

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
The Church Year

Catechist Preparation

Clarifying the Essentials

The Liturgy is celebrated on fixed days throughout the year and is permeated with the mystery of Christ.

- ◆ When the faithful gather to celebrate Liturgy, they are being built up into a spiritual household in Christ. (See CCC 1179.)
- ◆ In the liturgical action, the whole Christ (Latin, *Christus totus*) acts, Head and Body. Jesus, the eternal High Priest, celebrates with his body, which is the Church both in Heaven and on earth. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] 1136.)

The Church observes the memorials of martyrs and other saints throughout the annual cycle of the liturgical year.

- ◆ The saints who lived for Christ, dedicating themselves to him, suffering with him, and now living with him in glory deserve our honor and attention for they are faithful examples of our calling as Christians. (See CCC 1173.)
- ◆ By observing the memorials of holy men and women, from Mary to the Apostles, the martyrs, and all the other saints, the Church unites herself to the Liturgy eternally celebrated in Heaven. (See CCC 1195.)

Why Is This Important?

The Church year, celebrated by Liturgy and the liturgical seasons, proclaims that our days are not dreary and dull. We are made for rejoicing for we have been saved in Christ and transformed by his Resurrection. This mystery permeates the passage of time itself, so that as the days and weeks go by, we are lifted in the Liturgy to share in the heavenly celebration with all the angels and saints around the throne of God.

*The Lord's day,
the day of Resurrection, the day
of Christians, is our day.*

SAINT JEROME

Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Arrange the space with chairs and a focal point with a candle, a Bible, and a visual representation of the liturgical calendar. Provide name tags and have some refreshments available.

Welcome

Greet the participants as they arrive, and take time for introductions as the session begins. Invite everyone to think about the significant events of the past week and, in the quiet of their heart, give thanks to God for those events.

Engage

1. Invite the participants to think of the major events that their family celebrates. Then ask the group to share with others why it is important to remember such events.
2. Ask the group to quietly read the story in Insight. Then explore the For Reflection questions together.

Teach

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

- ◆ The liturgical year celebrates the entire mystery of Christ.
- ◆ Sunday is the day that we gather to remember and to celebrate the mystery of Christ's saving action.
- ◆ The liturgical year developed over a period time, and it includes the seasons of preparation and feasts as well as ordinal (numbered) Sundays.
- ◆ Easter is the culmination of the liturgical year.

Apply

Invite the group to think about one or two saints whose lives are an example to them of how we are called to reach out to the poor and the homeless and other people in special need. Encourage the participants to celebrate the feast days of these saints during the year.

Pray

Invite the group to stand while you lead them in praying a short litany to the saints. Conclude by singing one of the suggested hymns for today's session.