

# Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

## CATECHUMENATE SESSION

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A • February 8, 2026

### Catechist Preparation

#### Scripture

**FIRST READING**—ISAIAH 58:7-10

Through the prophet, God calls his people to share food with those who are hungry, shelter the oppressed, and provide for the homeless and naked.

**SECOND READING**—1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5

Paul reminds the Corinthians of the core message that he preached among them: Jesus Christ crucified.

**GOSPEL**—Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus uses the images of salt and light to teach his disciples that their faith must be lived in such a way that others end up glorifying God.

#### Church Teaching: Care of the Poor

One of the key characteristics of Catholic Social Teaching is a preferential love for the poor. This preferential love entails the special commitment on the part of individual believers, of communities of the faithful, and of the institutional Church herself to work for the alleviation of poverty and to assist all those in society who are marginalized and oppressed. This preference also demands that when making moral decisions in any particular circumstances, the needs and concerns of the poor should be given priority over others.

Through Baptism all believers share in the mission of Jesus, who liberates us. Whatever their individual competency, work, or station in life, believers strive for the just distribution of goods and services so that the entire human race might be lifted up and move forward in freedom.

#### Further Reading

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 1939, 2426, 2448

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:** Chapter 31, especially pages 420–421

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

### Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

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

#### Discover

1. Gather the children around the prayer table.
2. Invite them to share
  - What they think it means to be poor
  - Reasons people might be poor
  - What they do or have done to help the poor

#### Deepen

1. Light the candle and proclaim the First Reading, Isaiah 58:7-10.
2. Ask the children to name what the Lord says we must do to help the poor and what will happen if we do so. (*Share bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the homeless, clothe the naked, do not turn our back on our own; when we cry for help, the Lord will answer.*)
3. Point out that the reading also promises that when we do these things, our light (the light of God) will shine for all to see.
4. Invite the children to return to their seats, and continue the discussion by asking:

*What are other ways we can help people in need?*

*What are other ways we can let our light, the light of God within us, shine for others to see?*

#### Pray

Give the children quiet time to think about how they might help someone in need. Then invite them to pray after you, “Jesus, let my light shine for all to see.” Repeat this prayer several times.

## 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. Ahead of time, do an internet search for uses for salt (see **Introduce 1**) and gather several copies of recent parish bulletins (see **Teach 2**). Ask the parish outreach coordinator for a suggestion of an outreach activity the group could take part in (see **Challenge**), and prepare a note home to families explaining the opportunity and providing details needed for participation.

### Sunday Word

Isaiah 58:7-10

Psalms 112:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Matthew 5:13-16

### Welcome

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

### Invite

1. Invite the children to name all the ways we use salt in our daily lives. Be prepared to share some unusual and fun examples from your internet research.
2. Ask the children to name as many sources of light as possible. Invite volunteers to name ways they use light and how they feel when the lights go out unexpectedly.
3. Gather the children around the prayer table, light the candle, and proclaim the Gospel, Matthew 5:13-16.
4. Ask the children what Jesus said about salt and light.

### Teach

1. Invite the children to return to their seats.
2. Lead a discussion on care for the poor, highlighting the following discussion points:
  - In today's Gospel, Jesus says that we are the salt of the earth and we are the light of the world.
  - He also tells us that we must let our light shine before others so that they may see our good deeds.
  - One way that we let our light shine is by caring for the poor and those in need.
  - Touch back to the question asked in the **Dismissal Session**: What are some reasons people might be poor and in need? (*Accept all replies.*)
  - Ask: What are some good deeds we can do to show the poor and those in need that we care for them? (*Accept all suggestions.*)
  - Invite the children to look through parish bulletins to find ways the parish cares for the poor and those in need. Also share with the children how your parish works with other area churches to do so.

### Challenge

Explain to the group the outreach opportunity you have chosen to invite all to take part in. Distribute and review with the children the invitation you have prepared for their families outlining the opportunity, what is needed, and a due date for any contributions (or a date and time for any service opportunity such as serving a meal at a soup kitchen).

### Prayer

Invite the children to again gather around the prayer table. Pass the bowl of salt around the group and invite the children to pray after you, "**Jesus, we are the salt of the earth.**" Hold up the candle and invite the children to pray after you, "**Jesus, we are the light of the world. Let our light shine for all to see. Amen.**"