

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA  
Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C • August 17, 2025

## Catechist Preparation

### Scripture

**FIRST READING**—JEREMIAH 38:4-6, 8-10

Jeremiah was punished because his words were not those people wanted to hear (see Jeremiah 38:2-3). Yet his punishers relented and rescued Jeremiah from the threat of famine and death.

**SECOND READING**—HEBREWS 12:1-4

Saint Paul encourages us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus as leader, Savior, and perfecter of faith. In him we find the strength we need to turn from sin, endure hardship, and persevere in the path of discipleship.

**GOSPEL**—LUKE 12:49-53

Arguments over inheritances, sibling rivalries, and differences of opinion over finances or how best to care for aging parents or young children are often sources of division between parent and child, siblings, and spouses. Here Jesus says that believing in and following him will cause division too.

### Church Teaching

In today's Second Reading, Saint Paul reminds us that we have a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us. Their determination to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus as they ran the race of life and faith are an inspiration for us today.

## 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. If possible, have images of the saints on the table too.

### Additional Background

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 946–964, 2683

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:** pages 160–161

**Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 194, 195

### Discover

Invite everyone to reflect quietly on the Liturgy of the Word just celebrated. Then ask:

*What image, feeling, word, or mood stays with you?  
Why?*

Invite all to close their eyes as you slowly read from today's Second Reading:

*Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith.*

Ask:

*Who is in the great cloud of witnesses surrounding you today?*

### Deepen

Proclaim the entire Second Reading (Hebrews 12:1-4).

### Discuss

- Jesus gave us an example by continuing to hope and trust in the Father, even in his time of suffering and death.
- Praying, reading and reflecting on the Gospels, honoring the Ten Commandments, living the Beatitudes, and performing the Works of Mercy help us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.
- The Communion of Saints is a great cloud of witnesses who surround and pray for us as we run our earthly race.

Ask:

*Who would be consoled by the reading? In what way?  
When in your life would this reading give you hope?  
In what way?*

Invite the participants to share with another person.

### Pray

Recite or sing the Litany of the Saints.

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## Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

### Readings

Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10

Psalm 40:2-4, 18 (14b)

Hebrews 12:1-4

Luke 12:49-53

### Welcome

Begin by welcoming everyone who is present. Invite one or two people to share key points from the Dismissal Session.

### Engage

1. Play a recording or sing a setting of the Litany of the Saints.
2. Proclaim the Second Reading (Hebrews 12:1-4).  
Share a personal experience of a saint—or holy woman or holy man who is a part of your “cloud of witnesses”—and how that person’s life inspires you to run the race with faith and determination.
3. Invite the participants to share examples of those who inspire and encourage them as they continue on their journeys of faith.
4. Proclaim the Gospel (Luke 12:49-53).

Ask:

*What do you think is the message of the Gospel?*

*What does the Gospel teach about faith? About the cost of being a disciple of Jesus?*

### Explore

1. Offer a presentation including the following points:
  - The journey of faith is not made in isolation or alone.
  - The cloud of witnesses give example by their lives and by their writings, and pray for all who walk the journey of faith in Christ on earth today.

- The cloud of witnesses includes the Communion of Saints—Mary and the saints in Heaven, those in Purgatory, and holy women and men (pilgrims) who walk the earth today.
- Jesus is our ultimate model for running the race with hope, perseverance, and determination. He suffered and endured the Cross so that we would not grow weary and lose heart in our journey.
- The Word of God, prayer and liturgy, the Ten Commandments, Beatitudes, and Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy help us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus as we run the race of life.

Highlight key points from *Catholic Teaching: The Cloud of Witnesses and the Communion of Saints*. Also highlight the **Key Terms** and **Voices of Faith**.

### Apply

1. The Church honors Mary and the saints on solemnities, feasts, and memorials throughout the liturgical year. Their stories remind and inspire us to run life’s race with faith and perseverance. Use a liturgical year calendar to point out key feasts of Mary, the Apostles, and saints important to the parish.
2. 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 again playing a recording of or singing the Litany of the Saints. Since this Sunday falls near the Solemnity of the Assumption, consider including part of the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary.