

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Third Sunday of Easter • Year C • May 4, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ACTS 5:27-32, 40B-41

The Apostles are brought into court for having preached the name of Jesus in defiance of the Sanhedrin, a powerful juridical body that ruled in the Jewish community at that time. Not only do the disciples show no fear in the face of this dangerous opposition, they positively rejoice that they have been ill-treated for preaching Christ. Their mission goes on in spite of persecution, suffering, and danger.

SECOND READING—REVELATION 5:11-14

Today's reading occurs inside the court of Heaven in the presence of God. The scene is one of suffering transformed into glory. Christ's suffering makes possible the fulfillment of his mission.

GOSPEL—JOHN 21:1-19

The disciples spend the night trying to fish. Jesus appears and tells them to cast out their nets. They then catch a huge number of fish. The symbolism of this event at the end of the Gospel account is clear. In the presence and under the direction of the Risen Lord, the disciples can undertake their evangelizing mission with new and unparalleled vigor and fruitfulness.

Church Teaching

There is a definite connection between the celebration of the sacraments and our efforts to spread the Good News. They both reveal who we are as Christians and inform our identity as such. They also fuel our activities on behalf of the Kingdom of God. The sacraments are not meant to be received passively. They are meant to be lived, to be enacted by word and example.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 857–870, 1396–1397

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 213–232

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 188, 292

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 third 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.

Deepen

1. Explain that during the whole season of Easter, the First Reading is from the Acts of the Apostles. This book reveals the development of the Apostles from being followers of Christ into the leaders of the early Church.
2. Proclaim the First Reading (Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41), then discuss the following points:
 - Peter is seen as the leader of the Apostles. He is the spokesperson for the group.
 - Peter and the other Apostles have a deep conviction about who Jesus is and embrace the mission of proclaiming Jesus' Resurrection.
 - Peter will not be deterred from witnessing about Jesus and rejoices that he is found worthy to suffer dishonor for Christ.

Pray

Use the prayer from the participant page as the closing prayer: *O Lord, we sing your praises, for you have brought us into new life, the life of your Son, who does not leave us orphaned but shepherds us as his flock, his people. Amen.*

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Readings

Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41

Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13

Revelation 5:11-14

John 21:1-19

Welcome

Begin by welcoming everyone who is present, including sponsors, team members, and spouses who are joining the group. Tell the group that Peter and the other Apostles return to their former occupations when they are unsure about their future course of action. What do we do when we are unsure about what is next or are undecided about a future course of action?

Engage

Lead the group in a discussion about the following questions:

What do you think is the message of today's Liturgy of the Word?

Who would be comforted by the message? Why?

Who would be challenged by the message? Why?

In what places of our world and society does this message need to be proclaimed today?

In what ways are we to be the disciples of today, ready to proclaim the message of Jesus even in the face of ridicule and persecution?

Explore

1. Discuss the following points:

- The Church is apostolic, founded by Christ, built upon the Apostles. In Baptism we are commissioned to carry on the work of the Apostles: to take the Good News into the world.

- The Eucharist is the source and summit of our life as disciples of Christ. In the Eucharist, we are nourished by the Word of God and the Body and Blood of Christ to continue our mission. It is necessary for us to gather every Sunday to be strengthened for that mission.
 - At the conclusion of every Eucharist, we are commissioned with these or similar words, "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord." We are sent out to the world. The focus of the Christian mission is outward. We live this mission in word and deed in our homes, our workplaces, our neighborhoods, our country, and our world.
2. Highlight key points from **Church Teaching: Eucharist and Mission**. 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 discuss how they will proclaim, in word and deed, the Good News of Jesus Christ this week. Ask them to share with the group the results of their discussion.

Pray

Use one of the hymns suggested for today or use the prayer from the participant page as the closing prayer: *O Lord, we sing your praises, for you have brought us into new life, the life of your Son, who does not leave us orphaned but shepherds us as his flock, his people. Amen.*