

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA  
Second Sunday of Easter (or Sunday of Divine Mercy) • Year C • April 27, 2025

## Catechist Preparation

### Scripture

**FIRST READING**—ACTS 5:12-16

Today's reading summarizes the early Church's growth and success in the exercise of her gifts and the faith with which the Apostles are met as they go about the mission entrusted to them by Christ.

**SECOND READING**—REVELATION 1:9-11A, 12-13, 17-19

The apocalyptic visions contained in the Book of Revelation supply the content of the Second Readings over the course of the Easter season in Year C of the Lectionary cycle. Today's passage centers on a vision of "one like a son of man" (Revelation 1:13) who is revealed to be Lord of all.

**GOSPEL**—JOHN 20:19-31

Thomas the Apostle insists he will never believe that the Lord is risen unless he sees and touches his wounds. Suddenly Christ appears to the disciples and confronts the unbelieving Thomas. A profoundly moved Thomas professes faith. The final verses of this passage seem to be aimed directly to us: we have not seen as Thomas did, but we are called upon to believe.

### Church Teaching

Through Baptism we are born anew by the gift of faith, a seed that grows within us as encouraged and nurtured by others of faith. We become part of a living tradition handed down from the time of the Apostles to the present day. Our relationship with God can at times be tested, our faith strained. In those difficult times of doubt and struggle, individuals can turn to the community formed by God, to the household of the faithful, and seek renewal, comfort, and strengthening.

### Additional Background

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 142–184

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:** pages 35–47

**Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 25–32

## 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. 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 our celebration of the second Sunday of Easter?*

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

2. Invite several participants to share their reflections with the large group. Then ask the group how they are sometimes like "doubting Thomas."

### Deepen

Proclaim the First Reading (Acts 3:12-16), and then discuss the following:

*What does this reading say about the power of the preaching of Peter and the Apostles?*

*In what ways do we look for signs of proof in order for us to believe the words of a preacher?*

*How are present-day followers of Jesus challenged to lead others to faith?*

### Pray

Use a musical setting of today's Psalm (Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24): "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting" or use the prayer from the participant page as the closing prayer: *O God, your mercy is boundless, your love is everlasting. By your Holy Spirit bring us up from death and the netherworld to share in the new life of your Son and the peace of your kingdom. Amen.*

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## Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

### Readings

Acts 5:12-16

Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19

John 20:19-31

### Welcome

Begin by welcoming everyone who is present, including sponsors, team members, and spouses who are joining the group. Invite the participants to consider the times that they have been a “doubting Thomas.” Explain that this term refers to people who have to see and touch with their own eyes and hands before accepting the testimony of another.

### Engage

Proclaim today’s Gospel (John 20:19-31) in a reflective manner, pausing to discuss these points:

- Jesus stood in the disciples’ midst and spoke “peace.” What do you understand the word *peace* to mean?
- Jesus sends the disciples as the Father had sent him. To whom or to what is Jesus sending the disciples?
- Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit on the disciples and speaks to them about the forgiveness of sin. In what ways do you experience forgiveness and in what ways do you offer forgiveness to others? Do you ever not forgive another? Why or why not?

### Explore

1. Lead the group in a discussion about the following points:
  - Faith is a gift that comes from God and is mediated through the community.
  - Believing calls forth an act of faith without seeing.

- Faith is both a personal and a communal act.
- Faith is one’s relationship to God—the seed that is planted in Baptism and nurtured and encouraged by others of faith.
- Faith is a living tradition passed down from the Apostles to the present age. We participate in faith and are called to hand on the faith.

2. Highlight key points from ***Church Teaching: Believing, an Ecclesial and Human Act***. 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. Invite the catechumens and candidates and their sponsors to think about people whom they would name as persons of faith and what qualities these people possess that would be helpful to imitate.

### Pray

Use minor exorcism 94A found in the OCIA ritual text, or use the prayer from the participant page:

*O God, your mercy is boundless, your love is everlasting. By your Holy Spirit, bring us up from death and the netherworld to share in the new life of your Son and the peace of your kingdom. Amen.*