

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C • August 3, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ECCLESIASTES 1:2; 2:21-23

The Book of Ecclesiastes is part of the Wisdom literature of the Bible. Elsewhere in the Old Testament, we read that the wise person can live in accordance with the dictates of God and achieve a measure of success in this world. Here, however, the author seeks to convince the reader of the ultimate futility of human life and effort.

SECOND READING—COLOSSIANS 3:1-5, 9-11

In this section of Colossians, believers are warned to put aside all the trappings of their old way of life prior to their conversion to Christ. The perspective of this reading illustrates detachment from worldly wealth, a theme found in the Gospel passage.

GOSPEL—LUKE 12:13-21

Jesus condemns obsessive attachment to material possessions. The core of this teaching of Jesus is to avoid greed. He follows this teaching with a parable that drives home the point that true wealth is found in a deeper relationship with God.

Church Teaching

Traditional catechetical instructions regarding the Tenth Commandment focused on the unjust desiring of another's property. The Fathers of the Church, however, saw property more in the context of stewardship in service of God and Christian love. Thus property is conceived as having a social function within the universal purpose of all created things. Material possessions are to be understood as placed within the universal dominion of God, who owns all things and who is the common Creator of all people.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2534–2541

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 449–457

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 531–533

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Prepare the space by setting chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a green cloth, a candle, and an open Lectionary or Bible. Have also some newspaper clippings or headlines that depict greed, corruption, and exploitation of others.

Discover

1. Invite the participants to quietly reflect on the liturgy just celebrated and then to 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 surprises them
 - Something that puzzles them
2. Gather some responses from volunteers to share with the large group.

Deepen

Proclaim the First Reading (Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23). Lead a discussion in which the participants consider the following:

- One meaning of the word *vanity* is “worthless.” Ask the participants to share what is “worthless” according to this reading. Then invite them to discuss what the sacred writer was trying to convey about value and worth.
- The criteria by which success is determined in our secular world may be how much money one has, how much power one has, signs of prestige or rank or social importance, or other criteria. Invite the participants to reflect on what criteria a believer should use to determine whether someone is successful.

Pray

Pray the Responsorial Psalm from today's liturgy (Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9) in a meditative fashion, pausing after each verse.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Readings

Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23

Psalms 95:1-2, 6-9

Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11

Luke 12:13-21

Welcome

Welcome everyone who is present, including sponsors, team members, and spouses who join the group.

Engage

1. Distribute or summarize aloud several newspaper stories about greed. When all have had a chance to peruse them, proclaim the Gospel for today (Luke 12:13-21).
2. After a few moments of quiet, ask the following questions:

What is the connection between the newspaper clippings and the Gospel?

How do you understand the Gospel message regarding hoarding?

What is the balance needed with regard to possessions or money and the Gospel?

What is it that most matters to God?

3. Invite several volunteers to share their reflections with the large group.

Explore

1. Lead a discussion around the following points:
 - Appetites (the senses) are good; they are a way the body communicates its needs.
 - Moderation, not excess, marks the way of life of a believer. Self-control is a skill to be learned and practiced as part of a life of virtue.
 - It is important to develop an informed conscience, one that is aware of greed and

envy and the harm they cause—both to the self and to the neighbor. Greed is not just the accumulation of possessions but a harmful attitude toward possessions.

- God created all things good (Genesis 1); it is misuse, abuse, or hoarding of things that brings harm out of something that is good.
 - Believers are called to be stewards of all creation; everything is a gift from God, and believers are to use God's gifts as a means of bringing about the Reign of God.
2. Acknowledge that following the teaching of Jesus is not easy, but that his way is the way that leads to freedom. Invite the participants to share examples of times when they overcame feelings of envy or freely shared their possessions.
 3. Highlight key points from **Church Teaching: Prohibition Against Greed and Avarice (Tenth Commandment)**. Also highlight the **Key Terms** and **Voices of Faith** sections.

Apply

1. 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 . . .

2. Encourage the catechumens, candidates, and their sponsors to spend some time this week discussing what they think matters to God. On this basis, encourage them to decide either to change or deepen their understanding of the proper use of wealth, power, and prestige.

Pray

Use the minor exorcism found in the ritual text for the OCIA at 94D. Have the sponsors place their hands on the shoulders of their catechumen or candidate while you pray it aloud.