

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord • Year A • January 11, 2026

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ISAIAH 42:1-4, 6-7

The prophet speaks God's message! Those who are called are sent as God's daughters and sons to be witnesses, bringing forth justice to the nations.

SECOND READING—ACTS 10:34-48

Peter preaches Good News! From every nation, God gathers to himself sons and daughters in faith. All without exception are called to the message of hope and life found in Christ.

GOSPEL—MARK 1:7-11

John the Baptist stirs our hearts! The mighty One will baptize us with the Holy Spirit and fire. Jesus will burn away all that holds us back from God. He will fill us with divine love.

Church Teaching: Following Christ in Baptism and Mission

All three synoptic Gospel accounts agree that after Jesus' Baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon him. The Spirit, who had hovered over the waters of the first creation, descended on the Christ as a prelude of the new creation, which will be poured out on all believers who are incorporated into his Paschal Mystery. Immersed in the font, brought into the life and love of the Holy Trinity, we are purified from sin and given a wholly new birth in the Spirit. Thus Baptism

- *Is the doorway into true life:* for it takes away all vestige of sin, whether Original or personal sin

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1224, 1263, 1265, 1267, 1272

United States Catholic Catechism of Adults: Chapter 15, especially "Effects of Baptism," pages 192–195

Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II: pages 65, 92, 114–116

- *Makes us adopted children of God:* for it bestows upon us sanctifying grace, which helps us as we grow in goodness and moral virtue
- *Builds up each of us as members of the Church:* for it joins us as brothers and sisters in faith and holds us responsible for one another in pursuing the mission of Christ as his one Body in the world

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a bowl of water, Sacred Chrism (or a bowl containing scented oil), a white baptismal garment, and a baptismal candle.

Discover

1. Invite the children to think about the liturgy just celebrated.
2. Ask volunteers to respond to the following questions:
Does anyone remember the name of the feast we are celebrating today? (the Baptism of the Lord)
Does anyone know why the Church is still decorated for Christmas today? (This feast officially ends the Christmas season.)
3. Proclaim the First Reading, Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7.
Invite volunteers to share words or phrases they heard in the reading. Ask the following questions:
What is the prophet saying to us about the Lord?
The prophet also said that we are to be a light for the nations, open the eyes of the blind, free prisoners, and bring people to the light. How can we do these things?

Deepen

1. Proclaim the Second Reading, Acts 10:34-38.
2. Ask volunteers to share what they think is the most important message of the reading.

3. Discuss with the children three important messages or meanings:

- God shows no partiality.
- All who fear God and act uprightly are acceptable to him.
- God is with all who do his will.

Pray

Conclude with a Blessing of the Catechumens, Prayer of Blessing B, OCIA 97B.

Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup, you will need the four phrases written on the third page of this session plan, and copies of the participant handout.

In preparation for the session, read or review the prayers of the Rite of Baptism, which give the meaning of each of the symbols of Baptism.

Sunday Word

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6

Acts 10:34-38

Mark 1:7-11

Welcome

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

Invite

1. Proclaim the Gospel, Mark 1:7-11.
2. Ask whether anyone in the group has been to a Baptism. Invite volunteers to name who was baptized and when the Baptism was celebrated.
3. Invite volunteers to share why Baptism is important. Make a connection with the last verse of the Gospel reading, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Teach

1. Read and discuss *Key Teachings* from the participant handout.
2. Highlight the following points in today's session:
 - Baptism is the first sacrament we receive.
 - Baptism joins us to Christ and makes us members of the Body of Christ, the Church.
 - Through Baptism, Original Sin and all personal sins are forgiven.
 - Baptism marks us forever as followers of Christ.
 - We receive Baptism only once.
 - As members of the Church, we are called to serve others and to share the Good News of Jesus with all.
3. Review with the children this week's *Faith Words*: *Baptism* and *mission*. Refer to the participant handout for definitions.

Challenge

1. Gather the children around the prayer table. Hand out the four phrases (available on the next page of this session plan).
2. Invite a volunteer to hold up any one of the symbols on the prayer table. Ask who has the paper that tells about that symbol. Invite that person to read the words on his or her paper. Repeat this process until all four symbols have been described.
3. Conclude by asking the children what each baptismal symbol tells us about what it means to be the beloved daughters and sons of God. Who are we as children of God? How are we to act? What are we to do?

Pray

On this final day of the Christmas season, conclude by singing a favorite Christmas carol.

I baptize you
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

[God] now anoints you with the Chrism of salvation
so that . . . you may remain
forever a member of Christ
who is Priest, Prophet, and King.

[You] have become a new creation
and have clothed yourself in Christ.

Walk always as children of the light
and keep the flame of faith
alive in your hearts.