

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord • Year C • April 20, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ACTS 10:34A, 37-43

Peter's preaching lays out the entirety of the life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus along with its significance for humanity. Peter proclaims this Good News as one of the chosen witnesses who ate and drank with Jesus after Jesus' rising from the dead.

SECOND READING—COLOSSIANS 3:1-4 OR 1 CORINTHIANS 5:6B-8

Both alternative selections for the Second Reading declare that the Resurrection provides believers with grounding for their new life in Christ. Paul reminds the Colossians that they have died and been raised up in the company of Christ (a baptismal reference) and urges them to live accordingly. In the passage from First Corinthians, Paul urges the community to sweep its house clean in order to truly celebrate and live Christ's saving Passover.

GOSPEL—JOHN 20:1-9

A key element in this account is the role of the beloved disciple. He outruns Peter to the tomb yet allows Peter (the "head" of the Apostles) to enter first. Both then enter, but at this point only the beloved disciple believes.

Church Teaching

John's account, like that of the Synoptics, shows that the disciples do not expect the Resurrection and find it hard to believe until the Risen Lord himself appears to them. Their faith in the Resurrection is founded upon their personal encounters with the Risen One. Our own faith in Christ's Resurrection rests upon their witness to it and upon its saving effect in our own lives.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 638–658

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 89–100

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 126–131

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Have the space set with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a white cloth, a white candle, and an item that reflects the Easter environment of the church.

Discover

1. Invite the participants to share what they observed as they entered the church on this Easter Sunday. Then ask the following questions, and invite the participants to reflect on them quietly before sharing their responses with one or two other people:

What did you see or hear in the Liturgy of the Word?

What word, phrase, or image from the readings stays with you?

2. Invite several participants to share their reflections with the large group.

Deepen

1. Proclaim today's Gospel (John 20:1-9). Then encourage the participants to put themselves in the place of those at the discovery of the empty tomb and ask the following questions:

How might you have responded to the empty tomb?

To whom would you have gone to tell about the empty tomb? Why?

What would have been your concern, fear, or hope?

2. Encourage the participants to share their thoughts about the following:

We, today, know that Jesus rose from the dead as he had foretold. In what way might it be easier for us to grasp the full meaning of the Resurrection than it may have been for those first disciples?

Pray

Use a musical setting of today's Psalm (Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23)—"This is the day that Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad"—or use the prayer from the participant page as the closing prayer.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Readings

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

John 20:1-9

Welcome

Begin by welcoming everyone who is present, including sponsors, team members, and spouses who are joining the group. Begin with a discussion of the participants' reflections and experiences of Easter. Explore what they already know about the meaning of Easter.

Engage

Proclaim the First Reading (Acts 10:34a, 37-43). Explore with the group what Saint Peter proclaims about Jesus' life, what he proclaims as the work (mission) of Jesus, and what the commission was of those who ate and drank with him after the Resurrection of Jesus. Then explore the following questions:

What is the message of Easter?

Who would be challenged by this message and why?

Who would be consoled by this message and why?

Explore

- Lead the group in a discussion about the following points:
 - The significance of the Resurrection is that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. He is the Savior of the world. He is the Messiah.
 - Jesus Christ conquered sin and death forever just as he foretold.
 - We are called to believe in the Resurrection—the mystery of God's love.
 - The Resurrection is a real event. It is foundational to our faith in Christ and the Paschal Mystery.

- The Risen Jesus appears to the disciples and eats and drinks with them as a sign of the Resurrection of the body. The disciples gradually come to believe and rejoice.
- In Jesus' Resurrection, we come to know more fully the promise of eternal life.
- We too come to know Christ in the breaking of bread.

- Highlight key points from *Catholic Teaching: The Resurrection of Christ*. 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 . . .

- The whole of the Easter season is a celebration of the Resurrection of Christ. We are called to sing "Alleluia, he is risen." Invite the catechumens and candidates and their sponsors to think of ways that they can continue to celebrate the fifty days of Easter.

Pray

Pray the Apostles' Creed together as the closing prayer. You may wish to provide copies for the participants.