

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

The Epiphany of the Lord • Year A • January 4, 2026

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ISAIAH 60:1-6

The prophet Isaiah extols the future splendor of a restored Jerusalem. The exiles shall return and rebuild her in beauty, and all the nations shall be drawn to her.

SECOND READING—EPHESIANS 3:2-3A, 5-6

Saint Paul clarifies for the Christian community that he has received a revelation from God—namely, that the Gentiles are coheirs and copartners of the same body, the Body of Christ. Salvation is meant for all without exclusion.

GOSPEL—MATTHEW 2:1-12

Foreign wise men arrive from the east to pay homage to the newborn king. Their destination is Bethlehem, where they offer priceless gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the infant Jesus.

Church Teaching: Salvation

No one is excluded from Salvation. All are drawn to God in Christ. This gathering does not simply unite each individual believer to the Lord but to one another—in one great communion of faith, hope, and love.

It was not just one Magus searching alone. The Magi set forth together. Together they were rewarded with the gift of faith. The fact of their companionship in searching for the Savior symbolizes the universal call to Salvation found in the Body of Christ, the Church. Their togetherness also symbolizes how our response in faith, though singular and personal, is nurtured and supported communally.

Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 528, 863, 848, 868

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 7, especially pages 84–85

The Epiphany celebrates that all men and women everywhere are called to worship God and have a place at the banquet table of the Lord. All are made worthy to join in the heritage first announced by the prophets of Israel and in these days now fully preached by the Church. People of every race, language, and way of life are called to share in the one eternal banquet with Jesus Christ the Lord.

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a white candle, a white cloth, and a Christmas crèche (if possible include the figures of the three kings).

Discover

1. Invite the children to gather around the crèche and identify the various figures now included in the setting.
2. Ask the children to share what they already know about the visit of the Magi. Fill in any details that they may forget to mention, such as the following:
 - That the Magi were from a foreign land
 - The names of the gifts the Magi brought, and their significance
 - Herod's conversation with the Magi and his interest in Jesus
 - The star
 - The angel

Deepen

1. Light the candle and sing an Epiphany hymn, such as "We Three Kings" (the text to verse 1 and the refrain are on the front of the participant handout).
2. Proclaim the Gospel, Matthew 2:1-12.
3. Ask the children why they think the angel told the Magi to return home by a different route.
4. Invite volunteers to share what gifts they would have offered Jesus and why.

Pray

Invite the children to pray the Glory Be after you:
Glory be to the Father / and to the Son / and to the Holy Spirit, / as it was in the beginning / is now, and ever shall be / world without end. / Amen. Then conclude by singing the refrain of “We Three Kings” or another Epiphany or Christmas carol.

Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup, you will need copies of the participant handout. You may also want to send home copies of The Blessing of the Home on the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord (available at RCLBenziger.com > Resources > Christmas Season).

Sunday Word

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalms 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6

Matthew 2:1-12

Welcome

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

Invite

1. Gather the children around the prayer table. Explain to them that
 - At Christmas, Jesus was first visited by the shepherds. He came to the Chosen People of Israel.
 - At Epiphany, Jesus is visited by the Magi, who are from another country. Jesus came to save all people of all time.
2. Light the candle on the prayer table and sing “We Three Kings” or another Epiphany or Christmas season carol.
3. Proclaim the First Reading, Isaiah 60:1-6.
4. Invite volunteers to share words and phrases of hope that they heard in this reading. (It may be

beneficial to proclaim the reading a second time so that the children will listen closely.)

Teach

1. Invite the children to return to their seats, and lead a discussion that highlights the following points:
 - The Magi were called from their homeland to follow the star. That star led them to Bethlehem and to the Messiah.
 - God works through humans such as Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the Magi in order to draw all people to himself.
 - Jesus came to save all people.
 - All people of all time are meant to be part of the family of God.
 - The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord celebrates the coming of Christ for all people of all time.
 - We are called to share in the mission of Christ—to bring others to God.
2. Review and discuss the **Key Teachings** and **Faith Words** with the children. These may be found on the participant handout.

Challenge

1. Share with the children the names and the significance of the Magi’s gifts:
 - **Gold:** Royalty; Jesus is the Son of God
 - **Frankincense:** Priesthood; to pray and offer sacrifice on behalf of others
 - **Myrrh:** Prophet; willingness to risk one’s life to call people back to the worship of the one, true God; to die for the sake of another
2. Discuss with the children the gifts that they have to give to Jesus.

Pray

Invite all to think quietly about one gift they will offer Jesus this week. Then invite those who wish to pray, “Lord, this week I will give you the gift of _____.” Conclude by singing an Epiphany carol or refrain.