

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B • February 8, 2015

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—JOB 7:1–4, 6–7

Part of this book consists of a series of conversations between Job and his “friends.” In this passage Job replies, assessing the finitude and frailty of the human condition not as an indictment of God, but as a description of human existence.

SECOND READING—1 CORINTHIANS 9:16–19, 22–23

Paul considers freedom as the condition which enables us to fight against sin and death as well as embrace service to God and others. His ministry is not limited to either Jew or Greek, but seeks freedom for everyone.

GOSPEL READING—MARK 1:29–39

For Christians “demons” or “devils” represent evil. They are hostile to God, good health, and goodness itself. Yet they are depicted in this passage as being perceptive enough to recognize Jesus for who he is.

Church Teaching

Jesus comes to save us from all evil. Through the Church, his healing ministry continues. While we still experience physical evil, the mystery of innocent suffering epitomized by the Cross is made redemptive in the Resurrection. Redemptive suffering becomes a beacon of hope and a source of consolation. The disruption of sin and evil is completed in Christ’s rising from the dead. Death becomes, therefore, a threshold to everlasting life. The most profound response to the problem of evil and innocent suffering is seen in the compassionate response of God that is poured out for us in Jesus Christ.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 375, 385, 395, 407

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 69–71

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 75–78

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Set the space with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a green cloth, a candle, and an enthroned (reverently opened) Bible or Lectionary. If possible, have the front page of several newspapers available.

Discover

Invite everyone to reflect on today’s liturgy quietly for 1–2 minutes. Read aloud Job 7:1–4, 6–7. Then have participants respond to the following questions:

- ◆ Verses 1–3: *When have you felt like Job when he described his life as a drudgery? When is it not drudgery?*
- ◆ Verse 4: *Have you ever experienced a sleepless, restless night that seemed like an eternity until morning? Describe what that was like.*
- ◆ Verses 6–7: *How do you respond to those moments that seem fleeting?*

Deepen

Hand out the front pages of several newspapers. Compare the present day news with that of Job’s message. Discuss the following questions:

- ◆ *How is today similar to Job’s time?*
- ◆ *How is today different from Job’s time?*
- ◆ *How does Job maintain hope in the midst of pain and struggle? Note that Job cries out without holding back (see Job 6:3b; 7:11), but he still trusts in the Lord (see Job 9:4; 19:26)*

Pray

Use the prayer found in the Participant’s Handout.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Sunday Word

Job 7:1–4, 6–7

Psalms 147:1–2, 3–4, 5–6

1 Corinthians 9:16–19, 22–23

Mark 1:29–39

Welcome

Welcome everyone who is present, including sponsors, team members, and spouses who join the group. Invite one or two people to share some of the key points from the Dismissal Session.

Engage

- Have participants imagine someone making these statements to them. Discuss how they would respond.
 - God must really love you since you have so much suffering in your life.
 - God doesn't give us more than we can handle.
 - Why doesn't God do something to stop all of these disasters?
 - Only the good die young.
 - The world is coming to an end.
- Then begin a discussion about the existence of evil using the following questions:
 - How do you define evil?*
 - What do you think is the cause of evil?*
 - Does God cause people to commit evil acts?*
 - Does God cause natural disasters to happen?*

Explore

- Explain that with today's session, we will begin a three part exploration:
 - Evil in the World: the reality of evil, sin and suffering
 - Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick
 - Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation
- Highlight key points from the Participant Handout's Church Teaching: Evil in the World, using these points:

- God created all things good; in the beginning, everything existed in harmony and peace.
 - Yet we do not live in a perfect world; it often presents itself as wounded and broken.
 - We learn from Story of the Fall in Genesis about the root cause of evil.
 - Through Adam and Eve's free choice to turn away from God, sin entered the world. Thus, all descendants are born into this world with Original Sin. This explains our human condition of tending to turn away from God's will.
 - Evil is real. Two types of evil exist:
 - Moral evil, which is founded in Original Sin and experienced in personal sin. For example, a fire started by arson or the careless act of a human being.
 - Physical evil, which exists in nature and the human condition. For example, a fire started by lightning or spontaneous combustion.
 - Personal sin is when we freely choose to participate in evil and commit sin.
 - Physical evil is experienced in natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, and other realities.
 - God stands with us in the midst of evil. God sent Jesus into the world that we might know of his great love for us by conquering evil and saving us from sin.
- Highlight the Key Terms and Voices of Faith sections.

Apply

Invite the catechumens and candidates to complete these statements, and share responses with a partner:

From the prayer, discussion, and study for this Sunday, I understand the Church's teaching to be . . .

I am challenged to live the message of this Sunday by . . .

Pray

Use the Prayer of Exorcism 94H (RCIA).