

# Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

## CATECHUMENATE SESSION

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A • January 25, 2026

### Catechist Preparation

#### Scripture

**FIRST READING**—ISAIAH 8:23–9:3

The prophet gives voice to the promise of God that his people have nothing to fear. Darkness will be banished and believers will walk in the light of the Lord.

**SECOND READING**—1 CORINTHIANS 1:10–13, 17

Saint Paul reminds the Corinthians that divisiveness has no standing within the Christian community. It must give way to unanimity of mind and heart in Christ.

**GOSPEL**—MATTHEW 4:12–13 OR 4:12–17

Jesus calls disciples to follow him. They leave behind comfortable routines to follow Jesus as he proclaims the Gospel and heals those who are sick.

#### Church Teaching: Vocations

The word *vocation* derives from the Latin *vocare*, which literally means “to call.” All human beings are called by God to share in his divine life and find eternal happiness with him in Heaven. In times past, the notion of “vocation” or “calling” was usually applied only to members of the clergy and religious orders. The Second Vatican Council expanded the concept of vocation to all believers, rightly understanding that the model for discipleship as seen in the Gospels applies to all men and women who are baptized. Whatever particular gifts, talents, and characteristics a believer has, they are to be employed for the common good, for building up the Church, and for nudging the world ever closer to the Kingdom of Christ.

#### Further Reading

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 897, 899

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:** Chapter 11, especially pages 134–135

**Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II:** pages 88 and 146

### Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

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

#### Discover

1. Invite volunteers to name things that make them afraid. Be prepared to offer a couple of examples of your own. Then ask the children to raise their hands if they or any people they know are afraid of the dark. Ask why people are afraid of the dark.
2. Invite the children to then name sources of light that break through the darkness. Start by giving one example, such as a candle.

#### Deepen

1. Gather the children around the prayer table, light the candle, and proclaim the First Reading, Isaiah 8:23–9:3.
2. Invite the children to name a word or phrase that they remember from the reading. If necessary, proclaim the reading again.
3. Invite the children to return to their seats, and continue a discussion of the reading by highlighting the following or similar points:
  - God’s people had been walking in darkness and gloom. Ask, “What people in the world and in our city today are walking in darkness and gloom?”
  - God’s people saw a great light, and rejoiced. Ask, “What might give light and joy to the people we just mentioned?” (*Help the children identify ways that they can bring light and joy to those who are walking in darkness and gloom.*)
  - The people also rejoiced because the things that burdened them had been lifted from them. Ask, “What are some burdens—some difficult or hard things—that people carry today?”
  - Conclude by asking the children what they think is the meaning of the reading for us today.

**Pray**

Sing or read today's Responsorial Psalm, Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14.

**Extended Catechesis Session**

*(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)*

**Supplies Needed**

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

**Sunday Word**

Isaiah 8:23–9:3

Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14

1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17

Matthew 4:12-23 or 4:12-17

**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, light the candle, and proclaim the Gospel, Matthew 4:12-23.
2. Invite volunteers to recall:

*What two brothers did Jesus first ask to come after him?*

*What two brothers did he ask after that?*

*What did all four of the men do when they heard Jesus call them to come and follow him?*

*Could you have done what the brothers did? Why or why not?*

3. Invite the children to return to their seats, and ask the following questions:

*What do you think it takes to be a disciple of Jesus today?*

*What are disciples of Jesus supposed to say and do?*

**Teach**

1. Read and discuss **Key Teachings** and **Faith Word** from the participant handout.
2. Continue the discussion, highlighting the following points:
  - Every person is called to be a witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ. *(Invite the children to name practical, everyday ways they can do this.)*
  - Every person has a gift needed to bring about the Reign of God. *(Invite volunteers to name the gifts they have been given OR take time to point out the gifts you see present in each child in the group.)*
  - All gifts are given by the Spirit for the sake of the People of God. *(Emphasize that our gifts are meant to be shared with others.)*
  - The Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist strengthen us to be Jesus' disciples in the world today.

**Challenge**

1. Remind the children that the priesthood, religious life, married life, and single life are the ways in which believers are called to share in the mission of Christ. The Church calls these ways of life *vocations*.
2. Explain that no matter what vocation we are called to, every one of us, here and now, is asked to help spread the Good News about Jesus.
3. Challenge the children to take time this week to tell at least one other person about their experience in the OCIA and what it means for them to learn about and to follow Jesus.

**Prayer**

Conclude with the Anointing of the Catechumens (OCIA 98–103) or Prayer of Exorcism 94H (*Order of Christian Initiation of Adults*).