

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
The Holy Catholic Church

Catechist Preparation

Clarifying the Essentials

The Church is one, the one Body of Christ.

- ◆ The Church's unity derives from her *source*, the Holy Trinity, one God in three divine Persons; her *founder*, Jesus, whose one sacrifice reconciled all humanity to God; and her *soul*, the Holy Spirit, who joins the members of the Church together intimately in Christ. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 813.)
- ◆ The Church, while one, is characterized by a great diversity of God's gifts and a multiplicity of peoples and cultures. (See CCC 814.)
- ◆ Christ is the Head of the Church (See CCC 792.)

The Eucharist strengthens our communion with Christ and with the members of the Church, the living and those who are being purified and all the saints in Heaven.

- ◆ Faith, a treasure which finds enrichment by being shared, is nourished by the Sacraments. (See CCC 947.)
- ◆ The Sacraments, wherein we partake of God's grace, unite us to one another and to all those who have gone before us in faith. (See CCC 950.)

Why Is This Important?

The Church is the sacrament—sign and instrument of Salvation. She is both a visible and a spiritual edifice. Incorporated as a local gathering of those coming together to worship, the Church is also a universal reality, planted in every land and among every people.

*Let us be buried with Christ
by Baptism to rise with him; let us
go down with him to be raised with him; and
let us rise with him to be glorified with him.*

SAINT GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, ORATIONES

Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Have the space set with chairs, and provide a focal point with a candle and a Bible. Provide name tags and have some refreshments available.

Welcome

Greet the participants as they arrive, and take time for introductions as the session begins. Then invite everyone to pray silently for the Spirit to open their mind and heart to God's message.

Engage

Invite the participants to read and reflect on the story in Insight, share their response to the story, and explore the For Reflection questions together. On newsprint or a white board, brainstorm all the words that the group associates with the word *Church*. Then have them share with a partner a particular experience they have had of Church.

Teach

Summarize or invite the group to read Church Teaching. Then discuss the following:

- ◆ Christ made Peter the visible foundation of the Church. (See Matthew 16:16–19, John 21:15–17.)
- ◆ The Church forms us as the Body of Christ, uniting all in Christ.
- ◆ The Church gathers us, nourishes us through the Sacraments, and directs us out to the world to carry on the mission of Christ.
- ◆ Through our Baptism we are made members of the Communion of Saints, united with the faithful on earth, in Purgatory, and in Heaven.

Apply

Encourage the participants to complete these statements and share their thoughts:

*From the prayer, discussion, and study for this topic,
I understand the Church's teaching to be . . .
I am challenged to live the message of this teaching by . . .*

Pray

Pray the Apostles' Creed together.