

# Purification and Enlightenment Session

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

## Catechist Preparation

**FIRST READING**—DEUTERONOMY 26:4-10

This is a pivotal passage in the Old Testament, with the credal statement contained here recalling how God marks Israel with his special favor in the events of its history. The people express their acknowledgment of God's election of them, which is at the center of their existence. Israel's own understanding regarding its election was not based on pride or merit but on the repeated experience of God's fidelity.

**SECOND READING**—ROMANS 10:8-13

This portion of Saint Paul's letter is thought to derive from an early Christian confession of faith. It emphasizes belief in the heart as well as witnessing to faith. What the children of Israel found in the old Covenant, Christians find in the person of Christ.

**GOSPEL**—LUKE 4:1-13

Considered against its Jewish background, this scriptural episode shows how Jesus succeeds in his desert experience versus the Israelite experience of being tested or tempted in the desert. Israel came up against physical hunger, the lure of idolatry, and the desire to test God. Jesus responds to these same temptations out of his deep fidelity to God. He reverses the human unfaithfulness that has ever been part of the story of God's dealing with those whom he chooses. Jesus becomes the exemplar of the right response to God's election.

## Making Connections

### Key Images and Symbols

Temptation (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] 538, 2119)

Sin (CCC 1850, 1871)

Grace (CCC 1987, 1996, 2021)

Confession of Faith (CCC 161)

Righteousness (CCC 1848, 1987, 1991)

### Music Suggestions

"Change Our Hearts," R. Cooney (GIA)

"At the Name of Jesus," C. Walker (GIA)

## Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Have the space set with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth, a dish with sand, and a crucifix.

### Respond

1. Ask the following questions and invite the participants to reflect on them quietly before sharing their responses with the group:

*What did you see or hear in the Liturgy of the Word?*

*What word, phrase, or image from the readings stays with you?*

2. Invite the participants to share their observations about the environment of the church during Lent. Ask: *What does the environment say about the importance of the Lenten season?*

### Enhance

1. Invite the participants to consider the following questions quietly. Some might want to write their responses on a piece of paper or in a journal:

*What is the Lord asking of you this Lent?*

*In what way do you experience temptation, and how do you respond to it?*

*How is this Liturgy of the Word leading you more deeply into Lent?*

2. After a few moments of silent reflection, invite several volunteers to share their responses to the last question.

3. Use these points to summarize:

- Lent is a time of spiritual recollection to prepare for initiation into the Church and, in particular, the baptismal renunciations and promises.
- Lent is a time to sort out what in our lives leads us into a deeper relationship with God and what leads us away from God.

### Pray

Use the Prayer of Exorcism from the OCIA text (#94F).

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## Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

### Readings

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Psalm 91:1-2, 10-15

Romans 10:8-13

Luke 4:1-13

### Welcome

Begin by welcoming everyone who is present, including godparents, sponsors, team members, and spouses who are joining the group.

### Uncover

1. Proclaim the First Reading (Deuteronomy 26:4-10).
2. Ask the following questions and invite the participants to reflect on them quietly before sharing their responses with one or two other people:

*What does this reading proclaim about who God is and what God desires for all of us?*

*What does it tell us about the Israelites and their relationship with God?*

*What does it tell us about our need to give thanks and praise to God for our many blessings?*

### Purify

1. Read or summarize **Repent** on the participant handout, and allow time for reflection and discussion of the **For Reflection** questions.
2. Use the Responsorial Psalm from today's liturgy as a meditation. You may wish to invite everyone to close their eyes while you read aloud the verses of the Psalm in a slow, reflective style, pausing frequently.
3. After some silence, invite the participants to share their responses to these questions:

*What word or phrase stays with you?*

*What is the message of this Psalm?*

*In what way is the Lord your refuge and fortress?*

*When might you pray the refrain: "Be with me, Lord"?*

### Enlighten

1. Summarize or invite the participants to read the remaining sections of the participant handout and reflect on the questions. Then discuss the following points:
  - With God's grace, we can confront sin in our lives.
  - Acknowledging sin is a necessary step to holiness.
  - Conversion means to turn away from sin and to be faithful to Christ and the Gospel. The whole season of Lent is focused on the need for conversion. Conversion is a lifelong pursuit of God and the way of the Gospel.
  - In Baptism we die to sin but live for God in Christ.
2. Highlight the **Key Images and Symbols of the Season** section.

### Live

1. The Scriptures give us clues about having a right relationship with God, others, and all created things. To foster these right relationships, we are encouraged to make use of the three Lenten practices: prayer, works of charity (almsgiving), and fasting. Encourage the participants to discuss these practices and share some practical examples of each one.
2. Allow some quiet for the participants to consider what aspects of these three Lenten practices they will focus on during Lent this year.
3. Invite the participants to reflect on the questions in **Preparing for Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist**. If there is time, encourage volunteers to share their reflections.

### Pray

Invite the participants to gather around the table on which you have placed the sand and crucifix. Conclude by praying together the prayer from the participant handout.