

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
First Sunday of Lent • Year C • March 9, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—DEUTERONOMY 26:4-10

The credal statement contained in this pivotal passage in the Old Testament recalls how God marks Israel with his special favor in the events of her history. The people acknowledge their election by God, which lies at the center of their existence.

SECOND READING—ROMANS 10:8-13

This portion of Saint Paul's letter is thought to derive from an early Christian confession of faith.

GOSPEL—LUKE 4:1-13

Considered against its Jewish background, this scriptural episode shows how Jesus succeeds in his desert experience. This is in contrast to the Israelites' experience of being tested or tempted in the desert.

Church Teaching

Hardness of heart convinces us that we do not need to look any further than ourselves because we are the masters of our own destiny. But in Christ, we are given the means to overcome that blindness as well as the allure of this world. In the Lord Jesus, we come to know the path to true life and how we can stay focused on God and his kingdom.

At the heart of this knowledge, or illumination, stands the stunning realization that God elects, or chooses, his people, lavishing his care and concern upon us in Christ. God acts to favor us. Our Salvation stems from his blessed, generous choice.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 205, 303, 781–801

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 111–123

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 6–10, 153–160

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Have the space set with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth, a candle, and a dish with ashes or sand. Create a space to place the Lectionary. When all are seated, light the candle and sit in quiet for a few minutes of quiet reflection. You might wish to provide the opportunity for the participants to run the sand through their fingers to share in a “desert” experience.

Discover

1. Gather the participants' observations about the environment of the church for Lent. Ask them to share what they think the environment says about the importance of the Lenten season. Did anything surprise them?
2. Invite the participants to name images or phrases that they heard in the Liturgy of the Word. Ask them to choose one image or phrase and share what message it conveys to them.

Deepen

1. Pass around the dish of ashes or sand. Then discuss the following:
 - Ashes remind us that this life is temporary. We come from the earth, and in death we return to the earth.
 - Sand signifies the desert, the place where Jesus was tempted. The desert is often symbolized as a place of purification—a place to fast and to pray that is away from distractions.
2. Invite the participants to consider their hopes or expectations of this season and then share their thoughts with another person.

Pray

Use the Responsorial Psalm from today's Liturgy of the Word (Psalm 91:1-2, 10-15) as the closing prayer.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Readings

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Psalm 91:1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15

Romans 10:8-13

Luke 4:1-13

Welcome

Begin by welcoming everyone who is present, including sponsors, team members, and spouses who are joining the group. Invite them to share their hopes or expectations of this Lent.

Engage

Proclaim the Gospel (Luke 4:1-13). Explore each of the temptations with these or similar reflection questions. Pause after each set of questions, giving some time for sharing in small groups:

Stones into bread—In what ways is your relationship with material things in balance or harmony? In what ways is your relationship with material things out of balance? What type of fasting would help put your relationship with material things back into balance?

Power and glory—In what ways is your relationship with others in balance or harmony? In what ways is your relationship with others out of balance? What works of charity would help put your relationship with others back into balance or harmony?

Throw yourself down—In what ways is your relationship with God in balance or harmony? In what ways is your relationship with God out of balance? In what ways would prayer help put your relationship with God back into balance?

Explore

1. Lead the participants in a discussion around the following points:
 - God established the Covenant with the people of Israel; they are the Chosen People.

- In response to God's choosing them, the Israelites confess faith in the one true God. They offer their firstfruits of the harvest in sacrifice.
- God is faithful to the Covenant no matter what the Israelites do through betrayal and sinfulness.
- Jesus is God's Elected One. In Christ, God establishes the new and eternal Covenant. We are called to enter into a new relationship with God through the waters of Baptism.

2. Highlight key points from **Church Teaching: Divine Election**. 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 the ways they can more fully participate in the celebration the season of Lent. Encourage each to choose something they will do for Lent.

Pray

Invite the participants to close their eyes and observe some time of silence before beginning. Then use the prayer from the participant page as the closing prayer: *Almighty, eternal God, your new Covenant sheds light on the miracles of old, for the Red Sea prefigures Baptism, and the nation you freed from slavery is a sign of your Christian people. May every nation share in the faith and privilege of Israel and come to new birth in the Holy Spirit. Amen.*