

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Sixth Sunday of Easter • Year C • May 25, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ACTS 15:1-2, 22-29

The decision to accept the Gentiles was not handed down from on high or derived from abstract principles. It was made through a divine-human collaboration involving many people and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The process was not complete until the local community sent back emissaries to Jerusalem “in peace,” showing that the teaching was accepted. This account is significant in showing a model of decision-making in the early Church.

SECOND READING—REVELATION 21:10-14, 22-23

When the Book of Revelation was written, the Temple and the city of Jerusalem had been completely destroyed. Therefore, the new city appearing from Heaven as the pure gift of God is especially poignant. It is the vision of the fulfillment of the ultimate goal of human life: union with God.

GOSPEL—JOHN 14:23-29

Peace is Jesus’ farewell gift to his disciples, a peace that the world cannot give. Peace will be the token of Jesus’ abiding presence even as he leaves them, just as the Spirit, or Paraclete, will provide for the disciples those things that Jesus did for them in his lifetime.

Church Teaching

When a bishop presides at Mass as its priest celebrant, the first words by which he opens the liturgy after leading everyone in the Sign of the Cross recall the greeting of the Risen Lord to his disciples: “Peace be with you” (John 20:19). The assembly responds in kind to the bishop. This traditional greeting of the bishop reminds us that the promise of Christ’s gift of peace is meant for every age and every place.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 736, 2304, 2442

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 395–397

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 480–482

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

Ask the following questions, and invite the group to reflect on them quietly before sharing their responses with one or two other people:

What are some key phrases or images used in the Second Reading from the Book of Revelation ?

What do these images tell us about what God has prepared for those who believe and follow Jesus who is the way, the truth, and the life?

Deepen

1. Proclaim the following Gospel verse: “Whoever loves me will keep my word, says the Lord, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him” (John 14:23). Explore with the participants what it means to keep Jesus’ word and what it might mean to have Jesus and his Father come “make their home” with us.
2. Encourage the participants to recall last week’s Scripture readings. Point out the connection between last week’s Scriptures and this week’s:
 - The new and holy city Jerusalem
 - The reward for those who love God
 - The great beauty and peace that will abound in the New Jerusalem
 - Disciples of Christ keep his Word.
3. Ask volunteers to share how these Scripture readings can be a source of encouragement and hope for disciples.

Pray

Use the Prayer of Blessing 97F from the OCIA ritual text, or use the Anointing of the Catechumens 98–103 in the ritual text.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Readings

Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

Psalms 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8

Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23

John 14:23-29

Welcome

Welcome everyone who is present, including sponsors, team members, and spouses who are joining the group.

Engage

1. Invite the participants to join with one other person and explore their vision of a world at peace. Ask them to discuss what would be needed for such a vision to be realized. After some time for discussion, ask volunteers to share their thoughts with the large group.
2. Proclaim the Gospel (John 14:23-29). Ask the group to consider the confusion the disciples must have experienced by reflecting on the following points:
 - Jesus is telling the disciples that he is going away.
 - He promises that the Father will send the Spirit, whom they do not know.
 - He tells them they should rejoice that he is going to the Father.
3. Ask the participants to share how they might feel if they were one of the disciples. Then remind them that Jesus gifted the disciples with peace, even in the midst of their confusion.

Explore

1. Lead the participants in a discussion around the following points:
 - Peace is a gift of the Spirit.
 - Peace is Christ's gift to every age and every place.
 - Peace frees us to live as children of God—brother and sister to each and every person.
 - Peace is more than the absence of violence. It connotes a harmony and balance in daily life that comes from a life in tune with God, others, and self.
 - Those who follow Christ live in peace and are called to be peacemakers in the world.
 - Peacemaking is a priority of the Church.
2. Highlight key points from **Church Teaching: Peace**. 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/candidates and their sponsors to discuss how they can be more intentional in their decisions to live a more peace-filled life at home and in the workplace.

Pray

Sing or pray the Prayer of Saint Francis, then pray together using the prayer on the participant page: *O God, heavenly Father, have pity on us. Guide us and help us do right to make peace in the world. Amen.*