

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

MYSTAGOGY: JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Fourth Sunday of Easter • Year A • April 26, 2026

Introduction

A period of post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogy should be provided to assist the young neophytes and their companions who have completed their Christian initiation (see OCIA 330). Mystagogy is the final period of post-baptismal catechesis intended to help the neophytes and the Christian community grow in their understanding of the Paschal Mystery through continuing to reflect on God's Word, by taking their place in the assembly for the celebration of the Eucharist, and by continuing to answer Christ's call to love others through works of charity (see OCIA 254).

In this session, the neophytes and their companions will reflect on their baptismal promises and on how Jesus, the Good Shepherd, guides them in their journey of faith.

Supplies

The optimum setting for this session is in the church, gathered around the baptismal font. If a different space must be used, set the space with chairs in a circle and a prayer table covered in white and containing a large white candle, a bowl of holy water, a Bible, and a statue or image of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

Catechist Preparation

1. Read the Scriptures for the Fourth Sunday of Easter.
2. Reflect on your baptismal promises to reject Satan and all his empty works. What is your own need of change and conversion right now, today?
3. Reflect on Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Where or how has he led you on your journey of faith in recent days?

Word of God

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Psalm 23:1-3, 3-4, 5-6

1 Peter 2:20b-25

John 10:1-10

Gather

1. Greet the children and their families as they arrive.
2. Take time for introductions and check in with everyone to find out how they are doing.

Deepen

1. Gather the group around the baptismal font or the prayer table.
2. Invite volunteers to help the group recall the experience of Baptism at the Easter Vigil by asking:
 - What did it feel like to be immersed in the baptismal waters?
 - What words did the priest say as you were being baptized?
 - What happened right after you were baptized?
 - What else do you remember about your Baptism?
3. Allow for a few moments of silent reflection, then invite the participants to bless themselves with holy water and to pray the Sign of the Cross.
4. Refer to the **Deepen** section of the participants' handout.

Meditate

1. Light the candle (if not already lit), sing an Easter Alleluia, and proclaim the Gospel: John 10:1-10.
2. Ask the group to describe the role of the shepherd.
3. Invite volunteers to share why the title of "Good Shepherd" is a good title for Jesus.
4. Invite all to return to their seats, and continue the discussion as follows:
 - Through Baptism you have become part of the Body of Christ, the Church. Jesus is the Head of the Church.
 - Jesus is also the Good Shepherd, watching over and caring for you, the sheep of his flock.

- How does the Good Shepherd speak to you?
How do you know when you hear his voice?
(*Answers will vary, but may include: he speaks to us through his Word; he speaks to us through those who teach us about him; he speaks to us when we pray; his voice speaks words of peace; his voice leads us to what is right and true, etc.*)

5. Read and discuss the **Meditate** section of the participants' handout.

Share

1. Read and discuss the **Share** section of the participants' handout.
2. Invite the participants to name some of the people whom they consider to be their guides and why. What do those people say? What do they do that makes them good guides?
3. Explain that part of our responsibility as the baptized is to be the presence of Jesus to others. Invite volunteers to name ways we can guide others to know and to believe in the Good News of Jesus by what we say and by what we do.

Do

1. Encourage the children to take some time this week to tell their guides, "Thank you" and to pray for their guides each day.
2. Also encourage them to watch for opportunities every day to be a guide to someone else through what they say and through what they do.

Pray

Invite all to close their eyes, to picture their guides, and to ask God to bless their guides. Conclude by praying, "**Lord, we thank you for those who guide us in your ways of truth and love. Bless them. Help us be good guides to others, too. Amen.**" Then sing an Easter Alleluia or refrain.