

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Second Sunday of Lent • Year C • March 16, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—GENESIS 15:5-12, 17-18

Abraham's vision differs from the customary practice in those days. Both parties to a covenant would stand between the sacrificial offerings to swear their oaths. The vision reveals that God alone—symbolized by the fire pot and torch—passes between the sacrificial offerings.

SECOND READING—PHILIPPIANS 3:17-4:1 (OR 3:20-4:1)

Saint Paul, concerned over some among the Christians in Philippi who were falling from the faith, urges the Philippians to remain firm in their baptismal commitment, keeping their gaze fixed on their citizenship in Heaven, from which will come their Savior, Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL—LUKE 9:28B-36

Luke sets the Transfiguration of Jesus on top of a mountain where Jesus, Peter, James, and John go to pray. Mountains are the scenes of significant moments in God's dealings with his people.

Church Teaching

Contemplative prayer may begin with a reflective process similar to meditation, but it is less a matter of the head and more a matter of the heart.

Contemplation entails opening an interior space where the mystery of God can show itself. Yet contemplation cannot be forced or controlled precisely because God cannot be forced or controlled. Contemplation is similar to enjoying a piece of music or being caught up in the beauty of a breathtaking landscape. We cultivate our appreciation of these things, and we are attuned to these things even as we let go of ourselves to enjoy them.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2697, 2709–2719

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 461–480

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 567–571

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Have the space set with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth, a candle, a dish with sand, a crucifix, and an icon or picture of the Transfiguration. When all are seated, light the candle and sit in quiet for a few minutes. If possible, play a recording of appropriate instrumental music.

Discover

Invite the participants to name images or phrases that they heard in the Liturgy of the Word. Some possibilities might include the mountain, the burnt offering, Covenant, citizenship in Heaven, dazzling white, and three tents. Ask the participants to choose one image or phrase and share what it means to them.

Deepen

1. Lead the group in an experience of a guided meditation. Use these or similar words, pausing after each instruction: *Close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths. Picture yourself in a beautiful place on a mountain. Feel the warmth of the sun, and see the deep blue sky. Rest peacefully, comfortably on a warm rock. As you look out over the vast display of beauty, you sense the presence of another person. As you look around, you see a person approaching you, and you recognize that it is Jesus. He greets you warmly and sits beside you. He asks you about your journey that has brought you to this mountaintop. He asks about your hopes, your fears, your worries, your joys. After some time passes, he looks into your eyes and says to you, "Do not fear, I am with you always!" He takes his leave of you, and you return to this time and place.*
2. After some quiet time, invite volunteers to share what the experience of a guided meditation was like for them.

Pray

Invite the participants to observe several moments of silence. Encourage them to just be, knowing that they are always in the presence of God.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Readings

Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18
Psalm 27:1, 7-8, 8-9, 13-14
Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 9:28b-36

Welcome

Begin by welcoming everyone who is present, including sponsors, team members, and spouses who are joining the group. Invite them to share images or phrases from the Gospel and share what message they convey to them.

Engage

1. Use the following points to explore the group's understanding of a covenantal relationship, such as the one described in the First Reading (Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18):
 - God initiates the Covenant; Abram freely responds.
 - Faith is rewarded. God promises Abram descendants more numerous than the stars.
 - A sacrifice seals the Covenant.
2. Use the following points to explore the Transfiguration of Jesus (Luke 9:28b-36):
 - Mountaintops are places of encountering God—the sacred.
 - The Apostles who witnessed this event were in awe.
 - A voice speaks, "This is my chosen Son; listen to him" (Luke 9:35).
 - There is a challenge to tell no one what had happened.
3. Conclude with a discussion about who would be consoled by the message of these readings and why they would be consoled.

Explore

1. Invite the group to read the *Catholic Doctrine* section of the participant resource. Then discuss the following points:

- God invites us into relationship. What will be our response?
 - Prayer—conversation with God—is one way to respond in our relationship with God.
 - There are various forms of prayer. Each requires time, a desire to deepen one's relationship with God, and the commitment to pray.
2. Provide an experience of each of the three expressions of prayer.
 - Vocal prayer—Pray the Sign of the Cross.
 - Meditation—Again use the Sign of the Cross, asking the participants to pause as each Person of the Trinity is named. Invite the participants to think of the qualities and attributes they associate with each Person as each is named. Invite them to also consider what it means to trace the sign of the cross on their bodies.
 - Contemplation—Proclaim the words of the Gospel: "This is my chosen Son: listen to him." After a moment or two of silence, invite the participants to repeat the words in a slow, reflective manner in the quiet of their hearts.
 3. Highlight key points from *Church Teaching: Contemplative Prayer*. 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 a phrase they might use each day this week as a way to pray. Such phrases might include: "Be still and know that I am God" and "Jesus, be with me."

Pray

Use the Rite of Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens (OCIA 98-103).