Period of Purification and Enlightenment

Session Features

Catechist Resource

**Catechist Preparation**
Provides a focus on exegetical points or highlights to illuminate or explain the scriptural texts.

**Making Connections**
Links the Key Images and Symbols used in the session to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and provides music suggestions that can be used in the sessions.

**Dismissal Session**
Offers a simple, consistent format that gives the catechist tools to facilitate a gathering with the elect after they are dismissed from the Liturgy of the Word.

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**Purification and Enlightenment Session**

**Catechist Preparation**

**First Reading**—Genesis 2:7–9, 3:1–2
Tempted by the serpent, the man and woman freely respond to the lure of the serpent rather than to the command of God. They sin and they are overwhelmed. This describes the universal human experience of sinfulness.

**Second Reading**—Romans 5:12–19
In our unredeemed state, we are subject to sin, inheriting the legacy left to us by our primeval parents, Adam and Eve. Alienated from God by their sin, Original Sin, and by our own personal sins, we are redeemed by the gift of Christ’s Passion, his suffering and Death.

**Gospel Reading**—Matthew 4:1–11
All three Synoptic Gospels depict the temptation of Jesus in the desert. In Matthew’s version, Satan is called the “tester” (in Greek, peirazon), a title that evokes the testing of the ancient Israelites in the wilderness—a test which the people failed. Jesus does not succumb to the temptations of Satan.

**Making Connections**

**Key Images and Symbols**

- Temptation (Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC] 518, 2119)
- Sin (CCC 1850, 1871)
- The New Adam (CCC 359, 411)
- Righteousness (CCC 1848, 1887, 1991)

**Music Suggestions**
- “Change Our Hearts,” R. Cooney. (GIA)
- “Who Calls You by Name,” D. Haas. (GIA)
- “At the Name of Jesus,” C. Walker. (OCP)

**Dismissal Session**

(About 20 minutes)

Have the space set with chairs in a circle. On a small table place a purple cloth, a dish with sand, and a crucifix.

1. **Respond**
   - Ask the following questions, and invite the group to reflect on them:
   - What did you see or hear in the Liturgy of the Word?
   - What word, phrase, or image from the readings stays with you?

2. **Enhance**
   - Invite the participants to consider the following questions in quiet. Some might want to write their responses on a piece of paper or in a journal:
   - What is the Lord asking of you this Lent?
   - In what ways do you experience temptations, and how do you respond to them?
   - How is this Liturgy of the Word leading you more deeply into Lent?
   - After a few moments of silent reflection, invite several volunteers to share their response to the last question.

3. Use the following points to summarize:
   - Lent is a time of spiritual recollection (retreat time) to prepare for initiation into the Church and, in particular, the baptismal renunciations and promises.
   - Lent is a time to sort out what leads us into a deeper relationship with God and what leads us away from God.

**Pray**

Use Minor Exorcism #4F from the RCIA text.
Extended Catechesis Session
Guides the catechist in leading the extended sharing, which takes place among catechumens after the Sunday Mass or later in the week.

Welcome
Reminds the catechist to gather everyone in an atmosphere of hospitality and warmth.

Uncover
Offers ideas to ground the group in their experience of Liturgy.

Purify
Helps the catechist lead the elect in a deepening of their self-searching and repentance based on the Sunday Liturgy.

Enlighten
Offers points of reflection on Church teaching and key images and symbols of the season.

Live
Encourages the participants to integrate learning into their daily lives.

Pray
Offers ideas or specific text with which to conclude the session.