

# Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

## INQUIRY SESSION: LITURGICAL YEAR

### Inquiry Session (Approximately 60 minutes)

#### Prepare

For this session you will need handouts for the children that have a circle divided into twelve equal sections (each section should be labeled with a month of the calendar year); markers or crayons in liturgical year colors (purple, white or gold, green, red); a large calendar of the current liturgical year; a flip chart or whiteboard; and markers.

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. Also make refreshments available.

#### 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. Invite the group to name a few holidays that all know, and ask volunteers to share the date or month when that holiday is celebrated. List on the flip chart or whiteboard the holidays and dates the children mention.

Give each child a copy of the handout with the divided circle. Invite them to write or draw a symbol in the appropriate month of the holidays now listed on the flip chart or whiteboard. Offer help where needed.

Next ask the children to continue working with the handout and to write or draw in other important events in their lives. These could be more holidays, birthdays, and other special family events.

When the children have had enough time to do so, invite volunteers to share some of the things they added to their circles.

3. Invite the children to think of how they celebrate the important days they listed. Perhaps their family has a party. Maybe gifts are exchanged. The day could include a special meal or special activities.

Encourage each child to share about one such holiday or special day and how it is celebrated in the family.

4. Read together the *My Story* section of the participant page and discuss the questions found there.

#### Expand (15–20 minutes)

1. Read and discuss the *God's Story* section of the participant page.
2. Use a large liturgical calendar to help highlight the following discussion points:
  - The Church has a special calendar called the liturgical calendar.
  - It gives us a picture of the liturgical year in which we celebrate the key events in the life of Jesus Christ.
  - This calendar does not begin on January 1. It begins on the first Sunday of Advent and ends on the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. (Share these two dates with the children.)
  - The liturgical calendar is not divided into months. It is divided into seasons.
  - There are two seasons of preparation, Advent and Lent. During these seasons the priest wears purple vestments.

- There are two seasons of celebration, Christmas and Easter. During these seasons the priest wears white vestments.
- There is a very short season, which is the most important season of the liturgical year. It is called the Triduum, and it falls between the seasons of Lent and Easter. During this season the priest wears white vestments on Holy Thursday evening, Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunday, and red vestments on Good Friday.
- The remaining season is the season of Ordinary Time. During this season the priest wears green vestments.
- Sometimes a special feast falls on a Sunday, and the priest will wear red or white vestments.
- In the liturgical calendar, Sunday is the first and most important day of the week. It is the day on which Christians celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord.

3. Read aloud each Scripture passage listed below.

**Deuteronomy 16:16-17** (Feast of Booths)

**Acts 20:7** (Eutychus Restored to Life)

**John 20:1** (The Empty Tomb)

4. After reading each passage, pause and ask volunteers to share what the passage tells us about a time to worship or the importance of Sunday, the Lord's Day.

### ***Our Response (15–20 minutes)***

1. Build upon the discussion of the Scripture passages by further highlighting the discussion points listed below.
  - The Church throughout the world gathers on Sunday to celebrate the day that Jesus rose from the dead.
  - On Sunday the Church celebrates the Mass. The Mass is the prayer of the whole community; it is what we do together.
  - The seasons and feasts of the liturgical year give us many opportunities to thank and praise God for the many graces and blessings he gives to us.
  - The seasons and feasts of the liturgical year help us to remember whose sons and daughters we are and how we are called to live.
2. Invite the children to share any questions they may have about the liturgical year and its seasons and feasts.
3. Give the children time to add the liturgical seasons to their handouts, encouraging them to use the liturgical color assigned to each season.
4. Use the participant page or in your own words tell the story of Pope Gregory XIII and the Gregorian calendar.
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 quiet themselves.

Ask them to choose one event they wrote about or drew on their calendar, and in the quiet of their hearts to give thanks to God for that special day.