

# Period of Purification and Enlightenment

## Session Features

### Participant Resource

#### Prayer

Provides text that correlates to the readings of the day, which can be used as a gathering or closing prayer.

#### Sunday Word


Lists the Scripture readings for the corresponding Sunday, and provides insights and questions for further reflection based on the readings.

### Purification and Enlightenment Session

**PARTICIPANT**

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA  
First Sunday of Lent • Year A

*O God,  
merciful and just,  
in your compassion  
wipe away our offenses  
and create in us  
a clean heart  
so that, in freedom  
and love,  
we might  
sing your praise.*



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

**Repent**  
The serpent's voice can enter into our minds as we calculate our circumstances. The voice of temptation insinuates that we can do without God or his ways.  
The Tempter's seductive voice says we can cast aside our relationship with the Creator, and come away unscathed. It says we know better than the One who made us.  
We are often faced with temptation in whatever form it comes to us, and we sometimes decide to follow its promptings. We end up excluding God from our lives, rupturing our relationship with God, or disobeying divine Law and the moral norms God has given us.

**For Reflection . . .**  
*Why does sin sometimes hold such sway over us?  
From what sin(s) do you seek release and pardon?  
When and why have you doubted God's Word?*

**Renew**  
Christ succeeded where Adam failed. Christ refused temptation. For his bread as the Only-Begotten Son was the Word of God. His entire life was in obedience to the Father. The mantle of glory which covered Christ was service.  
Jesus Christ is the source of Salvation, a gift from above that exceeds the transgressions below. The saving act of Christ overflows for the many, bringing with it acquittal from sin, abundant life, and righteousness. God, in Christ, remains faithful to his eternal plan even when we are carried away under the impulse of temptation and sin. God's love is steadfast and true.

**For Reflection . . .**  
*When and how have you been moved into goodness—perhaps even greatness—by the grace of God?  
Who has challenged you by pointing out your flaws? How has that helped you?*

Nihil Obstat: Rev. Msgr. Robert Coerver, Censor Librorum  
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RCL+ Benziger

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### Church Teaching: Christ, the New Adam

We cannot escape from the effects of sin alone. We need help. We need a savior. The Good News has been revealed to the world. Jesus Christ is the Savior and he is the embodiment of God's generous mercy to sinners. He is the New Adam, who makes right what went wrong when our first parents sinned against God and his command. Jesus Christ is the New Adam, who offers us an escape from the prison of our own making.

God's grace enables us to confront sin in our lives. With God's help we are able to see our sins and admit our faults. Without that admission we cannot progress toward holiness. Similar to a doctor who probes the wound before treating it, God, through his Word and Spirit, casts a probing and sometimes painful light on our personal sin. Conversion demands an interior judgment that we have sinned in real ways that necessitates real pardon from God.

The Church helps us in reconciliation. The first type of Church activity that promotes reconciliation is prayer, including the intercessory prayer of Mary and the Saints. Another activity is preaching. A third activity is the personal pastoral action aimed at helping an individual return to a healthy and holy relationship with God. Finally, the Church's own witness to the need for continual purification and renewal within and among her members promotes reconciliation.

### Distinctiveness of Church Teaching

Saint Augustine of Hippo says that "God creates us without us, however, he does not save us without us." We have a conscience that must be employed as we contemplate how Jesus saves us and how each of us needs that Salvation.

Acknowledging our sins is the first step in acknowledging the power, love, and mercy of God. It is also a protection against future temptation.

### Key Images and Symbols of the Season

**TEMPTATION**—by which we stumble and fall.

**SIN**—which weighs us down and keeps us from God.

**GRACE**—the sheer gift of God's goodness to us; it buoys us up into authentic life.

**THE NEW ADAM**—Jesus Christ, in whom we are recreated as true adopted sons and daughters of God.

**RIGHTEOUSNESS**—by which we are accounted as living for God alone.

### Preparing for Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist

Is there a particular Scriptural word or phrase, a concept from Church teaching, or an image that resonates with you in this season of grace?

Keeping in mind the experience of this Lenten Sunday as you look forward to Baptism. What will it mean to you that you will be recreated in the image of Christ?



Key Images and Symbols of the Season

Evokes Scriptural, doctrinal, and general faith images to spark the religious imagination of the elect.

Preparing for Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist

Centers the elect on their upcoming full initiation.

### Church Teaching

Identifies and explores a particular aspect of Church teaching based on the corresponding Sunday's readings.

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