

# Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA  
Third Commandment: Keep Holy the Lord's Day

## Catechist Preparation

### Clarifying the Essentials

The parish is the ordinary place where the household of God gathers to celebrate Sunday Mass.

- ◆ A stable, intentional community, the parish initiates us into liturgical life, gathers us, forms us by Jesus' teaching, and from the Eucharistic assembly sends us to engage in loving works of service (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2179).
- ◆ Sunday is the foremost holy day of obligation, followed by other holy days (see CCC 2177).

Sunday Eucharist represents the source and summit of Christian life.

- ◆ Only serious reasons excuse attendance, such as illness or infant care (see CCC 2181).
- ◆ We avoid most work or activity on Sunday other than Works of Mercy, providing for family needs, or necessary social services (see CCC 2185).

### Why Is This Important?

Other days of the week are filled with the competing demands of work. Sunday is meant to be set aside to celebrate God and our relationship with him.

Mass is the primary part of Sunday, but not necessarily the only part of this holy day. We also piously see to the needs of the poor, the sick, and the elderly. We devote ourselves to family time and care. Sunday is thus a true festival day where we celebrate, serve, reflect, contemplate, and cultivate minds and hearts attuned to God and God's grace.

*[M]embers of the body of Christ,  
seedlings of unity,  
sons and daughters of peace,  
keep this day joyfully,  
celebrate it without anxiety.*

SAINT AUGUSTINE

## Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle, or in clusters, and create a focal point with a candle, an open Bible, and a liturgical calendar. Provide name tags and refreshments.

### Welcome

Greet the participants as they arrive. Take time for introductions and conversation. Then begin with the Sign of the Cross.

### Engage

1. Read the Insight section, and have the participants respond to the For Reflection questions.
2. Invite everyone to think about their childhood and what their family did on Sundays. Ask the participants to share their memory with one other person. Then ask:

*What did your experience teach you about Sunday?*

*What have you observed about the importance of Sunday for Catholics?*

*What questions do your observations raise for you?*

### Teach

Invite the group to silently read Church Teaching. Then discuss the following:

- ◆ Christians celebrate Sunday as the Lord's Day. It is the first day of the week, the day that Jesus rose from the dead. Christians begin the week by joining together to celebrate Mass.
- ◆ The Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life. To participate in Sunday Mass every week is an obligation for every Catholic.
- ◆ The Commandment to keep holy the Lord's Day also calls us to refrain from unnecessary labor. Sunday is to be a day of rest, a time to be renewed.

### Apply

Invite the group to answer the following questions:

*In what way am I affirmed in my understanding?*

*What insight did I gain? How am I challenged to live this teaching?*

### Pray

Sing a hymn from a recent Sunday Mass.