

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C • August 24, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ISAIAH 66:18-21

This passage is taken from the third part of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. It describes an incredible gathering of people from every corner of the earth, streaming to Jerusalem where all—Jew and Gentile alike—will join in worship at the Temple. Even more startling is God's promise to include Gentiles among those who minister as leaders of worship in the Temple.

SECOND READING—HEBREWS 12:5-7, 11-13

In this passage from Hebrews, the author encourages believers to persevere by employing the image of a father disciplining a child in order to make the child strong and healthy. The idea of discipline would be familiar both from Greek culture's athletic experience and from the Jews' experience of rabbinic training.

GOSPEL—LUKE 13:22-30

Here a question is posed about who will be saved. Jesus warns his fellow Jews against assuming that their status as children of Abraham guarantees them anything. His closing statement about the first and the last implies a judgment that the presence of Gentiles at the eschatological banquet may go hand in hand with an exclusion of those in his audience.

Church Teaching

As the Gospel affirms, the Son of God did not come to condemn but to save and give life (John 3:17; 5:26). So how does Christ judge? His judgment takes the form of a Revelation from the Lord. Jesus himself is the fullness of God's Revelation. In the bright light of that Revelation, the truth about the world and each individual will eventually become known.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 668–682, 1020–1060

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 155–158

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:
133–135, 202–216

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Prepare the space by setting chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a green cloth, a candle, an open Lectionary or Bible, and if possible, a picture of Michelangelo's Last Judgment.

Discover

Invite the participants to quietly reflect on the liturgy just celebrated. Then ask them to share with one or two people an image, a word, or something that surprised or puzzled them from the readings. Gather some responses from various volunteers.

Deepen

1. Begin by sharing your experience of a large parish or diocesan event. Include the answers to the following questions:

What was the event?

What was the mood?

What was the purpose of the event? In what way was its purpose achieved?

2. Ask the participants to remember a large, diverse gathering, such as a family reunion or an event that gathers people for a specific purpose. When they are ready, invite them to share that experience with one other person.
3. Proclaim the First Reading (Isaiah 66:18-21).
4. Invite the participants to reflect on the following two questions:
What are some common elements of large gatherings?
What does this Scripture passage tell us about God's desire for all to be one?
5. After they have shared some of their responses aloud, summarize their insights.

Pray

Remind the participants that thanksgiving is an important aspect of prayer. Invite them to pray, in the quiet of their hearts, a word of thanks for all the people who are and who have been a part of their lives.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Readings

Isaiah 66:18-21

Psalms 117:1-2

Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13

Luke 13:22-30

Welcome

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

Engage

In a reflective manner, proclaim the Gospel (Luke 13:22-30). Then discuss the following questions:

Who would be consoled by this passage and in what way?

Who would be challenged by this passage and in what way?

What does it mean to you when you hear phrases, such as “Strive to enter through the narrow gate”; “some of the last will be first, and some are first who will be last”; and “I do not know where you are from”?

What is the posture or status of one who follows Jesus?

Explore

1. Read aloud those portions of the Creed (the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed) that speak of Christ coming to judge the living and the dead.
2. Explain that the Church believes there are two judgments. They are the particular judgment at the time of one's death, leading to Heaven, hell, or Purgatory; and the Final Judgment at the end of time, leading to eternity in Heaven or hell—Purgatory will be no more.
3. Emphasize the fact that these judgments are determined by the lives we have lived. Life on this earth is a journey of conversion. We are called to turn toward God, who longs for us. Conversion

is a process of aligning our choices to the Great Commandment: to love God and to love our neighbor. Invite questions and discussion

4. Highlight key points from **Church Teaching: Final Judgment**. Also highlight the **Key Terms** and **Voices of Faith** sections.

Apply

1. Invite 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 and candidates and their sponsors to do an examination of conscience at the end of each day. Share with them a simple format, such as
 - *Today, I give thanks to God for . . .*
 - *Today, I ask forgiveness for . . .*
 - *Today, I offer forgiveness to . . .*

Pray

Lead an examination of conscience as the prayer. Use the suggested format above or refer to the Order of Penance for additional material. Conclude by praying the prayer on the participant page: *Almighty God, you judge the living and the dead according to your goodness. Through your Son, Jesus, bring forth the harvest of justice. Manifest the fullness of your kingdom by the light of his truth and love. Amen.*