

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

Fifth Sunday of Lent • Year C • April 6, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ISAIAH 43:16-21

This passage employs imagery from the exodus out of Egypt and the creation story in Genesis to exhort the people to trust that God will not hold their sins against them but will rescue them.

SECOND READING—PHILIPPIANS 3:8-14

Paul describes himself as “forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead” (vs. 13), which is exactly what Isaiah urges the ancient Israelites to do.

GOSPEL—JOHN 8:1-11

Jesus confronts the elders, turns them away, and restores the adulterous woman’s sense of self-worth. She departs from Jesus reconciled to God, to her community, and to herself.

Church Teaching: Forgiveness

We too are caught in sinfulness. Jesus’ command to “go and sin no more” is addressed to us.

With Saint Paul, we look to the past only long enough to describe our former ways as rubbish, and we strain forward in Christ, accepting that we have been reconciled to God and one another.

After Baptism, we continue to experience the forgiveness of God in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. This sacrament also restores our relationship with the Church.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 433, 755, 1443

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 18, especially the section entitled “Recognize Sin—Praise God’s Mercy,” pages 242–243

Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II: pages 80, 82, 124–125

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 crucifix. When all are seated, light the candle and sit in quiet for a few minutes.

Discover

1. Proclaim the Gospel passage, John 8:1-11.
2. Invite the children to consider the people from the Gospel passage. Use these or similar questions:

- THE ELDERS

Why did they bring the woman to Jesus?

What were they hoping would happen?

- THE WOMAN

What do you think she was feeling? Expecting?

What do you think would have been her response to Jesus?

- JESUS

What do you think he thought about the elders?

How did he feel about the woman?

What do you think he was writing on the ground?

Deepen

1. Remind the children that just last week, you shared experiences of being forgiven. Pick up on that conversation in light of today’s Gospel by inviting them to
 - Think of a time when they experienced being forgiven for something they knew it was wrong to do or to say. Ask:

How did you feel when you got caught?

How did you feel when you were forgiven without being punished?
 - Think of a time when they forgave someone who did something hurtful to them. Ask:

Why did you forgive that person?

How did he or she respond to your forgiveness?

2. In light of these experiences and the story from the Gospel, ask volunteers to share what they think Jesus is trying to teach us about

- Forgiveness
- God
- Reconciliation

Pray

Conclude by praying together the Act of Contrition, printed on the front of the participant handout.

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 a note for families (see **Challenge**).

Sunday Word

Isaiah 43:16-21

Psalms 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6

Philippians 3:8-14

John 8:1-11

Welcome

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

Invite

1. Ask the children whether anyone has ever heard these sayings: "Wipe the slate clean"; "It's a new day"; "What's done is done"; and "It's the first day of the rest of your life."
2. Invite volunteers to share what they think these expressions mean.
3. Proclaim again the Gospel, John 8:1-11.
 - Lead a discussion of how the messages of the sayings are similar to the message of the Gospel.

Teach

1. Read and discuss **Key Teachings** and **Faith Word** from the participant handout.
2. Explore these key points:
 - Recall from last week's session all of the "new things" that happen because of Baptism. Remind the children that one of those things is that we are forgiven of all of our sins and are given a new start, a new life in Christ.
 - Because we are only baptized once, the Church offers the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation as an opportunity to continue to seek and experience the mercy and forgiveness of God for sins committed after Baptism.
 - When we celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, we are made friends with God and with the People of God, the Church, once again.
 - Jesus spent a lot of time with sinners. He ate with them. He talked with them. He healed them. He forgave them, and he always invited them to change their ways.

Challenge

1. If possible, show the children the reconciliation room. Ask who remembers why we celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.
2. Send a note home to let their families know when the parish will next celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Encourage the children and their families to participate in the celebration, even though the children have not yet celebrated First Penance and Reconciliation.

Prayer

Again pray the Act of Contrition, printed on the front of the participant handout.