

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA  
The Ascension of the Lord • Year C • May 29 or June 1, 2025

## Catechist Preparation

### Scripture

**FIRST READING**—ACTS 1:1-11

Luke's description of this event parallels the beginning of his Gospel (see Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-2). Jesus' forty days in the desert are balanced with the forty days of his post-Resurrection appearances. And Jesus' command at the conclusion of the Gospel is repeated here with a similar command.

**SECOND READING**—EPHESIANS 1:17-23 OR  
HEBREWS 9:24-28; 10:19-23

The Ephesians reading reflects the sort of evolved theological understanding of the Ascension underlying Luke's description. The reference to Christ as Head of the Church recalls Saint Paul's body metaphor found in 1 Corinthians 12; however, here the Church is also called the "fullness" of Christ.

**GOSPEL**—LUKE 24:46-53

This reading reiterates two important Lucan themes: that the Messiah had to suffer and that the disciples are to be witnesses to the ends of the earth.

### Church Teaching

The Ascension is not about Christ's removal from the Church. Rather, it is about a new form of his presence, a presence that in many ways is even more powerful and significant than was his earthly existence with the disciples.

By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, Christ entrusts to them and their successors the power to make present the work of Salvation through the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments. The Lord himself acts through the Eucharist and the sacraments to convey grace to believers of all times and places throughout the world.

### Additional Background

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 659, 661, 663

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:** pages 96–97

**Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 132, 222

## 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 icon or image of the Ascension.

### Discover

Invite the participants to share some of what they heard in the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word for the Solemnity of the Ascension. Ask them to highlight anything that might have surprised them about the celebration of the Word today.

### Deepen

1. Ask the participants to share what they know or what they have heard about the Solemnity of the Ascension. Before commenting on their responses, write key elements of their sharing down on a large piece of paper or whiteboard so that everyone can see.
2. Proclaim the First Reading (Acts 1:1-11). Then lead a discussion of the following points:
  - The name *Theophilus* is a Greek word meaning "Friend of God." This is the person to whom the Acts of the Apostles is addressed.
  - The beginning of this book summarizes the events in the life of Jesus from his Resurrection at Easter until his Ascension into Heaven.
  - Jesus asks the disciples to be patient and wait for the "promise of [the] Father" to be fulfilled.

### Pray

Prepare the following on a separate sheet of paper so that everyone can pray together: *Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations through Christ Our Lord. Amen.*

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## Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

### Readings

Acts 1:1-11

Psalm 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9

Ephesians 1:17-23 or Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:19-23

Luke 24:46-53

### Welcome

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

### Engage

1. Proclaim the Second Reading (Ephesians 1:17-23) and allow a few moments for quiet reflection. Then ask the following questions:

*What do you hear in this opening prayer of Saint Paul to the Ephesians?*

*What is the hope expressed?*

*What does Paul desire for the believers?*

2. Remind the participants that Christ sits at the right hand of God; Christ is the Head of the Church and we are all part of His Body; and we who believe will inherit eternal life.
3. Proclaim the Gospel (Luke 24:46-53). Then highlight the following points:
  - Jesus makes a statement that the disciples have witnessed the saving events of his Death and Resurrection.
  - Jesus tells the disciples that he is sending them what his Father promised.
  - The disciples are asked to stay in Jerusalem until the coming of the Holy Spirit.

### Explore

1. Invite the participants to read Catholic Teaching: The Ascension of the Lord. Then lead the

participants in a discussion around the following points:

- The Ascension celebrates Jesus' ascent into Heaven.
  - Jesus promises the disciples that the Holy Spirit will come upon them and strengthen them. This Spirit will remain with them until the end of time.
  - This solemnity expresses our hope that someday we too will rise from the dead and be with Jesus in Heaven.
  - Through his Paschal Mystery, Jesus unites Heaven and earth. The veil, which had separated Heaven and earth, has been "torn" through his Death and Resurrection.
  - Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ entrusts his Church with the power to continue the work of Salvation and to celebrate the sacraments, through which Christ himself acts to convey grace to believers of every time and place.
2. 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 one way that they will offer hope to someone this week.

### Pray

Sing or recite the Responsorial Psalm from today's liturgy (Psalm 47:2-3, 6-9), or close with another suggested hymn for today's session.