Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C • September 7, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

***First Reading*—**Wisdom 9:13-18b

This passage from the Book of Wisdom echoes the Gospel's call for a fair assessment of what is truly important in life. The author admits that many obstacles stand in the way of acquiring wisdom and making this type of assessment. Only with God's help is it possible to become truly wise.

***Second Reading*—**Philemon 9-10, 12-17

Slavery was long established in the ancient world, and the slave was considered property. Paul was courageous to harbor Philemon's runaway slave and foster his conversion. For Paul to instruct the master to accept Onesimus as his brother is no less amazing.

***Gospel*—**Luke 14:25-33

The two short parables at the close of the Gospel emphasize that discipleship proceeds from a clearheaded plan that should not be undertaken without care and thought. One must know the cost involved in pursuing the way of life that leads to the freedom of God's children.

Church Teaching

All those who, for the sake of the kingdom, practice detachment and willingly endure their daily "cross" find themselves in a very particular condition: they are free. Without the love of God or the amazing, life-giving power of the Gospel, such self-renunciation would seem absurd and foolish, even impossible. But embracing and knowing Christ and the power of his Resurrection, and being re-created in God's redeeming Word, makes such behavior not only intelligible and desirable but possible.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2544–2549

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 449–450

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 532–533

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

On a small table, place a green cloth, a candle, and an open Bible.

Discover

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

Deepen

1. Ask the participants to reflect on the past week, using these or similar questions:

   In what ways were you conscious of God's presence?

   In what ways was this past week a rewarding experience?

   In what ways was this past week a challenging experience?

   If you could change any thing about this past week, what would it be and why?

2. You may want to provide the group with paper and pens and do this as a journaling activity. When they are ready, ask the participants to select one of their answers and share it with one other person.

3. Invite the participants to reflect further on the following questions:

   What takes your time? Your energy? Why?

   What criteria do you use to set your priorities personally and as a household?

   If you could change anything about your weekly routines, what would it be and why?

Pray

Reflectively pray today's Responsorial Psalm, Psalm 90:3-6, 12-17.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Readings

Wisdom 9:13-18b
Psalm 90:3-6, 12-17
Philemon 9–10, 12–17
Luke 14:25-33

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

1. Proclaim the Gospel, Luke 14:25-33.
2. After a few moments of quiet, ask the following questions:

   What disturbs you about this passage?

   What do you find consoling?

   What directions does it give you for making decisions?

   How would you summarize its message?
3. Gather some feedback from the participants' reflections and summarize their responses.
4. Invite two or three parishioners (if possible, a priest, a religious sister, a married couple) to share how they understand this Gospel statement: "So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions" (Luke 14:33). Allow time for the participants to enter into discussion with the presenters.

Explore

1. Lead a discussion, highlighting the following points:
   - Each and every one of Jesus' followers must be willing to embrace the many crosses that come throughout life.
   - All choices are to be determined by how and in what ways they help to bring about the Reign of God.
   - It is important to ponder what takes our time and our energy—to ponder in what ways we are being led to God or away from God, who is to be at the center of our lives.
   - Detachment does not mean not having or using things but rather indicates an attitude of freedom that comes from being grounded in a relationship with God.
   - We are called to love God and to love others, not to possess or to be possessed by them.
2. Highlight key points from ***Church Teaching: Self-Renunciation***. Also highlight the ***Key Terms*** and ***Voices of Faith*** sections.

Apply

Ask 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

Sing one of the hymns from Mass that reflects the Sunday Word, or use the prayer from the participant page as a closing prayer: *God of life, let your light shine upon us. Teach us your holy Law, that we might walk the path that leads to you, so that embraced by you, we might possess all that is truly important. Amen.*

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