

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

Fifth Sunday of Easter • Year C • May 18, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ACTS 14:21-27

The new Christian communities are structured communities of faith and prayer that are helped by such people as the elders mentioned in today's reading. And the life of these communities is marked by love, joy, and growth.

SECOND READING—REVELATION 21:1-5A

Today's reading from the Book of Revelation invites us into a vision of a new Heaven, a new earth, and a New Jerusalem.

GOSPEL—JOHN 13:31-33A, 34-35

Where the synoptic Gospels place the account of the institution of the Eucharist as the memorial of Jesus, John's Gospel places Jesus' new Commandment to love one another.

Church Teaching: The New Commandment

On Holy Thursday evening, at the Mass of the Lord's Supper, the Church proclaims the reading about that final gathering for the Passover meal (see John 13:1-15). Then a ritual action portrays the washing of the disciples' feet, symbolizing the life of the Christian, who is called to continually put Jesus' love into practice.

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

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

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1967, 1983

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 307–388

Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II: pages 96–97

Discover

1. Begin by sharing how someone shared God's love with you this past week. Give simple, concrete examples—someone called to see how you were doing or someone promised to pray for you. Invite volunteers to share similar examples.
2. Then share an opportunity or two you had to share God's love with someone else this past week. Invite volunteers to share their examples. List these on the whiteboard or flip chart.

Deepen

1. Proclaim today's Gospel, John 13:31-33a, 34-35.
2. Ask the children what Jesus is asking us to do.
3. Ask what Jesus says love will do.
4. Refer back to the list on the whiteboard or flip chart. Praise the children, explaining that all of the things they did were acts of love, and because they did those things, others experienced the love of God, the love of Jesus.
5. Challenge the children to continue to add to the list. What other things could they say or do to love others, and to show others the love of Jesus?
6. When all have shared, invite everyone to look at the list you have created. Then say together a simple litany. Begin by saying, "Because you (fill in the blank with one of the children's examples)" and have the children respond, "all know that you are my disciples." Continue until all the examples have become a part of the litany.

Pray

Pray together the prayer from the front of the participant handout. Conclude by singing a familiar refrain or hymn about love, such as "They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love" or "Ubi Caritas" (any setting).

Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup, you will need a poster or individual copies of the Ten Commandments, copies of the parish bulletin or newsletter, and copies of the participant handout.

Sunday Word

Acts 14:21-27

Psalms 145:8-9, 10-11, 12-13

Revelation 21:1-5a

John 13:31-33a, 34-35

Welcome

1. Welcome everyone and invite volunteers to share what they did to **Thank a Good Shepherd** and to **Be a Good Shepherd** in the last week.

1. Invite one or two children to share some of the key points from the **Dismissal Session**. Highlight some of the specific examples mentioned about ways the children experienced and showed God's love in the past week.

Invite

1. Invite the students to name as many of the Ten Commandments as they can recall. Then invite them to look at the Ten Commandments you listed on the poster or handout you prepared. (*You may wish to use page 96 of Our Catholic Heritage, which also offers a brief explanation of each of the Ten Commandments.*)

2. Remind the students that the Ten Commandments are Laws given by God to help us live good lives. The first three Commandments teach us to love and serve God. The other seven Commandments teach us how to love and serve others.

3. Explain that in today's Gospel, Jesus gives us a New Commandment. Invite the children to listen carefully for what the New Commandment says.

4. Proclaim today's Gospel, John 13:31-33a, 34-35.

5. Invite a volunteer to name the New Commandment, often called the Law of Love.

6. Ask why this Commandment is important. (*If we live this Commandment, others will see and know that we are Jesus' disciples.*)

Teach

1. Build upon this discussion by again recalling the Ten Commandments.

2. Help the children make the connection between the Ten Commandments and the New Commandment. Both call us to love.

3. Review the Ten Commandments one by one. Invite a volunteer to read one Commandment, pausing to ask: *To whom are we showing love when we honor this Commandment?*

In what way does honoring this Commandment show others that we are disciples of Jesus?

Repeat this process until all of the Commandments have been discussed.

4. Distribute copies of the parish bulletin or newsletter. Review it with the children, inviting them to look for examples of ways the parish lives the New Commandment, the Law of Love. What ministries give parishioners the opportunity to show Jesus' love by serving and caring for others?

Challenge

Point out this week's **Shared God's Love with Me** and **Showed God's Love to Others** sections of the participant handout. Encourage the children to continue their reflections on these two themes in the coming week. Ask them to come next week prepared to share their experiences.

Prayer

Pray together the prayer from the front of the participant page. Conclude by singing a familiar refrain or hymn about love, such as "They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love" or "Ubi Caritas" (any setting).