

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE RCIA

PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Third Sunday of Lent, Cycle A Readings Used

FIRST READING—EXODUS 17:3-7

The ancient Israelites complain that God has led them out of their “comfortable” slavery in Egypt only to die of thirst in the desert. When God responds to the people’s complaint, Moses is instructed to strike the rock and water would flow from it.

SECOND READING—ROMANS 5:1-2, 5-8

This section of Paul’s letter focuses on God’s love, which has been poured into our hearts through the action of the Holy Spirit and given as a gift even while we were sinners. The reference to “poured out into our hearts” can clearly be interpreted as a baptismal reference.

GOSPEL—JOHN 4:5-42 OR 4:5-15, 19B-26, 39A, 40-42

The dialogue between Jesus and the woman is held on two levels. It is used by Jesus to communicate on a higher—or spiritual—truth, while the unenlightened understand this same image on a lower—or natural—level. In this instance, the image is of water. Jesus offers “living water.”

The woman does not understand at first and asks for the living water so she will not grow thirsty again. The water that Jesus gives is not that which is contained within a well but vital, living water, the fountain welling up from within a person to provide authentic life in the Spirit.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: Key Images and Icons:

The Desert: 2119

The Rock: 424, 1972

The Laying on of Hands: 699, 1150

The Well: 2560

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth, a Bible or Lectionary, and a bowl of water.

Respond:

1. Provide some quiet time for the children to reflect on the Liturgy of the Word and the Rite of Scrutiny just celebrated.
2. After some quiet, invite them to share a word, a phrase, or a feeling that they most remember from the liturgy.

Enhance:

1. After everyone has had an opportunity to share, ask them to consider what that word, phrase or feeling says about
 - Who God is
 - What God wants for all of us
2. Ask another volunteer to share the meaning of the word *sin*. (*Sin is freely choosing to do wrong. It hurts our relationship with God and with the Church.*)
3. Invite volunteers to share what they sang, saw, felt, or heard in the liturgy about sin.
4. Ask a volunteer to share the meaning of the word *grace*. (*Grace is the gift of God’s sharing his life and love with us.*)
5. Invite volunteers to share what they sang, saw, felt, or heard about God’s grace in the liturgy.
6. Finally, ask the children whether anyone can name a way we should be different—act differently, speak differently, do something differently—because of the liturgy we just celebrated.

Pray

Conclude by praying Prayer B from the Penitential Rite, Liturgy of the Word (RCIA 296).

Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup, you will need copies of the participant handout.

Sunday Word

(Note: Readings are for third Sunday of Lent, Cycle A.)

Exodus 17:3-7

Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

John 4:5-42

Welcome

Welcome everyone and spend a few minutes inviting everyone to share memories and experiences from the liturgy and the Rite of Scrutiny just celebrated. Also invite any questions the group may have about the experience.

Uncover

1. Proclaim the First Reading, Exodus 17:3-7.
2. Begin a conversation based on the reading by asking these or similar questions:

Why were the Israelites grumbling against Moses?

Can you think of any people in the world who are thirsty today?

When Moses struck the rock, the water flowed out for all to drink, to have their thirst quenched.

How can we help thirsty people in the world today?

3. Use the Key Teachings section of the participant handout.

Purify

1. Lead participants in a guided reflection, outlined for you on the following page.

2. After a few minutes of quiet, invite those who wish to share their experiences of the guided reflection. Ask how they felt during the reflection. What did they think of? What is the living water Jesus offers them?

Enlighten

1. Continue the discussion of the Gospel, highlighting the following discussion points:
 - Jesus offered the woman living water. At first, she did not understand the meaning of what he was offering.
 - In speaking further with Jesus, the Samaritan woman was led to embrace him as prophet and eventually as the Messiah—the one who was promised to them.
 - Our faith is based on our meeting and believing in Christ, who leads us to God.
 - Our personal relationship with Christ grows with the help of the entire Christian community, the Church, and it is strengthened through the life-giving waters of God's Word and the sacraments.
2. Review the Key Images listed in the To Help You Remember section of the participant handout.

Live

1. Remind the children that the journey toward the waters of Baptism continues. Beginning with this First Scrutiny (Penitential Rite) and the proclamation that Jesus is the Living Water, the whole Church prepares to renew their baptismal promises at Easter.
2. Conclude by referring to the Reflection section of the participant handout.

Pray

Say or sing together the Responsorial Psalm from today's liturgy.

Quiet yourself and close your eyes. (Pause)

Remember that wherever you are, God is there, too. (Pause)

Picture yourself at the well of Samaria.

It is noon and it is very hot.

You have come to draw water for your family. (Pause)

Jesus comes toward you and asks you for a drink.

What do you do?

What do you say? (Pause)

*Remember that Jesus asked the Samaritan woman
to go and get her husband.*

What question will he ask you?

How will you answer? (Pause)

Talk with Jesus about what you thirst for.

Do you thirst for friends?

Do you thirst for happiness?

Do you thirst for peace in your family?

What do you thirst for? (Pause)

*Think about what keeps you from going to the well
and receiving the living water.*

Maybe you are too busy.

Maybe other things seem more important.

Maybe you are afraid. (Pause)

Ask Jesus to give you the living water. (Pause)

*And when you are ready to return to this place,
open your eyes.*