

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

First Sunday of Lent • Year C • March 9, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—DEUTERONOMY 26:4-10

A pivotal passage in the Old Testament, the creedal statement contained here recalls 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 lies at the center of their existence.

SECOND READING—ROMANS 10:8-13

This portion of Saint Paul's letter is thought to derive from an early Christian confession of faith.

GOSPEL—LUKE 4:1-13

Considered against its Jewish background, this scriptural episode shows how Jesus succeeds in his desert experience, versus the Israelites' experience of being tested or tempted in the desert.

Church Teaching: The Right Response

Jesus, in his humble submission to God's will, exemplifies for us the right response to divine election. It is not coincidental that on this first Sunday of Lent, when the Church celebrates God's election of catechumens, we always read from a Gospel account of the temptation of Jesus. Jesus' forty days in the desert echo Israel's testing for forty years. These Gospel accounts tell of Jesus' unswerving trust and worship of a gracious and loving God. Thus God acts and God chooses, and in doing so, not only is human pride confounded but so too is the pride of Satan overturned. The entire life of Jesus—his ministry, suffering, and Death—points to

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 538–540, 1808, 2157, 2340

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 36, especially the section entitled “And Lead Us Not Into Temptation,” pages 488–489

Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II: pages 40, 130

God and God alone, whose reign is overtaking this world. For in Christ, the faithful are gathered up, given membership in this kingdom, and presented to God in a new and everlasting Covenant.

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth, a candle, a dish with sand, and a space to place the Lectionary. When all are seated, light the candle and sit in quiet for a few minutes.

Discover

1. Invite the children to name anything different they noticed about the Church and about the Mass today. (*Answers will vary but should include things like the color, the music, the environment, and the prayers.*)
2. Then ask what clues the things they mentioned give us about Lent.

Deepen

1. Pass around the dish of sand. Invite the children to close their eyes and to feel the sand, perhaps to make a sign of the cross on the top of it.
2. Ask why sand is a good symbol for the prayer table today. (*The Gospel is about Jesus in the desert. The desert is full of sand.*)
3. Explain that sand represents the desert, the place where Jesus is tempted. The desert is often seen as a place of purification—a place to go to fast and pray—away from everyone and everything.
4. Invite the children to stand as you proclaim the Gospel, Luke 4:1-13.
5. Ask volunteers to help retell the Gospel story in their own words. Offer help as needed.

Pray

Invite the children to think of a way they can grow closer to God in this Lenten season. After a moment of quiet, invite volunteers to share what they will do. Then invite the group to pray after you: *Jesus, / help us to use the days of Lent / to do your will / and to grow closer to you. / Amen.*

Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup, you will need copies of the participant handout and copies of the Lenten article "Purple Is for Lent, Too!" You may also wish to have on hand simple costumes and props for the retelling of the Gospel (see Invite #1 below).

Sunday Word

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Psalms 91:1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15

Romans 10:8-13

Luke 4:1-13

Welcome

Welcome everyone and invite one or two children to share some of the key points from the **Dismissal Session**.

Invite

1. Again proclaim the Gospel, Luke 4:1-13. Consider using props and inviting two of the children to role-play the parts of the devil and Jesus, acting out the Gospel as you proclaim it.
2. Ask volunteers to name the three temptations. (*Turn the stones to bread; worship the devil and receive all power and glory; prove you are God's Son.*)
3. Ask whether anyone noticed how Jesus answered the devil. (*with a quote from Scripture*)
4. Share examples of Scriptures that you recite or pray when you are tempted or in need of God's help. Invite the children to share their own examples. Conclude by saying how helpful it is to know God's Word in times of trouble.

Teach

1. Invite the children to name temptations in their own lives. (*Answers will vary but might include bragging, getting angry with a brother or sister, being lazy and not doing chores, gossiping, etc.*)
2. Explain that in Lent, Catholics concentrate on three things that help us avoid temptation and renew our commitment to live as chosen daughters and sons of God. (*prayer, fasting, and almsgiving or works of charity*)
3. Further explain that these three things are called the Lenten disciplines. By doing them, we become better disciples of Jesus and grow stronger in our faith.
4. Give and elicit from the children practical examples of each of the Lenten disciplines. You may find it helpful to review with the children the "Purple Is for Lent, Too!" handout.
5. Read and discuss **Key Teachings** and **Faith Words** from the participant handout.

Challenge

Encourage the children to think of a Lenten discipline they will do in the coming week. Will they take more time to pray? Will they fast from something in order to have more time to spend with God and others who need their love? Will they give alms or do works of charity to help the poor and those in need? Allow time for quiet reflection.

Prayer

Invite those who wish to share aloud the Lenten discipline they have chosen. Then invite all to pray the prayer on the front of the participant page.