

# Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA  
Forms of Prayer

## Catechist Preparation

### Clarifying the Essentials

The earliest Christians' prayer experience gives us a pattern to follow. We are founded on apostolic faith, animated by charity, and nourished by the Eucharist.

- The descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, which gave birth to the Church, took place as the Apostles were praying (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2623).
- As Sacred Scripture tells us, the initial Christian community at Jerusalem devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching, fellowship, the Eucharist, and the prayers (see CCC 2624).

The Holy Spirit constantly inspires believers to pray.

- The faithful hear the prayers contained in Sacred Scripture and give voice to their own prayer, especially through the Psalms (see CCC 2625).
- The Spirit also prompts new expressions of prayer, which bear witness to Christ at work in the Church's life, sacraments, and mission (see CCC 2625).

### Why Is This Important?

We are not left to our own devices in prayer. The Holy Spirit empowers believers to pray and enables us to pray as we ought. The witness of Scripture and the Church provide us with models to guide us. Christian prayer includes blessing and adoring God, petitioning him, interceding for others, giving thanks to the Lord, and praising him. Each of these forms of prayer can often blend into one another.

Our prayer adds nothing to the greatness of God. Rather, it makes us grow in divine grace, ever more attuned to God's loveliness, grandeur, and awesome power.

*Here is a medicine to relieve grief and every bad circumstance and every pain. What is it?*

*To pray and to give thanks in everything.*

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

## Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Arrange chairs in a circle. Place in the center a candle, an open Bible, a rosary, and prayer booklets.

### Welcome

Greet people as they arrive. Check in with everyone to find out how they are doing.

### Pray

Pray an Act of Faith. Have a copy available for each participant.

### Engage

1. Write on a whiteboard: in need, in thanksgiving, in praise, in sorrow. Invite all to consider such occasions when people pray. Ask, *When do you turn to God in prayer? Give some specific examples.*
2. Continue with these questions in small groups and summarize in the large group.  
*Do you have questions about praying in general?  
What have you heard about the way Catholics pray?*
3. Continue with the **Insight** and **For Reflection** sections of the participant handout.

### Teach

Discuss the **Church Teaching** section, using these points:

- From the beginning, people have prayed both alone and in groups. In the early Church, the believers gathered to pray, to hear the Gospel, to break bread, and to share in fellowship.
- The Holy Spirit opens our minds and hearts to give thanks and praise to God the Father. Our prayers do not add to God's greatness but help us to grow in a loving relationship with him.

### Apply

Ask participants to consider these questions:

- In what way am I affirmed in my understanding?*
- What insight into this Church teaching did I gain?*

### Pray

Explain that prayer sometimes includes a call and response. Pray a litany of thanksgiving, using the response: "We thank you, Lord."