

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B • February 19, 2011

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ISAIAH 43:18–19, 21–22, 24B–25

The sinfulness of God's people is contrasted with their status as God's witnesses in the world to his mercy and forgiveness. God continues even now to rescue his people from the mire of sin with his merciful love.

SECOND READING—2 CORINTHIANS 1:18–22

Paul affirms his initial preaching: Christ unequivocally fulfills the promises of the Old Testament. He is not “yes” and “no.” He is only God’s “yes” to us.

GOSPEL READING—MARK 2:1–12

Thatched roofing in these houses allowed for easy sunlight or airing out. Jesus praises the ingenuity of those who broke through the roof so that the paralytic man can be cured. This miracle reveals the nature of Jesus’ ministry as one of reconciliation.

Church Teaching

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation provides penitents a peace and serenity of conscience. Most importantly, God heals the broken relationship between the penitent and himself, and reconciles the person with the Church. The sacrament too has a revitalizing effect even on the Church herself, which suffers from broken relationships due to sins. In other words, the entire Church benefits when a penitent celebrates this sacrament. Grace continues to sanctify all in communion who pilgrimage to eternal life.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1434, 1444, 1456, 1468

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 242–243

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 296, 298, 304, 306

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a green cloth, a candle, and an enthroned (reverently opened) Bible. If possible, have the ritual book, *The Rite of Penance*, available to view.

Discover

Invite everyone to reflect on today’s Liturgy quietly for 1–2 minutes. Then have participants respond to the following questions:

- ◆ *What are some signs of hope in the world today?*
- ◆ *What causes your hope to wane?*
- ◆ *What might you tell someone who has “lost” hope?*
- ◆ *How does having hope affect your decisions?*

Deepen

1. Proclaim the First Reading: Isaiah 43:18–19, 21–22, 24b–25. Encourage everyone to close their eyes and lead them in a reflection using these or similar words:

I, the Lord, say to you remember not the past. Remember instead that I call you back to me when you turn away from me. Though you grow tired and prideful, I will always welcome you back, for you are mine and I love you. See, I take away your sins; I do not remember them. You are my children; I have formed you; come back to me with all of your heart!

2. Now after a few quiet minutes, invite the participants to respond to the following:
 - ◆ You cannot stop God from loving you.
 - ◆ God’s deep and abiding love is always present.
 - ◆ We are to share with one another our experiences of God’s abundant love and mercy.

Pray

Sing or play a recording of “Hosea” by Norbert (OCP).

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Sunday Word

Isaiah 43:18–19, 21–22, 24b–25

Psalms 41:2–3, 4–5, 13–14

2 Corinthians 1:18–22

Mark 2:1–12

Welcome

Welcome everyone who is present, including sponsors, team members, and spouses who join the group. Invite one or two people to share some of the key points from the Dismissal Session.

Engage

1. Proclaim the Gospel: Mark 2:1–12 and highlight the following points:
 - ◆ The crowds who follow Jesus wherever he goes
 - ◆ The faith of the paralytic man and those who lower him down through the roof
 - ◆ The disbelief of the scribes who are critical of Jesus' ability to heal
 - ◆ The response of the paralytic man who walks giving thanks and praise to God
2. Then invite the participants to respond to the following questions:
 - ◆ *In what ways do you experience God's healing power and mercy?*
 - ◆ *How have you grown in understanding God's unconditional love and forgiveness?*
 - ◆ *How do you respond to the gift of grace?*

Explore

1. Highlight key points from the Participant Handout's Church Teaching: Anointing of the Sick:
 - ◆ Jesus Christ, the Son of God, freely embraces human life and is the source of forgiveness. Through his earthly life, Jesus shows us God's unconditional love for humanity.

- ◆ In Baptism, we experience God's great love and mercy. God forgives those baptized of all sin.
 - ◆ After Baptism, sinners are invited to experience the merciful and forgiving grace of God in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.
 - ◆ The Spirit prompts us to seek reconciliation with God and the Church in the sacrament. His grace is always available to those who repent, turn back to God and live the Gospel.
 - ◆ Grace calls us to ongoing conversion. Grace helps us to make a sincere confession with a contrite heart and gives us strength to do good.
 - ◆ The sacrament is celebrated privately between the priest and the penitent, though sometimes in a communal setting.
 - ◆ The priest is bound by the seal of confession to never reveal what has been confessed.
 - ◆ The Rite of Penance has four major elements:
 - Contrition
 - Confession
 - Penance
 - Absolution
 - ◆ The Church is revitalized and nourished whenever a member celebrates the sacrament.
2. Highlight the Key Terms and Voices of Faith sections.

Apply

Lead the catechumens and candidates in an examination of conscience:

- ◆ *How have I opened myself to God's love and mercy?*
- ◆ *How have I turned away from God and his will?*
- ◆ *How do I practice love of God and love of neighbor?*
- ◆ *For what do I give thanks and praise to God?*

Pray

Use the minor exorcism RCIA #94G.