

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE RCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord • Year B • March 24, 2024

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ISAIAH 50:4-7

The prophet describes the Suffering Servant of God. Jesus Christ is the Suffering Servant. The servants of the Most High look to God for their help.

SECOND READING—PHILIPPIANS 2:6-11

Christ obeys the plan of the Father and sacrifices himself for the Salvation of all. Thus he is exalted as Lord.

GOSPEL—MARK 14:1–15:47

The crowds acclaim Jesus as he enters Jerusalem. Only days later, he is put to death on a cross. The pagan soldier is so moved, he declares this executed criminal to be the very Son of God!

Church Teaching: *The Gift of Perseverance*

In the midst of blessings and trials, the aspiration of every believer is to remain steadfast in faith to the very end. The Son of God has modeled this “final perseverance” for us in an exemplary fashion. Believing in him, encouraged by Baptism, assisted by the Church, emboldened by community, we strive to open ourselves in every situation of life to the love of God that guides us on right paths, even when in particular circumstances, we find that we share in the cross of suffering and pain.

We remain steadfast in faith. We persevere to the end because even in the most difficult of our present situations, we know that good is being done by our perseverance.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1820, 1821, 2016

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 8 (The Saving Death and Resurrection of Christ), especially the section entitled “Lift High the Cross,” pages 91–93

Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II: pages 22–23

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a red cloth, palms, a candle, and an open Bible or Lectionary.

Discover

1. Ask the children:

How many of you have taken part in a Palm Sunday liturgy before today?

Where were you?

What do you remember about that liturgy?

What was different about the beginning of today's Mass?

2. Invite a volunteer to explain why we were given palms today.

3. Encourage the children to find a special place at home to display their palms, perhaps on a prayer table or near a cross. Explain that the palms they received today are burned to create the ashes for next Ash Wednesday.

Deepen

1. Proclaim the Second Reading, Philippians 2:6-11.

2. Share with the children

- How much the Son of God loves us. He showed his love by choosing to come down to earth and be like us in all ways but sin.
- That our response to Jesus' great love is to praise and exalt him for his great gift of life and love
- That one of the ways we exalt Jesus is to “bend the knee”—to genuflect. (Invite the children to stand and to practice genuflecting.)

Pray

Invite the children to say why they want to praise and exalt Jesus today. Give all present time to think about this in the quiet of their hearts. Then, together, praise and exalt Jesus by genuflecting.

Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup, you will need the participant handouts, a flip chart or whiteboard, and markers. You may also wish to prepare for the children and their families and sponsors a listing of all Holy Week and Triduum liturgies and events.

Sunday Word

Mark 11:1-10 or John 12:12-16 (Procession with Palms)

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalms 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24

Philippians 2:6-11

Mark 14:1-15:47

Welcome

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

Invite

1. Discuss with the children:

What does it mean to obey?

Whom do you obey?

When is it easy to obey? Why?

When is it hard to obey? Why?

2. Invite the group to help you name five reasons it is important to obey/to be obedient. List these on the flip chart or whiteboard.

3. Ask:

Whom did Jesus obey?

How did Jesus obey his Father in Heaven?

Do you think it was easy or hard for him to obey?

Why?

Teach

1. Invite the children to raise their hands if they have heard of the words *determined, purpose, patience, dedicated, commitment, stick-to-it, and courage*. Encourage volunteers to use these words in a sentence or to give examples for each word.
2. Explain that all of these words can be summed up in the word *perseverance*. Jesus not only obeyed his Father in Heaven, he showed *perseverance*. He stuck to his mission. He was full of courage. He knew his purpose.
3. Write the word *perseverance* on the flip chart or whiteboard. Invite the group to help you make a list of the ways Jesus showed perseverance, ending with his dying on the Cross for us.
4. Review with the group the Faith Words and Key Teachings from the participant handout.

Challenge

Remind the children that Jesus was obedient to his Father in Heaven. Ask them to make a special effort during Holy Week to be obedient to parents, teachers, coaches, those in authority, and God's Laws.

Pray

Invite all present to quietly think of something that is hard for them to do. Then invite all to echo after you: *Jesus, help me to persevere.*