

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

INQUIRY SESSION: GOD

Inquiry Session (*Approximately 60 minutes*)

Prepare

Gather supplies needed for this session: flip chart or whiteboard; markers; drawing paper; crayons; and pencils or pens.

Set the space with chairs in a circle and in the center place a candle and a Bible. (Mark the Scripture citations noted in the participant materials.)

If needed, have name tags. Have some refreshments available, too.

Gather (10–15 minutes)

1. Greet the children as they arrive. Invite each child to share his or her name and something good that happened since the last time the group gathered.

Take time to find out how the children are doing.

Ask whether they had an experience of prayer or church since the last session.

2. Give each child a piece of drawing paper and provide crayons, pencils, or pens.

Invite the children to draw pictures of their families. (Older children may wish to simply write a list of the members of their family.)

Ask the children to think of or to write down a word that describes each person they drew or listed, and to either keep that word in mind or write it next to the person's picture or name.

If need be, give the children some examples by naming members of your family and the words you would use to describe each of your family members.

When the children have had enough time to draw or write, invite volunteers to share their work with the whole group.

3. Invite the children to close their eyes and in the quiet of their hearts to ask God to bless each member of their family.

4. Read together the **My Story** section of the participant page. Invite responses to the questions at the end of the section.

5. Ask the children what they know about God.

Invite them to share what words or phrases they would use to describe God, and write these down on the flip chart or whiteboard.

Expand (15–20 minutes)

1. Read aloud the **God's Story** section of the participant page.

2. Invite the children to name words and phrases they heard that are on the list you just made together.

Invite them to identify any new words or phrases that tell them about God. Add these new words and phrases to the list. Encourage volunteers to share what they think are the meanings of the new words and phrases.

3. Continue the discussion of God, highlighting the following points:

- God wants every person to be his friend. Just imagine how many friends God has, and yet he loves each and every one of us!
- God always takes the first step in our friendship with him by showing us how much he loves us and by caring for our needs.
- God loves each of us in a special way, because each of us is special.
- In Baptism we become God's adopted children—his daughters and sons, part of God's huge family of faith.

- Through the stories of his many friends, God continues to tell us about himself. These stories are in the Bible, and they tell us about God and about what God has done. Some stories you may have heard include the story of creation; the story of Adam and Eve; the story of Noah and the Flood; and the story of Abraham and Isaac.
 - Jesus tells us the most about God. The story of the life and ministry of Jesus is in the Bible, too.
4. Read aloud each of the Scripture passages listed below. After reading each passage, stop and invite the children to share what the passage tells us about God and what they think is the meaning of the word *covenant*.

Genesis 12:1-4 (Abram's Call and Migration)

Leviticus 26:12 (The Reward of Obedience)

Hebrews 1:1-2 (Introduction)

Our Response (15–20 minutes)

1. Invite the children to think in silence about the following questions:

How will you answer God's invitation to grow in friendship with him? . . . Will you take time to pray every day? . . . Will you read the Bible and learn more about God and God's friends?

Who can help you grow in friendship with God? Your parents? Your grandparents? A teacher? A pastor? A friend?

2. Discuss together as a group ways that the children can grow with their families in their friendship with God. *(Be prepared to offer suggestions such as: learn the prayers of the Church and pray them together; take time to thank God for at least one thing every day; read together one or more of the Scripture passages listed on the participant page; find a way as a family to help or to serve those in need;*

attend church together; and read the stories of the saints together.)

3. Encourage the children to pause during the day and throughout the evening to remember that they are always in the presence of God. Suggest that when they pause they silently say a short prayer such as, "Here I am, Lord."
4. Invite the children to listen to the story of a person whose life was changed because he answered God's invitation to grow in friendship with him.
- Refer to the participant page or tell in your own words the story of Saint Paul. After you have told the story, invite the children to retell Paul's story in their own words.
5. Point out the ***Faith Words*** section of the participant page. Review the faith words with the children.

Pray (2–3 minutes)

Invite the children to close their eyes and just talk to God in their own words, thanking God for the many blessings they have been given and asking God's help in the coming days.

After a few moments, invite the children to echo after you the following prayer, pausing slightly after praying each phrase.

God, you know me.

You know my mind and heart.

You know my thoughts.

Thank you for choosing to be my friend.

Help me to never take you for granted.

Amen.