

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA  
Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B • July 7, 2024

## Catechist Preparation

### Scripture

**FIRST READING**—EZEKIEL 2:2-5

God commissions Ezekiel to speak to the people a prophetic word. The people are described as rebellious. Even so, Ezekiel is instructed not to fear them or to crave acceptance. He is simply to speak the words God puts in the prophet's mouth.

**SECOND READING**—2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10

First Saint Paul describes an ecstatic experience he was granted. Following that, we continue to read how Paul was given an unspecified "thorn in the flesh" to produce humility in him. His request for it to be removed is denied in order that God's power be revealed in Paul's weakness.

**GOSPEL**—MARK 6:1-6A

The scene is set in Jesus' hometown synagogue. His hearers react badly because they presume to know him. He grew up among them. Note also that because Catholics assert the perpetual virginity of Mary, the reference to Jesus' brothers and sisters is, at first glance, problematic. Recall that in Jesus' day, brothers and sisters can also refer to cousins.

### Church Teaching

Prophets and prophecy are major threads woven throughout the Old Testament. Sixteen of the books in the Old Testament are attributed to prophets by name. The prophets, in conveying God's message, reiterated to the people that God alone is the ruler of human history, his chosen must adhere to his will and his Commandments, the Lord will judge us, our hope springs from God's loving mercy, and God is preparing a beautiful future for his people in the Messiah and the New Covenant.

### Additional Background

- Links:** Role of the prophet  
Map of Holy Land at the time of Jesus  
Ezekiel, the prophet during the Babylonian Exile
- Music:** "God Is Still Speaking," M. Haugen (GIA)  
"With One Voice," R. Manalo (OCP)  
"Go Out in the World," E. Bolduc (WLP)

## Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a candle, a green cloth, and an open Bible or Lectionary.

### Discover

1. Invite everyone to reflect quietly for one to two minutes on the Liturgy of the Word just celebrated and then share with one or two people.

2. Ask:

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

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

3. Gather some responses from the group.

### Deepen

1. Begin with a personal experience of good coming from a challenging time in your life.

2. Invite participants to think of a time when adversity built character. After a few minutes, encourage them to share with one other person (remind them to share only what they are comfortable sharing).

3. Proclaim the Second Reading, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

4. Discuss:

- Paul's determination to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ in the midst of many struggles
- Paul's view of his adversities as blessings in disguise
- The importance of embracing both the challenges and the blessings in our lives
- Seeing the good that comes from even difficult situations

5. Allow some time for reflection and questions.

### Pray

Use the Prayer of Exorcism, RCIA 94K.

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## Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

### Sunday Word

Ezekiel 2:2-5

Psalms 123:1-4

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Mark 6:1-6a

### Welcome

Welcome everyone who is present, including sponsors, team members, and spouses who join the group. Invite one or two people to share some of the key points from the Dismissal Session.

### Engage

1. Invite all to think of a time when the end of the world was proclaimed through the media. Ask:

*Who proclaimed the end?*

*How did you respond when you heard the news?*

*When the expected time of the end passed and nothing happened, what did you think?*

*How did you respond the next time the end of the world was announced?*

2. Proclaim the First Reading, Ezekiel 2:2-5.

3. Discuss:

- Babylon captured the Israelites and took them as slaves into exile (Babylonian Exile).
- Ezekiel is sent to the people in exile to exhort them to remain faithful to the Covenant.
- Ezekiel reminds the Israelites of God's promise that they will see their homeland; he challenges them not to give up their hope of return.

4. Ask:

*What gives you hope in the midst of struggles?*

*What message do you take with you from this passage from Ezekiel?*

5. Proclaim the Gospel, Mark 6:1-6a.

6. Discuss:

- Jesus returns to Nazareth and to the synagogue and begins to teach the people gathered there, but they do not accept him.
- Jesus is able to heal those who have faith in him.

7. Ask:

*In what way have you experienced the same response from people who know you? ("Who do you think you are?")*

*What will you take from this Gospel passage?*

### Explore

1. Highlight the following discussion points:

- The prophet is one who is called by God to convey a message to God's people. This is different from society's understanding of a prophet as one who foretells the future.
- In the Old Testament, the role of the prophet was often to call the people back to faithfulness to the Covenant established with Abraham.
- At other times, the prophet encouraged the people to trust in God's promise (for example, the promise to Moses to lead the people to a land flowing with milk and honey).
- Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise that he would send a Messiah to redeem the people.

2. Highlight key points from the participant handout's Catholic Teaching: Prophets and Prophecy. Also highlight the Key Terms and Voices of Faith.

### Apply

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...*

### Pray

Use the prayer found on the participant handout.