

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Fifth Sunday of Easter • Year C • May 18, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ACTS 14:21-27

The events surrounding the birth of new Christian communities illustrate some essential elements of life in the Spirit of the Risen Lord. These communities are structured communities of faith and prayer that are helped by such people as the elders mentioned in today's reading. And the life of these communities is marked by love, joy, and growth.

SECOND READING—REVELATION 21:1-5A

In the Easter season readings from the Book of Revelation, we are introduced to a living Christ who stands at the center of all things in Heaven and earth. Today we are invited into a vision of a new heavens, a new earth, and a New Jerusalem.

GOSPEL—JOHN 13:31-33A, 34-35

Where the synoptic Gospels place the account of the institution of the Eucharist as the memorial of Jesus, John's Gospel places Jesus' New Commandment to love one another. Thus the disciples' love becomes a memorial and a sign of Jesus, even as the Eucharist is celebrated in imitation of and memory of Jesus.

Church Teaching

On Holy Thursday at the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, the Church proclaims the reading from John's Gospel about that final gathering for the Passover meal (John 13:1-15). Following this proclamation, a ritual action portrays the washing of the disciples' feet. This liturgical action symbolizes the life of the Christian, who is called to continually put Jesus' love into practice.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1967, 1983

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 307–338

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 292, 401, 435

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 participants to share a word or phrase from the Liturgy of the Word that moved them in some way or caused them to reflect. If necessary, proclaim the readings again and ask the group to listen for words or phrases that stay with them.
2. Proclaim the Second Reading (Revelation 21:1-5a). After a few moments of silent reflection, discuss what the participants imagine a new Heaven and a new earth to be like.
3. Ask the participants to share what they think this reading tells us about God's hope and desire for all people.

Deepen

Continue to explore with the participants what the reading from Revelation proclaims about the New Jerusalem and the hope it presents for those who believe in Christ. Encourage the group to describe such a world and what it might be like to live in it.

Pray

Use the minor exorcism 94H from the OCIA ritual text or pray together the prayer on the participant resource: *Almighty God, compassionate without measure, open the door of faith to all, that your Church might be built up into a worldwide community of love. Amen.*

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Readings

Acts 14:21-27

Psalms 145:8-9, 10-11, 12-13

Revelation 21:1-5a

John 13:31-33a, 34-35

Welcome

Welcome everyone who is present, including sponsors, team members, and spouses who are joining the group. Invite one or two people to share what they heard in the Liturgy of the Word for this week.

Engage

1. Proclaim the Gospel (John 13:31-33a, 34-35). Ask the participants to form small groups of two or three persons and then complete the following:
 - Discuss the important points of this Gospel reading.
 - List the characteristics that befit a disciple of Christ.
 - Create a bumper sticker, a logo, or some other symbolic representation that summarizes the message of the Gospel reading.
2. After a few minutes, gather feedback from the small-group discussion. Invite volunteers to present their symbolic representations of the Gospel.

Explore

1. Review the Ten Commandments with the participants. Explain to them that these are a summary of the Mosaic Law. They tell us what not to do regarding our relationship with God and our relationships with our neighbors. These Commandments are a code of behavior meant to safeguard the community.

2. Explain to the group that an example of love that Jesus gives is the washing of the disciples' feet. This shows us that we are called to be servants to one another in humble love.
3. Tell the group that the new Law of Love that Jesus speaks of does not negate the Mosaic Law. It expands it. Disciples should be known by the love they have for each other. Ask the participants to silently reflect on ways that they might show love more fully for others.
4. Brainstorm examples of people and situations that exemplify the Law of Love. (Include examples from the home, such as going to work, providing for the needs of the members of the home, spending time listening to one another, holding the door for someone, and so forth.)
5. Highlight key points from **Catholic Teaching: Christ's New Commandment**. 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. Discuss the Corporal Works of Mercy as examples of how we keep the New Commandment of love. Encourage the catechumens/candidates and their sponsors to choose one of the Corporal Works of Mercy that they will do together this week.

Pray

Use the prayer from the participant resource as the closing prayer: *Almighty God, compassionate without measure, open the door of faith to all, that your Church might be built up into a worldwide community of love. Amen.*