

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Preparation for the First Rite of Scrutiny • Third Sunday of Lent • Year A Readings Used

Introduction

The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA), paragraphs 291–302, offers direction for celebrating Penitential Rites with children and youth in the OCIA process. In addition, paragraph 291 of the Order suggests that the guidelines given for the celebration of the scrutinies with adults (OCIA 141–146) may be followed and adapted.

If it is your parish's practice to celebrate one or more Rites of Scrutiny with the children and youth, it is important to provide opportunities for spiritual preparation for the elect, their godparents or sponsors, and members of the team.

Some parishes offer a time of preparation to the whole parish in the form of Lenten gatherings or evenings of reflection. Regardless of your parish's practice, the following two options are offered as suggestions to assist you in your preparation and planning of the first Rite of Scrutiny.



Option 1

Supplies

In addition to the prayer table setup, you will need a flip chart or whiteboard, markers, small slips of paper for each person present, and pencils or pens. You may also wish to prepare a handout or post for all to see the discussion questions to be used throughout the evening (see *Reflecting on God's Word*).

Setting

Arrange the chairs in a circle. Place a small table in the middle with a purple cloth, a Bible or Lectionary, a candle, a cross, a bowl of sand, and an empty basket.

Gathering

1. Welcome the children and families.
2. Ask a volunteer to light the candle on the prayer table.
3. Invite everyone to quiet themselves, and then pray in these or similar words:

*God of day and God of darkness,
we give thanks for the many ways that you have
blessed us. (Pause.)
We give thanks for this season of Lent—
an opportunity for us to think about our relationship
with you,
our relationship with others,
and our relationship to things. (Pause.)
Send the Holy Spirit to open our minds and hearts
as we prepare for the Rite of Scrutiny.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

4. Take a moment to explain that the ritual itself is very simple, and that the godparents or sponsors will rehearse for the celebration of the ritual and will guide the elect through it on the day of the celebration.

The purpose of this gathering is for everyone to have the opportunity to prepare spiritually for the celebration of the Rite.

Reflecting on God's Word

1. Proclaim the First Reading for the First Scrutiny (third Sunday of Lent, Cycle A), Exodus 17:3-7.
2. After a pause, invite all present to share what they heard in the reading—a word, a phrase, a thought, or a feeling.
3. Briefly review with the group the reading, highlighting these or similar points:
 - The people grumbled because they were thirsty.
 - They blamed Moses for bringing them out into the desert.
 - Moses cried out to the Lord and the Lord heard Moses.
 - Moses did as he was directed. The water flowed out for all to drink.

4. Invite the elect and their godparents or sponsors to think about today's world and to discuss the following questions:

*What do you hear people grumbling about today?
Who are the people today who are outcasts—people who have no place to call "home"? For what do they thirst?*

5. After giving enough time for discussion, invite volunteers to share their responses. Write the responses on the flip chart or whiteboard for all to see.

Continuing the Reflection

1. Proclaim the reading again, Exodus 17:3-7.
2. Say: *The water flows out for all to drink.*

Ask: What makes it hard for some people to get to the water to drink?

Record the responses on the flip chart or whiteboard.

3. Invite the entire group to brainstorm activities or signs that give hope to all who thirst.

Record the group's ideas on the flip chart or whiteboard.

Making the Connection

1. Give each person a slip of paper and a pencil or pen.
2. Proclaim the reading again, Exodus 17:3-7.
3. Invite each person gathered to think about his or her life and to think about what it is that he or she thirsts for.
4. Give everyone time to draw or write down their thirsts.

Concluding Prayer

Conclude the gathering by singing "Jesus, Remember Me" (J. Berthier/Taizé/GIA Publications). As you sing, invite each person to place his or her slip of paper in the basket on the prayer table. (Note: The thirsts listed may be used in the preparation of the intercessions for the elect for the First Scrutiny.)

Option 2

To Begin

Follow the directions for **Setting**, **Supplies**, and **Gathering**, as given in Option 1. Then continue as follows.

Reflecting on God's Word

1. Proclaim the Gospel for the First Scrutiny (third Sunday of Lent, Cycle A), John 4:5-42.
2. After a pause, ask the elect and their godparents or sponsors to share what they heard in the Gospel—a word, a phrase, a thought, or a feeling.
3. Lead them in a guided meditation using these or similar words:

Close your eyes. (Pause.)

Picture the well where Jesus meets the woman. (Pause.)

Listen in on their conversation.

What is Jesus saying?

What is the woman saying? (Pause.)

*As you keep listening, you suddenly realize it is not the Samaritan woman talking with Jesus. It is **you**! (Pause.)*

*Imagine **your** conversation with Jesus.*

What questions would he ask you?

What answers would you give him?

(Allow several minutes for quiet reflection, and then continue.)

The Samaritan woman was changed because of meeting and talking with Jesus.

She went into the village and told everyone what had happened.

The villagers went to find Jesus for themselves.

If you were telling people at school, at work, in your family, or in your neighborhood about meeting and talking with Jesus, what would you say?

Who might want to find Jesus for themselves because of what you say about him?

(Allow a few more minutes for quiet, and then continue.)

When you are ready, come back to this place and open your eyes.

Making the Connection

1. Give everyone a piece of paper.
2. Invite everyone to draw or to write a word or a phrase that describes the change they would like to make in their lives in order to be more like Jesus.
3. Encourage everyone to spend time between now and the celebration of the First Scrutiny continuing to think about and pray about what they would like changed in their lives and to bring that in prayer to the celebration of the First Scrutiny.

Concluding Prayer

Conclude the gathering by singing “Jesus, Remember Me” (J. Berthier/Taizé/GIA Publications). As you sing, invite each person to place his or her slip of paper in the basket on the prayer table. (Note: What has been written may be used in the preparation of the intercessions for the elect for the First Scrutiny.)