

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B • July 28, 2024

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—2 KINGS 4:42-44

Twenty barley loaves is enough for the prophet to eat but not nearly enough for an entire people starving due to famine in the land. That is, unless the power of God multiplies that meager amount! The link between this Old Testament miracle and that of Jesus as reported in the New Testament is significant.

SECOND READING—EPHESIANS 4:1-6

The series of “ones” in this passage describes what it is that makes up our Christian calling. Perhaps because Baptism is explicitly mentioned and Eucharist is not, this listing may be a series of liturgical acclamations used in early baptismal liturgies.

GOSPEL—JOHN 6:1-15

The entire chapter focuses on Jesus, who is the Bread of Life. The miracle described here is the only one reported by all four Evangelists. As such, it is highly significant.

Church Teaching

Ecumenism is distinct from interreligious dialogue, or the conversation between different world religions. The term “ecumenism” comes from the Greek *oikoumene* for *inhabited world*. It denotes relations between Christians worldwide—that is, among Catholics (Roman and Eastern), Protestants, Anglicans, and the Orthodox. The purpose of these relations is to produce greater understanding and cooperation.

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.

Additional Background

Links: Christian Unity Week
Ecumenism
Elisha, the prophet

Music: “One Bread, One Body,” J.B. Foley, SJ (GIA, OCP, WLP)
“We Are Many Parts,” M. Haugen (GIA, OCP, WLP)
“The Hand of the Lord Feeds Us,” S. Janco (WLP)

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 everyone.
4. Ask:
 - Have you ever been to a potluck meal?*
 - What was it like? Describe the foods that were brought.*
 - Did anyone go away hungry?*
 - In what way is the Gospel reading for today like a potluck meal? What are some similarities? What are some differences?*
5. Summarize the discussion, then proclaim the First Reading, 2 Kings 4:42-44.

Deepen

1. Proclaim the Gospel, John 6:1-15.
2. Ask:
 - In what way are these two passages alike?*
 - What do you think is the significance of having food left over?*
 - If you had been the boy chosen to bring forth his bread and fish, how would you have responded?*
 - Since the Gospel states that there were five thousand men there, how many did they really feed?*
3. Discuss:
 - The miracle of the loaves and fish is the only miracle account found in all four Gospels.
 - It is a foundational miracle in chapter 6 of the Gospel of John, referred to as the Bread of Life discourse.
 - Jesus is the Bread of Life.
 - This passage prefigures the actions of Eucharist: take, give thanks, break, and share.

Pray

Use the Responsorial Psalm from today’s liturgy, Psalm 145:10-11, 15-16, 17-18.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Sunday Word

2 Kings 4:42-44

Psalm 145:10-11, 15-16, 17-18

Ephesians 4:1-6

John 6:1-15

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 they were invited to help find a solution to a problem, whether at work, at home, or with an organization.

- Describe the problem.

Who was involved? How were you involved?

How did you arrive at a workable solution?

- What, if any, compromises were needed?
- What happens when one or two people are firm in their stance and refuse to compromise?
- Are there circumstances that prohibit or prevent you from compromising? Describe such a circumstance.

2. Proclaim the Second Reading, Ephesians 4:1-6.

3. Discuss

- Paul's commitment to continue to teach and encourage Jesus' followers, even from prison
- Paul's mandate for all to seek unity and to persevere in its pursuit

4. Ask:

What do you hear as the message of Paul?

Where would you proclaim the message today? Why?

Explore

1. Highlight the following discussion points:

- Christians are called to strive to preserve the unity that characterizes the household of the Lord.

- Such unity is grounded in the core truths of the Christian faith expressed in Saint Paul's letter: "There is one body and one Spirit . . . one hope . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all . . ."
 - Unity is the very essence of the household of faith (i.e., the Trinity, Three Persons in One God).
 - In the Nicene Creed, we profess our belief in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.
 - Since its beginnings, there have existed differences and divisions:
 - Saint Paul in his letter to the Corinthians
 - The First Council of Jerusalem
 - Schisms
 - Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholics
 - The Reformation
 - All who are justified by faith in Baptism are incorporated into Christ and rightly called Christians.
 - The work of ecumenism is to bring together all Christians into one Church.
 - The Catholic Church strives through communication and study to promote such ecumenism.
 - At this time, doctrinal and practical issues still keep us separated.
2. Highlight key points from the participant handout's Catholic Teaching: Unity and Ecumenism. 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...

Encourage the sponsors and their catechumens or candidates to pray the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed together.

Pray

Use the prayer found in the participant handout.