

Liturgical Resources

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Preparation for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation (Easter Vigil)

Preparation

Prior to the celebration of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation, it is important to provide a time for spiritual preparation for the elect and their godparents and/or sponsors and members of the RCIA team. This outline is merely a suggestion for how to facilitate the preparation time.

Setting

Option 1: Use the worship place proper if it is available on Holy Saturday morning. **Option 2:** Arrange chairs in a circle. Place a small table in the middle of the gathering space with a purple cloth a Bible and a candle.

Gathering

Option 1: Use the Preparatory Rites on Holy Saturday, RCIA 186–205. **Option 2:** If the parish has Liturgy of the Hours Morning Prayer, join them for the prayer, and then gather with the elect and their godparents and/or sponsors.

1. Lead the opening prayer, using these or similar words: *Father, we gather today to prepare for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. You have called us on this journey. We thank and praise you. You have helped us to know you the one, true God. We give thanks and praise to you. You have opened our minds and hearts to your marvelous works. We give thanks and praise to you. For what else do we offer our thanks and praise? (pause for additions) For these and all the prayers we hold in the quiet of our hearts, we pray the words that Jesus taught us to pray: Our Father . . .*
2. Invite the participants to quietly reflect on their journey of faith, naming the events and people who have helped them to arrive on this of preparation for initiation. Use these, or similar, questions:

Through the years, who has helped you to know Jesus? In what ways have they helped you?

In what way has your experience of prayer changed and/or deepened?

What and/or who has brought you to the decision to seek initiation into the Catholic faith?

3. Allow some time for sharing in small groups, then invite volunteers to share their reflections with the large group.

4. Encourage the participants to reflect on the baptismal formula for the renunciation of sin and Profession of Faith. Use these or similar words: *Let us recall that in the celebration of Baptism, we are called to reject Satan, his works, and his empty promises.* Ask the following questions:

When you are baptized, what are you saying no to?

What are the works of Satan that you reject? When and where do you encounter his works?

What are some of Satan's empty promises, and why are his promises so tempting?

(A ritual suggestion: Have the participants write their responses on paper. Use a small brazier and burn the papers as a symbolic letting go of the temptations.)

5. Continue to lead the reflection, using these, or similar, words: *In the celebration of Baptism, we profess our faith in God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and in the Church.* Ask the following questions:

When you renew your Baptism, what are you saying yes to?

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

What does it mean for you to say that you believe in the Church?
6. Encourage the elect and their godparent and/or sponsor to spend time throughout the day thinking about what it will mean for them to be confirmed and to receive Eucharist for the first time.
7. Conclude with the prayer found in the Rite of Christian Initiation #204.