more.” Ask:

*What do these words tell you about God?*

*How do these words make you feel? Why?*

### **Pray**

Sing or listen to a recording of the Responsorial Psalm from today’s liturgy, Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15.

## **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 pencils or pens.

### **Sunday Word**

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15

Hebrews 5:7-9

John 12:20-33

### **Welcome**

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

### **Invite**

1. Proclaim the Second Reading, Hebrews 5:7-9.
2. Ask: *In this reading, how did Jesus pray? Why were his prayers heard?*
3. Invite volunteers to share with their sponsors or with family members how they pray. Encourage them to describe:
  - When they pray
  - Where they pray
  - Their favorite prayer
  - Who taught them to pray
  - When and how often their families pray together
4. If time allows, invite volunteers to share some of their responses.

5. Conclude by explaining that prayer is a very important part of our Catholic faith tradition.

### **Teach**

1. Continue the discussion of prayer, highlighting the following points:
  - Prayer is God’s invitation to grow in our relationship with him.
  - Prayer is always possible, at any time and anywhere.
  - Prayer is not limited by words.
  - Prayer comes from the heart.
  - There is no right or wrong way to pray.
  - Prayer takes many shapes and forms.
  - There are five types of prayer: praise, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and contrition.
2. Review with the children the Key Teachings and Faith Words from the participant handout. If time allows, help the children experience one of the ways of praying listed in Key Teachings.

### **Challenge**

1. Invite the children to decide on one or more times they will stop to pray to God each day in the coming week—perhaps the first thing in the morning or the last thing in the evening; on the way to school; before a test; before meals; before practice; or before a game.
2. Have them write their choices in the My Prayer Time box on the participant handout.
3. Encourage them to try the three kinds of prayer with their families by using the Three Kinds of Prayer handout.

### **Pray**

Invite the group to pray a prayer of the heart—to close their eyes and talk to God silently or pray together A Prayer of Petition, page 101 of *Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II*.