

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles • Year C • June 29, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ACTS 12:1-11

The Church is fervently praying for Peter, who is imprisoned, heavily guarded and secured by double chains. Into this seemingly hopeless situation, God sends an angel to lead Peter to freedom. We are reminded that God alone is our deliverer.

SECOND READING—2 TIMOTHY 4:6-8, 17-18

Paul recounts the Lord's faithfulness in times of difficulty and danger and looks forward to the heavenly home that awaits him. His words are meant to be both a comfort and an encouragement to Timothy, and to all who strive to keep the faith no matter the circumstance.

GOSPEL—MATTHEW 16:13-19

Jesus asks the disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They offer various replies, and he further asks, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter alone gives a clear reply, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

Church Teaching

Jesus entrusts to Peter the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. In doing so, Jesus is giving Peter the task of caring for the house of God, which is the Church on earth. This is the ministry and task of each of the Apostles—indeed, of all members of the Church on earth in this and every age.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 871–873

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 132–137

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 177

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Prepare the space by setting chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a white cloth, a candle, an open Lectionary or Bible, and images of Saints Peter and Paul.

Discover

1. Invite the participants to reflect quietly on the liturgy just celebrated and then share with one or two people some of their reactions to the readings. Encourage them to share
 - An image
 - A word
 - A feeling
 - Something that surprised them
 - Something that puzzles them
2. Gather some responses from the large group.

Deepen

Proclaim the First Reading (Acts 12:1-11). Lead a discussion in which the participants consider the following:

- Just as an angel released Peter from his chains and led him to freedom, so angels protect and intercede for Christians on earth today. Every believer has an angel by his or her side (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 336).
- Angels are also the bearers of Good News. Scripture accounts of angels fulfilling this role include Luke 1:26-38 (the Annunciation); Luke 2:8-14 (the announcement of the birth of Christ to the shepherds in the field); and Luke 20:11-13 (the proclamation of the Resurrection of Jesus to Mary of Magdala).

Pray

Pray the Responsorial Psalm from today's liturgy (Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9).

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Readings

Acts 12:1-11

Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18

Matthew 16:13-19

Welcome

Begin by welcoming everyone who is present, including sponsors, team members, and spouses who are joining the group. Invite one or two people to share some of the key points from the Dismissal Session.

Engage

1. Begin by inviting the participants to share with two or three others what they consider to be characteristics of a trustworthy person. Ask them to name persons whom they can trust.
2. Invite large-group sharing.
3. Proclaim the Gospel for today, Matthew 16:13-19.
4. Ask the participants to name what Jesus entrusted, or gave, to Peter.
5. Explain that in giving to Peter the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, also known as “the power of the keys,” Jesus is giving Peter the authority to “govern the house of God, which is the Church” on earth (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 553).

Explore

1. Distribute or summarize aloud several articles about the ministry of Pope Francis. Highlight quotes, portions of homilies, recent writings, an overview of his travels, and so on. Then proclaim the Gospel for today, Matthew 16:13-19.
2. Ask the following questions:
What do the articles (homilies, quotes, etc.) tell us about the way in which Pope Francis is “governing the house of God,” the Church on earth today?
Who is assisting Pope Francis in this ministry?
3. Invite several volunteers to share their reflections with the large group.

4. Lead a discussion around the following points:

- In a few weeks, we will hear again today’s Gospel passage, and we will take a closer look at the specific roles of the pope and the bishops.
- Consider what it is that Christ has entrusted to all of the baptized People of God, also known as the Christian Faithful.
- The Christian Faithful includes the pope and the bishops, also known as the hierarchy. It includes priests, who assist the bishops in their ministry, and deacons, who assist priests in their ministry.
- The Christian Faithful includes those who choose as their vocation the consecrated life—men or women who consecrate themselves to God’s service and publicly makes vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.
- Finally, the Christian Faithful includes the laity, also known as the lay faithful or laypeople. These are all the faithful except the ordained and those who have chosen the consecrated life. Each member of the lay faithful, the baptized People of God, is given a special role to play in the mission of the Church.
- No matter the specific role, the role best suited to each person’s gifts and talents, all parts work together to build up the Body of Christ, the Church on earth. In this way, the lay faithful, too, assist the pope in his ministry throughout the world.

5. Highlight key points from *Catholic Teaching: The Christian Faithful*. Also highlight the *Key Terms* and *Voices of Faith* sections.

Apply

Encourage the catechumens and candidates to complete these statements:

From the prayer, discussion, and study for this Sunday, I understand the Church’s teaching to be . . .
I am challenged to live the message of this Sunday by . . .

Pray

Conclude by praying the prayer on the participant page.