

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA  
Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B • July 21, 2024

## Catechist Preparation

### Scripture

**FIRST READING**—JEREMIAH 23:1-6

The term shepherd here refers to the kings of Israel who have been responsible for its exile. God will be the Good Shepherd, who brings his people back and restores them.

**SECOND READING**—EPHESIANS 2:13-18

This passage has as its theme the unity effected by Christ between Jews and Gentiles. He accomplishes this by destroying the barrier between them—that is, the Law and the Commandments.

**GOSPEL**—MARK 6:30-34

This short passage serves as a bridge between the preceding section and the next, where Jesus is revealed as Lord and Shepherd.

### Church Teaching

Pastoral ministry has as its goal that people recognize and respond to the saving presence of God in the world. The Church and her pastoral ministry efforts are thus not to be confused with any political organization or society. The Church in her activity both signifies, and is the safeguard of, the transcendent character of the human person. She calls all men and women to reach for, be challenged by, and experience the consolation of the holiness of the Most High God.

## 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. If possible, have a listing of parish ministry groups as well as bulletins for everyone.

### Additional Background

**Links:** The prophet Jeremiah

Structure of the Church: parish, diocese, archdiocese  
Church offices: pastor, bishop, archbishop, pope

**Music:** "Psalm 23: Shepherd Me, O God," M. Haugen (GIA, OCP, WLP)  
"Shepherd of Souls," J. Montgomery and J.B. Dykes (GIA, OCP, WLP)  
"Like a Shepherd," R. J. Dufford, SJ (GIA, OCP)

### Discover

1. Invite everyone to reflect quietly for one to two minutes on the Liturgy of the Word just celebrated.
2. Ask:
  - From our Liturgy of the Word, what word or phrase or feeling stays with you?*
  - What does the word, phrase, or feeling convey to you?*
  - What questions does it raise for you?*
3. After a few minutes of quiet, invite participants to share with one other person.

### Deepen

1. Discuss:
  - What do you already know about the role of a shepherd?*
  - Why is the Lord is the "Good Shepherd"?*
2. Proclaim the First Reading, Jeremiah 23:1-6.
3. Discuss:
  - Why the Lord is chastising the shepherds
  - The message of Jeremiah to the shepherds
  - His message to the people—the sheep
  - The promise of a good king who will govern wisely
  - What the people can expect if they listen to Jeremiah.
4. Ask:
  - In what way is this passage a source of comfort?*
  - Who would welcome such a message? Why?*
  - Who would be challenged by the message? Why?*
5. Proclaim the Gospel, Mark 6:30-34.
6. Discuss:
  - Jesus is the Good Shepherd, who tends to the needs of the people.
  - Jesus reaches out to all; he responds to all who come to him.
  - Even when Jesus attempts to go away to rest, the people seek him out.
  - Jesus and his Apostles have the need to rest.
  - Jesus calls his disciples "Apostles"; they are to be both doers and teachers, continuing the work of Jesus.
7. Summarize the discussion.

### Pray

Slowly and reflectively pray the Responsorial Psalm, Psalm 23:1-6.

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## Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

### Sunday Word

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Psalm 23:1-6

Ephesians 2:13-18

Mark 6:30-34

### 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

Discuss what the group already knows about

- The parish structure
  - Pastoral and finance councils
  - The role of the pastor and his responsibilities
- The structure of the diocese
  - The role of the bishop (archbishop) and his responsibilities
  - The structure of the archdiocese
- The pope—the Bishop of Rome
  - The College of Cardinals and its role
  - The College of Bishops and its role
  - The structure of the Church
- Pastoral ministry

### Explore

1. Highlight the following discussion points:

- The pope and all bishops are the successors to Peter and the first Apostles.
- They have the responsibility to carry on the work that Jesus entrusted to the Apostles: to go to the ends of the world and proclaim the Good News and to baptize all believers.
- The faithful also have the responsibility to help the bishops carry out the work of the Church.

- Any activity by the Church that seeks to care for others' needs can be described as a form of pastoral ministry.
  - There are four areas of contemporary pastoral ministry:
    - Evangelization
      - To the ends of the earth
    - Worship
      - Public prayer
    - Community
      - Support for the parishioners
    - Service
      - Outreach activities
  - Describe the ways the parish attempts to meet the needs of the four areas of pastoral ministry.
2. If possible, have members of the parish who have responsibility for a particular ministry come and talk about that ministry. Explain how parishioners can volunteer for an established ministry as well as how new ministry opportunities are promoted.
  3. Give each person a bulletin. Walk through it, explaining the ministries that are included in it for the week.
  4. Highlight key points from the participant handout's Catholic Teaching: Pastoral Ministry in the Church. Also highlight the Key Terms and Voices of Faith.

### 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. Encourage the sponsors to take their catechumens or candidates to observe or participate in a ministry they are interested in or one that is unfamiliar to them.

### Pray

Use the prayer found on the participant handout.