

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE RCIA

INQUIRY SESSION: MARY

Inquiry Session (Approximately 60 minutes)

Prepare

You will need the following supplies for this session: a flip chart or white board; markers; drawing paper or blank notecards and envelopes; crayons; pencils and pens; a copy of the Hail Mary for each child or the Hail Mary printed on the flip chart or white board.

Set the space with chairs in a circle and in the center place a candle and a Bible. (Mark the Scripture citations noted in the participant materials.)

If possible, display a statue or pictures of Mary and Jesus. If you choose to do so, also display a picture of your mother.

If needed have nametags. Have some refreshments available, too.

Gather (10 – 15 minutes)

1. Greet the children as they arrive. Invite each child to share his or her name and something good that happened since the last time the group gathered.

Take time to find out how the children are doing.

Ask if they had an experience of prayer or church since the last session.

2. Share with the children the picture of your mother and talk about the qualities you admire in her. Include also the names of other women who have helped you to become the person you are today, and the ways they have helped you do so.

3. Read together the *My Story* section of the participant page. After doing so, use the flip chart or white board and:

- Invite volunteers to share the names of their mothers and other women who have taught them in school, sports, music lessons, scouts,

etc. List the names on the flip chart or white board for all to see.

- Ask those who volunteer to also name a quality (or a word) that describes the women they have named. Write the qualities next to the appropriate names.
- Invite the children to close their eyes and in the quiet of their hearts to tell Jesus “thank you” for their mothers, for the women they have named, and for all the things they have learned from these women.

Expand (15 – 20 minutes)

Read and discuss the *God’s Story* section of the participant page. Continue the story of Mary by sharing the following:

- Mary was betrothed (or engaged) to Joseph, the carpenter. She lived in the village of Nazareth in the territory of Galilee. Her parents were Anne and Joachim.
- One of the special feasts of Mary the Catholic Church celebrates each year is the Annunciation. The Annunciation is usually celebrated on March 25. The feast celebrates Mary’s saying “yes” to becoming the Mother of God. Just as Mary said “yes” to God’s will, we are each asked to say “yes” to God’s will.
- In the Gospel reading on the Solemnity of the Annunciation the angel Gabriel greets Mary with the words, “Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.” These words are in the first half of the Hail Mary, one of the many prayers that Catholics pray.
- When we are baptized we become members of the family of God, a family of faith. Mary is the spiritual mother of our family of faith, the Church. She prays for us.

2. Read aloud each of Scripture passages listed below.

Luke 1:26-38 (Announcement of the Birth of Jesus)

Luke 1:39-43 (Mary Visits Elizabeth)

Luke 2:1-20 (The Birth of Jesus)

After reading each passage, pause and invite the children to retell the passage in their own words.

3. Invite the children to respond to the following or similar questions:
 - What does each passage tell us about Mary?
 - If you were one of the people in the passage, who would you be? Why? What would you have said or done?

Our Response (15 – 20 minutes)

1. Continue the discussion of the Scripture passages with the following questions.
 - Mary is the first follower of Jesus. How did Mary answer the call to follow Jesus?
 - What are some ways each of us can answer the call to follow Jesus?
 - Mary is the Mother of God, and she is the spiritual mother of all. Why do you think the Church wants us to call Mary our mother?
 - What questions do you have about Mary?
2. Invite the children to name mothers they know who give witness to the Gospel. Encourage them to listen to the story of one such woman.

Refer to the participant page, or tell in your own words the story of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton. After doing so, invite the children to name the ways Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton gave witness to the Gospel. Ask them how what she did continues to make a difference in the world today.

3. Distribute paper or notecards, crayons, pencils or pens, and encourage the children to either make a special card or write a thank-you note to their mothers or to a woman in their lives who is like a mother to them.
4. Before concluding the session with prayer, point out the **Faith Words** section of the participants' page and review the faith words with the children.

Pray (2 – 3 minutes)

Remind the children that when the angel Gabriel greeted Mary, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." Ask them if they remember what prayer contains these words. (*The Hail Mary*)

Invite the children to join you in praying the Hail Mary together. Begin and end by praying together the Sign of the Cross.