

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Preparation for the Third Rite of Scrutiny • Fifth 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 third 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 with the words POOR CHOICE written on one side and the words BEST PERSON written on the other, and pencils or pens. You may also wish to prepare a handout or post for all to see the discussion questions to be used (see *Continuing the Reflection* #1).

Setting

Arrange chairs in a circle. Place a small table in the middle with a purple cloth, a Bible or Lectionary, a candle, a cross, and a symbol that the parish may be using for Lent (such as a bowl of sand). If parishioners are present, arrange chairs for them in separate small groups. (The groups should not be larger than five or six people.)

If the session is held in the church, use the environment that has been set for Lent.

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.
4. Begin by praying together the Sign of the Cross, and then pray:

God of light, send your Holy Spirit to open our minds and hearts as we gather to prepare for our third Rite of Scrutiny. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

5. Briefly explain that the Rite of Scrutiny is very simple, and that the godparents or sponsors will rehearse for the ritual and guide the elect through it. 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 Third Scrutiny, Ezekiel 37:12-14. Consider using verses 1-14, the vision of the dry bones.
2. After a pause, ask the elect and their families, godparents, or sponsors to share what they heard in the reading—a word, a phrase, a thought, a feeling, or an image.
3. Briefly comment on the following:
 - Ezekiel is the prophet sent to the Israelites during the time when they were slaves in Babylon.
 - The Babylonians had captured the Israelites, destroyed their temple in Jerusalem, and taken everyone away from their homeland.
4. Ask:

How do you think the Israelites felt?

What do you think the Israelites would want God to do?

Have you ever wondered whether God was listening to you cry out to him in hard times?

5. Continue the discussion:

- The role of the prophet Ezekiel is to tell the people that God hears their prayer for freedom.
- Ezekiel tells the Israelites to have hope and not to give up.
- God will take the Israelites back to their homeland. He will breathe life into the dry bones.

Continuing the Reflection

1. Invite the elect and their families, their godparents, or their sponsors to think about today's world.

Who might feel that they are in captivity, like the Israelites were in captivity?

Who has been taken from their homeland?

What would these modern-day captives ask of God?

What would help them not give up? What would help them have hope that God will answer their prayers?
2. After some time for sharing, record responses from the large group on the flip chart or whiteboard.
3. Briefly comment on the following:
 - God wants us to be free, to be the best people we can be, and to be happy.
 - Sometimes we do not make good choices, and our choices cause pain for ourselves and for others.
4. Ask:

What are some examples of bad or poor choices that people make?

What can we do to be the best people we can be—the people God wants us to be?

Record responses on the flip chart or whiteboard for all to see.

Making the Connection

1. Give each person a slip of paper and a pencil or pen.
2. Invite each person to think about his or her life and a poor or bad choice that he or she has made. Give each person time to write his or her thought on the side of the paper labeled POOR CHOICE.
3. Invite each person to then think about one thing that he or she could do to be the person God wants him or wants her to be—perhaps to be kinder to a sister or brother, to study harder in school, to stop using bad words—and then write that thought down on the side of the paper labeled BEST PERSON.

4. After all have written their thoughts, encourage the participants to continue to think about their choices and what they can do to continue to become the people God wants them to be in preparation for the celebration of the third Rite of Scrutiny.

Concluding Prayer

Conclude the gathering by singing “O Freedom” or another hymn that speaks of being set free from captivity. As you sing, invite each person to place his or her slip of paper in the basket on the prayer table. (Note: The poor choices and best person thoughts may be used in the preparation of the intercessions for the elect for the Third Scrutiny.)

Option 2

To Begin

Follow the directions for **Setting** and **Gathering** as given in Option 1. In addition to the prayer table setup, flip chart or whiteboard, markers, and pencils or pens, you will need small slips of paper for each person with the words UNTIE ME written on one side and UNTIE THEM written on the other side.

Reflecting on God's Word

1. Proclaim the Gospel for the Third Scrutiny (fifth Sunday of Lent, Cycle A), John 11:1-45.
2. After a pause, ask the elect and their parents, godparents, or sponsors to share what they heard in the Gospel—a word, a phrase, a thought, or a feeling.

3. Invite responses to the following questions:

How long did Jesus wait before he went to be with Martha and Mary?

How did Jesus respond to the news of the death of Lazarus?

What did Jesus command Lazarus to do?

What did Jesus command those present to do?

4. Invite the elect and their parents, godparents, or sponsors to discuss
 - The ways we bind others (the ways we keep others from being the best they can be)
 - What we can do to free people from what binds them or holds them back from being the best they can be
 - Jesus' statement that he is the resurrection and the life, that he wants all people to be free
5. After some time for discussion, invite thoughts from the large group.
Record their responses on the flip chart or whiteboard.

Making the Connection

1. Give each participant one of the slips of paper and a pencil or pen. Invite each person to think about how they feel bound in their own lives, where they need to be freed—maybe they are bound by fear or shyness, or they need to be freed from jealousy or anger. Give everyone time to write their thoughts on the side of the paper labeled UNTIE ME.
2. Then ask participants to think about ways in which they might be holding others bound—perhaps they make fun of others or bully others at school or at work, or maybe they do not give a classmate or a coworker a chance to be their friend. Give everyone time to write their thoughts on the side of the paper labeled UNTIE THEM.
3. After all have written their thoughts on their papers, encourage the group to continue thinking about the ways they are bound and need to be freed and the ways they are holding others bound as they prepare for the third Rite of Scrutiny.

Concluding Prayer

Conclude the gathering by singing "O Freedom" or another hymn that speaks of being untied, unbound, and set free. As you sing, invite each person to place his or her slip of paper in the basket on the prayer table. (Note: The thoughts on being bound and on holding others bound may be used in the preparation of the intercessions for the elect for the Third Scrutiny.)