

Preparation for the Rite for Entrance into the Catechumenate

A week or two before the celebration of the Rite for Entrance into the Catechumenate, time needs to be set aside for all who will be participating. Those present for the preparation session should include the celebrant, the children and their parents, sponsors, catechists, and the coordinator of the OCIA process. Please note that while parents have a significant role in the rite itself, they cannot be the godparents or Confirmation sponsors.

A Sample Preparation Session

To Prepare Ahead of Time

1. Set the environment with chairs arranged so that the parents, sponsors, and child are in their own circle, gathered around a focal point. The focal point could be a table that includes a cloth in the color of the liturgical season, an open Bible, a cross or crucifix, and a lit candle. If multiple tables are not available, the family groups could be arranged around a large prayer table that includes the same environment.
2. Provide a copy of Psalm 27 and a copy of the discussion questions (see *Deepen* #5) to each participant.
3. Provide poster board and crayons or markers to each small group.

Welcome

1. Welcome everyone in the group and invite family members and sponsors to sit with their child/the child they are sponsoring.
2. Pray together Psalm 27.



3. Invite each small group to use a poster board and crayons or markers to draw themselves taking a trip. Help them consider the details they will include by asking discussion starter questions such as the following:

Where are you going on your trip?

What kinds of things will you do on your trip?

Will you use a map or GPS to plan your trip?

What will you pack in your suitcases?

After the groups have had sufficient time, invite families to share their posters and talk about their plans for taking a trip.

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

RESOURCE ARTICLE

Deepen

1. Proclaim Genesis 12:1-4a.
2. Invite the small groups to compare Abram's preparation for his journey with their plans for a family trip. After sufficient time has been given, ask the whole group to share the similarities and differences they see between Abram's journey and the trips and journeys they plan as a family.
3. Continue the discussion, highlighting the following discussion points:
 - The OCIA process is also a journey.
 - The time from when they began the process to now has been a time of preparation for setting out on the journey.
 - During this preparation time, much has been said about God, Jesus, Mary and the saints, the Holy Trinity, prayer, the Church, and many other faith-related things.
 - The Rite for Entrance is the first public step on the next part of the journey.
 - It is the step that is taken by those who want to be baptized into the family of God.
4. Invite all to stand. Sing a Gospel Acclamation, and proclaim John 1:35-42.
 - Ask the participants why they think the disciples decided to follow Jesus.
 - Invite volunteers to share whether they would have followed Jesus. Why or why not?
 - Invite volunteers to share questions they would want to ask Jesus if they met him face to face today. (Note: You may want to record these questions on a whiteboard or flip chart for future use.)

5. Explain that in the Rite for Entrance, the children will be asked some questions. Invite all to return to their small groups to discuss the questions.

What do you want to become?

Why do you want to become a Christian?

What would you ask God for?

What can this community do to help you?

Why do you want to follow Jesus?

After enough time has been given for small-group discussion, invite volunteers to share their responses to the questions.

Challenge

Give everyone a copy of the readings that will be used in the Rite for Entrance and encourage them to read and discuss the passages at home. Also encourage the children to continue to think about and discuss with their families their responses to the questions (see **Deepen** #5).

Pray

For the closing prayer, invite each family group to pass the cross or crucifix from one person to the next, inviting each person to hold the cross or crucifix while offering a silent prayer of thanksgiving to Jesus.