

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

Second Sunday of Advent • Year A • December 7, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ISAIAH 11:1-10

The prophet Isaiah depicts the peaceable kingdom that the Lord God will establish. Enemies will be reconciled and predators will cease stalking their prey. Divine peace will be ushered in with the measuring rod of God's holy justice.

SECOND READING—ROMANS 15:4-9

Paul reminds the Christian community that the great sign of hope has flowered in their lives; the Gentiles glorify God for his mercy. God's name is praised among all the nations.

GOSPEL—MATTHEW 3:1-12

John the Baptist exhorts the people to repent. The Kingdom of God draws near, and in its approach the people are urged to change their ways, turn away from sin, and create a path for the Lord in their hearts.

Church Teaching: Justice and Peace

The flowering of justice and peace are signs of the messianic era, where justice is not something abstract but consists of relationships in harmony with God's will and Law, founded in solicitude for the poor and weak. Similarly, peace is not just the absence of war and violence but total well-being grounded in friendship with God, centered in the human community, and extending from there to the whole created order.

Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 437, 737, and 1076

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 23, especially pages 307–309

Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II: pages 98 and 99

To live in the messianic era does not mean that believers abandon their stations in life and their tasks in the world. Rather, they enter into those roles and activities even more ardently, with the mind and heart of Christ, animated by the Spirit to establish justice, love, and peace upon the earth.

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth, an Advent wreath, and a Bible or Lectionary. If possible, include a picture or icon of John the Baptist.

Discover

1. Begin by asking the children whether anyone hung the liturgical calendar or set up an Advent wreath at home.
2. Also ask volunteers to share one thing they did in the past week to prepare for Christmas.

Deepen

1. Gather the children around the prayer table. Light two purple candles on the Advent wreath and sing an Advent refrain.
2. Proclaim the Gospel, Matthew 3:1-12.
3. Allow for a moment of quiet reflection, and then help the children reflect on the Gospel by asking the following questions:

Who was John the Baptist?

What did he tell people to do?

Who is the One who will come after him?

4. Invite all to return to their seats. Continue a discussion of the Gospel by asking the following questions:

What did John the Baptist do to help people prepare for the coming of the Lord?

What can we do today to help prepare for the coming of the Lord?

Pray

Invite the children to quiet themselves, and then have them pray after you, “Lord, help me to prepare the way for you.” Together, pray this prayer several times. Conclude by singing an Advent refrain.

Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup, you will need copies of the participant handout.

Sunday Word

Isaiah 11:1-10

Psalms 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17

Romans 15:4-9

Matthew 3:1-12

Welcome

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

Invite

1. Gather the group around the prayer table. Again light two purple candles on the Advent wreath and sing an Advent refrain.
2. Proclaim the First Reading, Isaiah 11:1-10.
3. Lead the group in a guided meditation using the following phrases or similar words:
 - Close your eyes, right where you are.
 - Listen again to these phrases from the Scripture reading.
 - “Not by appearance shall he judge.” *(Pause.)*
 - “The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.” *(Pause.)*
 - “The wolf shall be a guest of the lamb.” *(Pause.)*
 - “The calf and the young lion shall browse together.” *(Pause.)*
 - “The cow and the bear shall be neighbors.” *(Pause.)*
 - “The baby shall play by the cobra’s den.” *(Pause.)*
 - “There shall be no harm.” *(Pause.)*

4. Invite the children to slowly open their eyes. Ask what phrase caught their attention and why.
5. Invite the children to return to their seats. Continue to help the group reflect on the reading by using these or similar questions:

Something is strange about some of those phrases—what is strange? (Help the children come to a conclusion by asking questions such as: Would a wolf and a lamb normally get along? Would a bear and a cow normally get along? Would a baby play with a cobra?)

But what did the last phrase say? (There shall be no harm.)

What do you think the reading is talking about? (A day when everyone and everything—all of creation—lives together in peace and friendship.)

Teach

1. Lead a discussion on justice and peace, highlighting the following points:
 - During the Church season of Advent, we wait for the coming of Jesus. He is the Messiah, the One sent by God the Father to save us from sin.
 - Jesus calls us to turn away from sin and to believe the Good News of Salvation.
 - Jesus often preached that the Kingdom of God is at hand. We help bring about that kingdom when we work for justice by caring for the needs of all and when we live in peace with one another.
2. Read and discuss the **Key Teachings** and **Faith Words** from the participant handout.

Challenge

In light of today’s discussion of the First Reading, invite the children to make a special effort in the coming week to get along with others at school, at home, on their teams, and in their neighborhoods. Remind them that their acts of justice and peace help build God’s kingdom on earth.

Pray

Invite the children to quiet themselves and to echo you in praying, “Lord, fill me with your peace.” Then sing an Advent song or refrain.