

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

Sixth Sunday of Easter • Year C • May 25, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ACTS 15:1-2, 22-29

The decision to accept the Gentiles was made through a divine-human collaboration involving many people and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The process was not complete until the local community sent back emissaries to Jerusalem “in peace,” showing that the teaching was accepted.

SECOND READING—REVELATION 21:10-14, 22-23

When the Book of Revelation was written, the Temple and the city of Jerusalem had been completely destroyed. Therefore the new city appearing from Heaven as the pure gift of God is especially poignant. It is the fulfillment of the ultimate goal of human life: union with God.

GOSPEL—JOHN 14:23-29

Peace is Jesus’ farewell gift to his disciples, a peace that the world cannot give. Peace will be the token of Jesus’ abiding presence, even as he leaves them, just as the Spirit, or Paraclete, will provide for the disciples those things that Jesus did for them in his lifetime.

Church Teaching: The Gift of Peace

When a bishop presides at Mass as the celebrant, the first words by which he opens the liturgy after leading everyone in the Sign of the Cross recall the greeting of the Risen Lord to his disciples: “Peace be with you” (John 20:19). The assembly responds in kind to the bishop. This traditional greeting of the bishop reminds us that the promise of Christ’s gift of peace is meant for every age and every place.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 736, 2304, 2442

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 395–397

Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II: pages 82, 122–123, 124–125

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.

Discover

1. Tell the children about the best gift you ever received and what made it the best gift. Invite them to think about the best gifts they have ever received too. Ask volunteers to name those gifts and to explain why they are among the best.
2. Next share with the children the best gift you have ever given and why it was the best. Ask volunteers to name the best gifts they have ever given. Invite them to describe what the gift was, to whom it was given, and why they think it was one of the best gifts they ever gave.

Deepen

1. Invite the children to listen carefully to the Gospel reading. In particular, ask them to listen for the name of the gift that Jesus gives to his disciples.
2. Proclaim today’s Gospel, John 14:23-29.
3. Ask the children what gift Jesus gave. (*peace*)
4. Of all the gifts Jesus could have given to his disciples, ask volunteers to share why they think Jesus gave them the gift of peace.
5. Invite the children to share whether they think peace is one of the best gifts ever given. Why or why not?
6. Conclude by reminding the children that we continue to share this gift at Mass during the Sign of Peace. Review with the children the reverent and appropriate way to share the Sign of Peace.

Pray

Pray together the portion of the Prayer of Saint Francis from the front of the participant handout. Invite all to exchange a Sign of Peace. Conclude by listening to or singing a refrain or hymn about peace.

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.

Sunday Word

Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

Psalms 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8

Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23

John 14:23-29

Welcome

1. Welcome everyone and invite volunteers to talk about their ***Shared God's Love with Me*** and ***Showed God's Love to Others*** reflections from last week's participant handout.
2. Repeat the opening discussion from the ***Dismissal Section*** by inviting volunteers to share the best gifts they ever received and why, and the best gifts they ever gave and why. This time list their responses on the whiteboard or flip chart.
3. Have the group review the lists and ask them to call out the names of those gifts that one buys in a store. As they do so, cross those items off the list. Repeat this, asking the children to name those things that cannot be bought. Circle those things on the list.

Invite

1. Proclaim again the Gospel, John 14:23-29.
2. Ask a volunteer to name the gift Jesus gave to his disciples. Write the word PEACE vertically on the whiteboard or flip chart.
3. Invite volunteers to describe the gift of peace. Is it a gift one buys? How does one give the gift of peace? What does peace look like?

Teach

1. Brainstorm with the group to create an acrostic from the letters of the word PEACE. For example, P could be "Pray for peace." Since Jesus says the word *peace* twice in today's Gospel, challenge the group to complete two acrostics together.
2. Review the acrostics and then give volunteers the opportunity to name any other ways they can think of to give the gift of peace.
3. One way we express the gift of peace at Mass is by sharing the Sign of Peace. Invite volunteers who were at the ***Dismissal Session*** to model for the group the reverent and appropriate way to share the Sign of Peace.
4. Explain to the children that the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is another way we receive God's peace and are made at peace again with God and with the Body of Christ, the Church. (If time allows, say more about this sacrament, using *Our Catholic Heritage* pages 82, 124, and 125 as your reference.)
5. In daily life, one of the best ways we can share the gift of peace is to be quick to forgive others for the things they have said or done to hurt us. We can also be quick to ask for forgiveness when we have hurt others in the same way.

Challenge

1. Challenge the students to follow Jesus' example and to give the gift of peace this week.
2. Point out ***The Gift of Peace*** and ***My Peace Acrostic*** sections of the participant handout. Encourage the children to continue their reflections on these two themes. Ask them to come next week prepared to share their examples.

Prayer

Pray together the prayer from the front of the participant handout. Exchange a Sign of Peace. Conclude by listening to or singing a familiar refrain or hymn about peace, such as "Peace Is Flowing Like a River" or "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace."