

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Fourth Sunday of Lent, Cycle A Readings Used

FIRST READING—1 SAMUEL 16:1B, 6-7, 10-13A

God is portrayed as being in total control of the situation. He chooses the youngest, the least among Jesse's sons, as Heaven's anointed to replace Saul. The key to the passage is the verse proclaiming "the Lord looks into the heart." God sees beneath outward appearances and judges the true worth of a person. In other words, God sees from the inside out.

SECOND READING—EPHESIANS 5:8-14

The very last part of the reading, a portion from an ancient baptismal hymn, applies the theme of enlightenment and waking from sleep to this initiation sacrament. Early Christians described Baptism as *enlightenment* or *illumination*.

GOSPEL—JOHN 9:1-41 OR 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

The man who has been cured gradually acknowledges the true identity of Jesus, the Light of the world, first calling Jesus "that man" (John 9:11), then "prophet" (John 9:17), "man from God" (John 9:33), and finally, climactically, "Son of Man" and "Lord" (John 9:38). The man grows in faith, while the critics of Jesus grow further away from him in disbelief.

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth, a Bible or Lectionary, and a baptismal candle.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: Key Images and Icons

Sent: 422, 1227

Washed: 1215, 1228

The Heart: 1777, 2711, 2715

Blindness: 398, 2088

Sight: 1216

Respond

Invite the children to sit quietly and think about the Liturgy of the Word and the Rite of Scrutiny just celebrated.

After some quiet, invite volunteers to share what they saw, heard, and felt during the celebration.

Enhance

1. Encourage each child and sponsor to discuss these questions:

What did the music, prayers, Scripture readings, and Scrutiny say about God's love for you?

What did they say about sin?

What did they say about God's grace?

2. Invite all to share responses with the large group.

Pray

Invite participants to quietly pray a prayer of thanks for the gift of seeing God with new eyes or sing verse one of "Amazing Grace."

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

1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a

Psalms 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

Welcome

Begin by welcoming everyone who is present, including parents, godparents, sponsors, and team members who are joining the group. Spend a few minutes gathering further reflections and memories of the liturgy and the Rite of Scrutiny from those just joining the group.

Uncover

1. Proclaim the Second Reading, Ephesians 5:8-14.
2. Begin a conversation based on the reading by asking these or similar questions:
What are some examples of fruitless works of darkness?
Why is it important to bring the fruitless works of darkness into the light?
What are some words we could use to describe how children of light are to live?
3. Use the **Key Teachings** section of the participant handout and allow time for quiet reflection before inviting responses to the reflection questions.

Purify

1. Share with the group some key phrases from the First Reading (1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a) such as
 - Fill your horn with oil and be on your way to Jesse of Bethlehem.
 - I have chosen my king.
 - Do not judge from his appearance.
 - Not as man sees does God see.
 - The Lord looks into the heart.
 - From that day on the spirit of the Lord rushed upon David.
2. Discuss these or similar questions:
What surprises you in this reading?
Describe your idea of the spirit of the Lord rushing upon David. For example, if the spirit of the Lord rushed upon you, what might that feel like? Sound like? Look like?
3. Invite the children to some quiet time for prayer and reflection. Use the following questions to guide them, allowing quiet time between the reading of each:
Imagine the Lord coming to look into your heart today. What would he see?
Is there anything you would not want him to see? Anger? Jealousy? Envy? Talk to the Lord about those things.

What would you be happy for the Lord to see? Things you did this week to help others? Kind words you said to someone? That time you were honest? Talk to the Lord about those things.

Is there anything you want to let go of so that you can see as the Lord sees? Ask the Lord for his help and guidance.

Enlighten

1. Lead a brief discussion, highlighting the following points:
 - Christ is the Light of the world.
 - Those who believe walk in the light.
 - The man born blind came to see that Jesus is the Son of God and fell down to worship him. He saw both physically and spiritually; thus he walks as a child of the light.
 - Baptism makes us children of the light who walk in God's ways.
2. Review the key images in the **To Help You Remember** sections of the participant handout.

Live

1. Remind the children that the journey toward Baptism is nearing its end! In these final days of the journey, the whole Church is preparing to renew their baptismal promises to reject Satan and all his empty works and to profess once again their faith in God and in God's Son.
2. Encourage the children, their parents, and their sponsors or godparents to reflect on what the empty promises of Satan are. What do they want to leave behind in the waters of Baptism so that they might emerge with new eyes to see Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life?
3. Conclude by referring to the **Reflection** section of the participant handout.

Pray

Say or sing together the Responsorial Psalm from today's liturgy.