

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Cooperating with Mary in Prayer

Catechist Preparation

Clarifying the Essentials

Mary's spiritual motherhood extends to the entire human race, all men and women.

- ◆ Mary, the Mother of God, gives us Jesus, her son. Thus as our spiritual mother, she offers all our cares and petitions to God (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] 2677).
- ◆ Mary is "blessed among all women" because she believed that God's promises would be fulfilled (Luke 1:42; see CCC 2676).

Mary is the perfect person of prayer.

- ◆ As such, she acts as a symbol or figure of the Church herself (see CCC 2679).
- ◆ The Church loves to pray with Mary. By joining her in prayer we "magnify" the great things God has done for her and through her for us all (see CCC 2682).

Why Is This Important?

Only someone who prayed extensively and deeply in her own life could have so completely submitted to God's plan as did Mary. She is an example of a humble person in devout prayer.

Mary's life of prayer enabled her to follow God's will. She espoused herself to God's plan. She fully entrusts herself to God. As God's "lowly servant," Mary best embodies all the praise and supplication of humanity throughout the ages, directing all to the Most High in prayer.

Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Arrange chairs in a circle. Place in the center a candle, an open Bible, a rosary, and prayer booklets.

Each one is a partaker of this spiritual origin in regeneration. (For) the water of baptism is like the Virgin's womb . . . the same Holy Spirit fills the font, who filled the Virgin . . .

POPE SAINT LEO THE GREAT

Welcome

Greet people as they arrive. Take time for introductions and check in with everyone to find out how they are doing.

Pray

Use the Litany of Loreto or pray the Hail Mary. (Have copies available for the participants.)

Engage

1. Begin with the **Insight** and **For Reflection** sections of the participant handout.
2. Then discuss the following questions. Be sure to record their responses on a whiteboard.

What do you know about who Mary is and why she is important?

What questions do you have about Mary's place in the Catholic Church?

Teach

1. Explain that at the cross of Calvary, Jesus gave his mother to all of us (see John 19:26–27). In Baptism, we become the adopted children of God and Mary becomes our spiritual Mother. In prayer, Mary leads us to her son, Jesus. She exemplifies the true disciple. Her "yes" to the invitation to be the Mother of God could only be the result of a deep relationship (prayer life) with God. God is the ultimate focal point of all prayer. God alone is the One whom we adore.
2. Discuss the **Church Teaching** section. As time permits, discuss any unanswered concerns raised by questions at the beginning of the session.

Apply

Encourage the participants to complete these statements:

What insight into this Church teaching did I gain?

I am challenged to live the message of this teaching by . . .

Pray

Sing or listen to a recording of the Magnificat. (Have copies of the text available for everyone.)