

## Preparation for the Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil

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*Prior to the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil, it is important to provide a time for spiritual preparation for the elect and their parents, godparents, and catechists. The optimal time for this gathering is Holy Saturday morning (see OCIA 185). This outline offers a suggestion for how to facilitate the preparation time.*

### Setting

Option 1. Use the worship space, if it is available on Holy Saturday morning.

Option 2. Arrange chairs in a circle. Place a small table in the middle with a purple cloth, a Bible, and a candle.

### Supplies

1. In addition to the items needed for the prayer table, you may wish to provide participants with a handout containing the opening and closing song/refrain, the opening prayer, and the reflection questions used throughout the session. In addition, you will need a copy of the Apostles' Creed (or the Nicene Creed, if that is the creed that was previously presented to the elect) for each participant. [Note: If you choose to do the ritual suggestion outlined in the Baptism section, you will also need paper, pencils or pens, and crayons or markers for the participants.]
2. Provide name tags if needed.
3. Have adult volunteers ready to supervise and offer refreshments to the children and youth at the conclusion of the gathering.

### Opening Prayer

1. Begin with an opening song or refrain familiar to the group such as "Jesus, Remember Me" (J. Berthier/GIA Publications).
2. Explain that the Opening Prayer is a litany of thanks and praise. Serve as the leader, and invite all to offer the response, "We give you thanks and praise."

Leader: Loving God,  
we gather today to pray and to prepare  
for the celebration of the Sacraments of  
Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

Leader: You walk with us on our journey.  
ALL: WE GIVE YOU THANKS AND PRAISE.

Leader: You have helped us to know you,  
the one true God.

ALL: WE GIVE YOU THANKS AND PRAISE.

Leader: You have opened our minds and hearts  
to your marvelous works.

ALL: WE GIVE YOU THANKS AND PRAISE.

Leader: For what else do we give thanks and praise?  
(Response to each sharing is:  
WE GIVE YOU THANKS AND PRAISE.)

Leader: With hearts full of thanks and praise,  
let us pray in the words that Jesus taught us.

ALL: OUR FATHER . . .

# Young Apprentices

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## RESOURCE ARTICLE: FOR THE CATECHIST

### Looking Back

1. Invite the elect to sit with their parents, godparents, and catechists.
2. Lead them to quietly reflect on their journey of faith by asking them to name the people and the events that have helped them prepare for their initiation into the Catholic faith. Use these or similar questions to guide them:
  - *Who has helped you to know Jesus? How would you now describe Jesus to a person who has never heard about him?*
  - *Who has helped you to pray? When do you pray? How do you pray? In what way do you find it easier to pray now?*
  - *Think back to when you first started to come to our sessions. How did you feel? What were you expecting it to be like? Have you always wanted to be baptized? Why or why not?*
  - *To be baptized is a very important decision. Do you really want to be baptized? (Do you really want to be confirmed? Do you really want to receive your First Communion?) Why is this something you really want to do?*
3. Allow some time for the children and youth to first share their responses with their parents and godparents, and then invite volunteers to share their thoughts with the whole group.

### Baptism

1. Lead the elect to reflect on the baptismal formula for the renunciation of sin and the profession of faith.
2. Meditatively read each set of questions; stop for quiet reflection; then invite the children and youth to share responses with their parents and godparents.

*In the celebration of Baptism, you will be asked: Do you reject Satan? How will you answer? In what ways does Satan tempt you?*

*You will be asked: Do you reject all his works? What are the works of Satan that you reject? When and where do you see Satan at work in your life?*

*You will be asked: Do you reject Satan's empty promises? What are his empty promises?*

### Rejecting Satan: A Ritual Suggestion

Invite the children, parents, and godparents to write or draw on paper one way that Satan tempts them OR what work of Satan (and what empty promise) they want to reject. Use a small brazier, and burn the writings or drawings as a symbolic letting go of Satan, his works, and his empty promises.

### Recitation of the Creed

*In preparation for the Recitation of the Creed, it may be helpful to begin with the following reflection/discussion questions.*

1. Remind the elect that in the celebration of Baptism, we profess our faith. Explain to them:

*You will be asked: Do you believe in God the Father, creator of heaven and earth?*

*You will be asked: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son?*

*You will be asked: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?*

2. Ask the children and youth:

*How will you answer those questions?*

*What do you mean when you say that you believe in God—Father, Son, and Spirit?*

*What does it mean for you to say that you believe in the holy catholic Church?*

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3. Invite the group to recite together the Apostles' Creed. Then invite them to follow along as you reflectively read it aloud again, pausing periodically to invite volunteers to paraphrase what has just been stated in the creed. [Note: If the Nicene Creed was presented to the elect, you may choose to recite the Nicene Creed. See OCIA 196.]

### Confirmation

1. Explain to the elect that in the celebration of Confirmation, the priest will take the sacred Chrism and anoint their heads while saying, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." Ask:  
*What gift do you desire? Why?*  
*What do you want to have "sealed in" or "sealed out"?*
2. Invite the children, their parents, and their godparents to reflect on those questions, and then invite volunteers to share their thoughts with the entire group.

### Eucharist

1. Remind the elect that in the celebration of the Eucharist, the priest and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion will offer them the host while saying the words, "The Body of Christ." They should respond, "Amen." Then they will be offered the wine with the words, "The Blood of Christ." They should again respond, "Amen."
2. Invite volunteers to respond to the following question:  
*You have waited a long time to receive Jesus in Holy Communion. After you have received the Body and Blood of Christ, and when you return to your pew, what will you say to Jesus?*

### Going Forth into the Day

1. Encourage the children and their parents and godparents and catechists to spend time throughout the day thinking about what it will mean for them to be baptized, to be confirmed, and to receive Eucharist for the first time.
2. Assure them that all will be ready for them. Answer any concerns that they may have.
3. Lead the Prayer of Blessing and Dismissal given in OCIA 204 and 205.
4. Conclude by singing a familiar hymn or refrain. (The suggestion given for the opening song/refrain would work well here, too.)

### Rehearsal

1. If possible, have the children and youth move to a different space for light refreshments.
2. Hold a brief rehearsal with their parents and godparents.