

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

Fourth Sunday of Easter • Year C • May 11, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ACTS 13:14, 43-52

Some in the Jewish community at Antioch welcome the Good News preached by Saint Paul. Others respond with jealousy and rejection.

SECOND READING—REVELATION 7:9, 14B-17

The “great trial” refers to the period of tribulation at the end of the world, yet the “tears” and “hunger and thirst” that will be wiped away by God are also present realities for the first hearers of this message undergoing persecution.

GOSPEL—JOHN 10:27-30

“The Father and I are one” (verse 30) makes explicit that Jesus’ promise to give life to the sheep and protect them forever from destruction lies in his oneness with God.

Church Teaching: Good Shepherds

Christ appointed his Apostles to share in his mission of proclaiming to all the world the Good News of Salvation. The bishops, successors of the Apostles, are called to continue this mission in the world today. The pope, successor to Saint Peter and the bishop of the Church of Rome, pastors the universal Church on earth. Priests—coworkers with the bishops—and deacons are charged with teaching the faith; leading worship, most especially the Eucharist; and seeing to the pastoral needs of those they serve. The laity too, by virtue of their Baptism, are called to dedicate themselves to God’s service and to the good of the whole Church.

Regardless of one’s vocation, the example of the Good Shepherd is set by Christ, who calls, leads,

protects, and brings to eternal life to the sheep of his fold.

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a white cloth, an icon or image of Jesus the Good Shepherd, a candle, and an open Bible or Lectionary.

Discover

1. Invite volunteers to share what they think makes a good leader. What does a good leader do? What does a good leader say? How does a good leader act? *(You may wish to list their responses on the board or on a flip chart.)*
2. After everyone has shared, ask for examples of good leaders in the world, in the Church, at school, and in their lives. *(List these on the board or flip chart for all to see.)* Have volunteers explain their answers. Be prepared to share examples of your own.

Deepen

1. Proclaim today’s Gospel, John 10:27-30.
2. Remind the children that “Good Shepherd” is one of the titles of Jesus.
3. Ask why this is a good title for Jesus. What did Jesus say and do to make him a Good Shepherd?
4. Ask a volunteer who we are in the Gospel. *(the sheep)*
5. What are we, the sheep, called to do? *(listen to Jesus’ voice; follow him)*
6. Invite volunteers to share what we have heard Jesus tell us to do as we have listened to his Word week after week and learned about his teachings.

Pray

Pray together the prayer from the front of the participant handout. Conclude by singing an Easter Alleluia, refrain, or familiar Easter hymn.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 880–913

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 20

Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II: pages 88–89

Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup, you will need a whiteboard or flip chart, markers, and copies of the participant handout. Do media research about the life of a shepherd—what a shepherd does, where a shepherd lives, and interesting facts about shepherds and sheep that the children would enjoy knowing.

Sunday Word

Acts 13:14, 43-52

Psalm 100:1-2, 3, 5

Revelation 7:9, 14b-17

John 10:27-30

Welcome

1. Welcome everyone and invite volunteers to share what they wrote about in the **My Favorite Meal** and **Glorifying the Lord** sections of last week's participant handout.
2. Invite one or two children to share some of the key points from the **Dismissal Session**. Especially highlight discussion points about what makes a good leader and some examples from that discussion.

Invite

1. Proclaim today's Gospel, John 10:27-30.
2. Share with the children what you learned about shepherds and sheep.
3. Role-play with the children examples of a Good Shepherd/Bad Shepherd.
 - Serve as the shepherd and invite the children to be the sheep.
 - Give an example, such as, "I will lead you to safety."
 - Have the group respond aloud, "Good Shepherd" or "Bad Shepherd."
 - Give another example, such as, "I will leave you on your own."
 - Again invite the group to respond aloud, "Good Shepherd" or "Bad Shepherd."

- Invite students to serve as the shepherd and to give their own examples of "Good Shepherd" and "Bad Shepherd."

Teach

1. Build upon the role-play activity by sharing that the Church too has shepherds. Invite volunteers to name who they think those shepherds are.
2. Using the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references (880–913) and the *Our Catholic Heritage* pages (88 and 89) as your foundation, review with the children the names of the shepherds of the Church and an overview of their responsibilities.
3. Conclude by explaining that the laity (all of the baptized who are not ordained or consecrated to religious life) also have the responsibility to shepherd others by honoring God's Word and the teachings of the Church, by giving good example to others, and by serving those in need.

Challenge

1. Brainstorm with the children a list of all those who shepherd them in the Church, at home, on their teams, and in their community.
2. Continue the conversation by asking the children whom they can shepherd at school.
2. Point out this week's **Thank a Good Shepherd** and **Be a Good Shepherd** sections of the participant handout, and encourage the children to continue their reflections on these two themes this coming week. Ask them to come next week prepared to share what they did.

Prayer

1. Proclaim again today's Gospel, John 10:27-30.
1. Pray a spontaneous prayer asking God to bless all shepherds of the Church who teach and guide the People of God throughout the world. Conclude by singing an Easter Alleluia, refrain, or familiar Easter hymn.