

# Period of Purification and Enlightenment

## Session Features

### Catechist Resource

#### Catechist Preparation

Provides a focus on exegetical points or highlights to illuminate or explain the scriptural texts.

#### Making Connections

Links the Key Images and Symbols used in the session to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and provides music suggestions that can be used in the sessions.

## Purification and Enlightenment Session

CATECHIST

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA  
First Sunday of Lent • Year A • February 21, 2010

### Catechist Preparation

**FIRST READING**—Genesis 2:7–9; 3:1–7

Tempted by the serpent, the man and woman freely respond to the lure of the serpent rather than to the command of God. They are tragically misguided. They sin and they are overwhelmed. This describes the universal human experience of sinfulness.

**SECOND READING**—Romans 5:12–19

In our unredeemed state, we are subject to sin, inheriting the legacy left to us by our primeval parents, Adam and Eve. Alienated from God by their sin, Original Sin, and by our own personal sins, we are redeemed by the gift of Christ's Passion, his suffering and Death.

**GOSPEL READING**—Matthew 4:1–11

All three Synoptic Gospels depict the temptation of Jesus in the desert. In Matthew's version, Satan is called the "tester" (in Greek, *peirazon*), a title that evokes the testing of the ancient Israelites in the wilderness—a test which the people failed. Jesus does not succumb to the temptations of Satan. He succeeds, and, in this success, the new Israel is launched. In the original wandering through the wilderness, the people are challenged by Moses to keep faith as they are tested (see Deuteronomy 6–8). The language used for covenant refers to the Father-Son relationship. God is the parent and Israel the child. All these motifs are found in Matthew's account of the temptation of Jesus: Son of God, testing, and being led in the wilderness.

### Making Connections

#### Key Images and Symbols

Temptation (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] 538, 2119)  
Sin (CCC 1850, 1871)  
Grace (CCC 1987, 1996, 2021)  
The New Adam (CCC 359, 411)  
Righteousness (CCC 1848, 1987, 1991)

#### Music Suggestions

"Change Our Hearts," R. Cooney. (GIA)  
"Who Calls You by Name," D. Haas. (GIA)  
"At the Name of Jesus," C. Walker. (OCP)

First Sunday of Lent  
CATECHIST

### Dismissal Session

(Allow about 20 minutes)

Have the space set with chairs in a circle. On a small table place a purple cloth, a dish with sand, and a crucifix.

#### Respond

Ask the following questions, and invite the group to reflect on them quietly before sharing their responses with the group:

*What did you see or hear in the Liturgy of the Word?*  
*What word, phrase, or image from the readings stays with you?*

2. Invite the participants to share their observations about the environment of the church during Lent. What does the environment say about the importance of the Lenten season? Did anything surprise them? Why?

#### Enhance

1. Invite the participants to consider the following questions in quiet. Some might want to write their responses on a piece of paper or in a journal:

*What is the Lord asking of you this Lent?*  
*In what ways do you experience temptations, and how do you respond to them?*  
*How is this Liturgy of the Word leading you more deeply into Lent?*

2. After a few moments of silent reflection, invite several volunteers to share their response to the last question.

3. Use the following points to summarize:

- Lent is a time of spiritual recollection (retreat time) to prepare for initiation into the Church and, in particular, the baptismal renunciations and promises.
- Lent is a time to sort out what leads us into a deeper relationship with God and what leads us away from God.

#### Pray

Use the Minor Exorcism from the RCIA text #94 F.

#### Dismissal Session

Offers a simple, consistent format that gives the catechist tools to facilitate a gathering with the elect after they are dismissed from the Liturgy of the Word.

#### Respond

Invites the elect to identify what resonates with them from the Liturgy of the Word.

#### Enhance

Encourages the elect to reflect on and name initial insights from the Liturgy of the Word.

#### Pray

Concludes the Dismissal Session with a prayer suggestion.

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#### Extended Catechesis Session

Guides the catechist in leading the extended sharing, which takes place among catechumens after the Sunday Mass or later in the week.

#### Welcome

Reminds the catechist to gather everyone in an atmosphere of hospitality and warmth.

#### Uncover

Offers ideas to ground the group in their experience of Liturgy.

#### Purify

Helps the catechist lead the elect in a deepening of their self-searching and repentance based on the Sunday Liturgy.

#### Enlighten

Offers points of reflection on Church teaching and key images and symbols of the season.

#### Live

Encourages the participants to integrate learning into their daily lives.

#### Pray

Offers ideas or specific text with which to conclude the session.

CATECHIST

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### Extended Catechesis Session

*(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)*

**Readings**  
 Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7  
 Psalm 51:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 17  
 Romans 5:12-19  
 Matthew 4:1-11

**Welcome**  
 Begin by welcoming everyone who is present, including godparents, sponsors, team members, and spouses who are joining the group.

**Uncover**

1. Proclaim the First Reading (Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7).
2. Ask the following questions, and invite the group to reflect on them quietly before sharing their responses with one or two other people:  
*What does this reading proclaim about who God is and what he desires for all of us?*  
*What does it tell us about sin?*  
*What does it tell us about our freedom to make choices?*

**Purify**

1. Read or summarize Repent on the participant page and allow time for reflection and discussion of the For Reflection questions.
2. Use the Responsorial Psalm from today's Liturgy as a meditation. You may wish to invite everyone to close their eyes while you read aloud the verses of the Psalm in a slow, reflective style, pausing frequently.
3. After some silence, invite the participants to share their responses to these questions:  
*What word or phrase stays with you?*  
*What is the message of this Psalm?*  
*What do you want to let go of in order to have a clean heart?*

**Enlighten**

1. Summarize or invite the participants to read the remaining sections of the participant resource and reflect on the questions. Then discuss the following points:
  - With God's grace we can confront sin in our lives.
  - Christ, our Savior, is the New Adam, who does more than right the wrong of Adam and Eve's sin. He overcomes all sin.
  - Acknowledging sin is a necessary step to growing in holiness.
  - Conversion means to turn away from sin and to be faithful to Christ and the Gospel. The whole season of Lent is focused on the need for conversion.
2. Highlight the Key Images and Symbols of the Season section.

**Live**

1. The Scriptures give us clues about having a right relationship with God, others, and all created things. To foster these right relationships, we are encouraged to make use of the three Lenten disciplines: prayer, works of charity (almsgiving), and fasting. Encourage the participants and sponsors/godparents to discuss what these practices are and to share some practical examples of each one.
2. Allow some quiet time for the group to consider what aspects of these three Lenten practices they will focus on during Lent this year.
3. Invite the group to reflect on the questions in Preparing for Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. If there is time, encourage volunteers to share their reflections.

**Pray**

Invite the participants to gather around the table on which you have placed the sand and crucifix. Conclude by praying aloud together the prayer from the participant session.

First Sunday of Lent  
CATECHIST
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