

Purification and Enlightenment Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Preparation for the Second Scrutiny • Fourth Sunday of Lent • Year A Readings Used

Preparation

Prior to the celebration of the Second Scrutiny, it is important to provide a time for spiritual preparation for the elect and their godparents or sponsors and members of the OCIA team. Some parishes offer this preparation to the whole parish community as a Lenten activity. This outline is merely a suggestion for how to facilitate the preparation time.

Setting

Option 1: Arrange chairs in a circle. Place a small table in the middle with a purple cloth, a Bible, a candle, a cross, and a symbol that the parish may be using for Lent, such as a bowl of sand. If parishioners are present, arrange several small groups. **Option 2:** If this session is held in the church, use the environment that has been set for Lent.

Gathering

1. Welcome everyone. If this is the first time that members of the parish are present, invite them to introduce themselves to the others in the group.
2. Ask a volunteer to light the candle and invite everyone to a moment of silence. Then pray, using these or similar words: *We gather to pray in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Pause.) Send the Holy Spirit to open our minds and hearts as we gather to prepare for the Second Scrutiny. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*
3. Briefly explain the to the participants that this is preparation for the second of three scrutinies. The godparents or sponsors will rehearse for the ritual and guide the elect through it. The purpose of this gathering is to prepare spiritually for the Second Scrutiny.

Option 1

1. Proclaim the Second Reading for the Second Scrutiny (Ephesians 5:8-14). After some time for silent reflection, ask the participants to share what they heard in the reading—a word, a phrase, a thought, or a feeling.
2. Briefly comment about the reading, using these or similar points:
 - Light produces goodness.
 - We are called to live as children of light.
 - We learn what pleases God.
 - Fruitless works of darkness are to be exposed for what they are.
3. Invite the participants to think about today's world and consider what might be the fruitless deeds of darkness that need to be exposed. After some time for sharing, gather the groups' thoughts and record them on a large piece of paper or on a board.
4. Proclaim the reading again. Then remind the participants that we are called to live as children of light and to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Invite the participants to discuss what they understand is pleasing to the Lord. After some time for sharing, gather their thoughts and record their responses on a large piece of paper or on a board.
5. Proclaim the reading again. Encourage the participants to reflect on their own lives and name the fruitless deeds of darkness that they encounter. After some time for sharing, gather these responses.
6. Invite the participants to spend time between now and the Second Scrutiny thinking about possible fruitless deeds of darkness in their own lives and what they do that is pleasing to the Lord.
7. Close by singing "Amazing Grace."

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Option 2

1. Proclaim the Gospel for the Second Scrutiny (John 9:1-41 or 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38). After a pause for silent reflection, ask the participants to share what they heard in the Gospel—a word, a phrase, a thought, or a feeling.
2. Briefly comment about the reading, using these or similar points:
 - The man born blind is healed without even asking for it.
 - No one wants to be associated with the blind man in his state of seeing for fear of repercussions from the authorities.
 - The man born blind seeks Jesus, whom he does not know.
 - The authorities, who do have sight, are in many ways “blind.”
 - There are two kinds of blindness: physical and spiritual.
3. Invite the group to discuss the following:
 - The types of blindness named in the Gospel
 - The message of Jesus about blindness
 - The ways in which we experience blindness in our world, our workplaces, and our communities
4. After some time, give everyone a piece of paper. Invite them to write a word or a phrase that describes the blindness from which they would like to be healed.
5. Invite the participants to spend time between now and the Second Scrutiny thinking about the ways we are blind. Collect the papers before everyone leaves.
6. Close by singing “Amazing Grace.”

Option 3

1. Use either formula A or B for the Intercessions for the Elect found in the ritual text (OCIA 167).
2. After the gathering prayer, lead a reflection using the intercessions by proclaiming one intercession at a time. Follow each intercession with a pause and some time for the participants to discuss what it means to them at this point of their faith journeys.
3. Proclaim the Gospel for the Second Scrutiny (John 9:1-41 or 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38). Invite the group to choose a word, a phrase, or a thought from the Gospel and to think about it each day until the celebration of the Second Scrutiny.
4. Close by singing “Amazing Grace.”