

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

CATECHUMENATE SESSION

The Ascension of the Lord • Year C • May 29 or June 1, 2025

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—ACTS 1:1-11

Luke's description of this event parallels the beginning of his Gospel (see Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-2). Jesus' forty days in the desert are balanced with the forty days of his post-Resurrection appearances. And Jesus' command at the conclusion of the Gospel is repeated here with a similar command.

SECOND READING—EPHESIANS 1:17-23

This reading reflects the sort of evolved theological understanding of the Ascension underlying Luke's description. The reference to Christ as the head of the Church recalls Saint Paul's body metaphor found in 1 Corinthians 12; however, here the Church is also called the "fullness" of Christ.

GOSPEL—LUKE 24:46-53

This reading reiterates two important Lucan themes: that the Messiah had to suffer and that the disciples are to be witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Church Teaching: The Ascension

The Ascension is not about Christ's removal from the Church. Rather, it is about a new form of his presence, a presence that in many ways is even more powerful and significant than was his earthly existence with the disciples.

By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, Christ entrusts to them and their successors the power to make present the work of Salvation through the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments. The Lord himself acts through the Eucharist and the sacraments to convey to believers of all times and places throughout the world.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 659, 661, 663

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 96–97

Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II: page 28

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. Add an icon or image of the Ascension, if available.

Discover

1. Begin by inviting the children to share what they have learned about God, about Jesus, and about how to live as a disciple of Jesus as they have come together each week to listen to God's Word. What are some favorite Scripture stories they have heard? What was the message of those stories for their lives? Share some examples of favorite things you remember too.
2. Invite the children to listen to today's First Reading. Ask them to listen for what the promise of the Father is (*the Holy Spirit*) and what will happen when the Apostles receive that promise (*they will receive power to be Jesus' witnesses*).

Deepen

1. Proclaim today's First Reading, Acts 1:1-11.
2. Invite a volunteer to name the promise of the Father. (*The Father will send the Holy Spirit.*)
3. Ask another volunteer to tell what will happen to the Apostles when they receive the Holy Spirit. (*They will receive the power to be Christ's witnesses.*)
4. Ask whether anyone knows what it means to be a witness for Christ. What does a witness for Christ say and do? How does a witness for Christ act?
5. Remind the children that in this reading, Jesus says that the Apostles will be his witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
6. Brainstorm with the children all the places they can be Christ's witnesses. You may wish to list their ideas on a whiteboard or flip chart for all to see.

7. Challenge the children to be Christ's witnesses wherever they go in the coming week.

Pray

Sing together the Ascension hymn on the front of the participant handout, "Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise."

Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup, you will need copies of the participant handout.

Sunday Word

Acts 1:1-11

Psalm 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9

Ephesians 1:17-23

Luke 24:46-53

Welcome

1. Welcome everyone and invite volunteers to share their **Gift of Peace** and **Peace Acrostic** ideas from last week's participant handout.
2. Invite one or two children to share some of the key points from the **Dismissal Session**. Highlight some of the specific examples mentioned about where and how the children can be Christ's witnesses in the coming week.

Invite

1. Invite the children to name their favorite saints. You may wish to list these on the whiteboard or flip chart. Include your own favorites in the list.
2. Ask them to share what they know about how each saint was a witness for Christ. Give examples for the saints you named too.
3. Explain to the children that all the baptized, from the time of Christ to the present day, are called to be his witnesses so that others will come to know him and to embrace the Christian way of life.

Teach

1. Proclaim the Gospel, Luke 24:46-53.
2. Explain that the last part of the Gospel describes the Ascension of the Lord, the Solemnity we celebrate today.
3. Invite a volunteer to share what happened at the Ascension in his or her own words.
4. Explain that while the Ascension celebrates Jesus' return to his Father in Heaven, it is also the day on which the Apostles were given the command to be his witnesses in the world.
5. Remind the children that at every Mass, we too are sent forth to be Christ's witnesses. Share with them two examples of what the deacon or priest says: "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord" and "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life."
6. Explore with the children ways that we can live out those commands at home, at school, and in our community.

Challenge

Point out this week's **Go in Peace** and **Glorifying the Lord by My Life** sections of the participant handout. Encourage the children to continue their reflections on these two themes in the coming week. Ask them to come next week prepared to share their experiences.

Prayer

Sing together the Ascension hymn on the front of the participant handout, "Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise."