

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
Third Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B • January 25, 2015

Catechist Preparation

Scripture

FIRST READING—JONAH 3:1–5, 10

Nineveh is the ancient city on the left bank of the Tigris River across from modern day Mosul. The key term in this passage denoting the conversion of the people of Nineveh is found in the final verse: they *turned*.

SECOND READING—1 CORINTHIANS 7:29–31

Paul is quite forceful in his announcement about the end of times. He tries to convey a sense of great urgency to compel the people to repent and believe.

GOSPEL READING—MARK 1:14–20

Jesus' joyful news of the kingdom is connected with the challenging news of repentance. His message represents a succinct summarization of the Gospel: God's power is available to those who open themselves to Jesus and follow his way.

Church Teaching

The time to repent and believe is at hand. There is no time left to delay. A crisis of decision is upon every person to either embrace Jesus and his way or go their own limited and faulty way. The initial preaching of Jesus as recorded in Mark's Gospel contains urgency as well as great promise and joy. Indeed, the urgency surrounds the joy and promise, for if we do not cast aside our sins, fall upon the mercy of God and repent, we shall perish.

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 541, 1427, 1431, 1434, 1849

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 74–78

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 107, 392, 394

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.

Discover

Invite everyone to reflect on today's liturgy quietly for 1–2 minutes. Then have participants respond to the following questions:

- ◆ *What insight did you gain from today's liturgy?*
- ◆ *What message did you hear in today's readings?*
- ◆ *Which person from today's readings would you like to have a conversation with and why?*

Deepen

Proclaim the First Reading: Jonah 3:1–5, 10. Then discuss the following questions:

- ◆ *What would you say are some of the messages contained in this passage? (God initiates; one cannot hide from God; people can choose to listen and change their ways; God listens)*
- ◆ *When have you experienced a similar situation, either called to invite people to change or invited to return to God?*
- ◆ *Who are some of today's prophets who, like Jonah, call us to return to God's ways?*

Pray

Use the prayer found on the Participant Handout.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Sunday Word

Jonah 3:1–5, 10

Psalm 25:4–5, 6–7, 8–9

1 Corinthians 7:29–31

Mark 1:14–20

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

Proclaim the Gospel: Mark 1:14–20. Then discuss the meaning of the passage by asking these questions and emphasizing these points:

- ◆ Imagine that you are along the Sea of Galilee and Jesus calls to you. How would you respond?
—Note that Jesus calls people to repent, believe, and follow him.
- ◆ What do you need to leave behind in order to follow Jesus?
—Note that Simon, Andrew, James and John all left their nets (representing their jobs) and immediately followed Jesus.
- ◆ What attracts you to Jesus? Why might you feel compelled to immediately drop everything to follow him?

Explore

1. Highlight key points from the Participant Handout's Church Teaching: Sin and Repentance, using these points:
 - ◆ Often we say that we want to follow Jesus and adhere to his ways. But soon, old habits creep back in or we become lax in our commitment and dedication to God and the Gospel way of life.

- ◆ God is good, yet we often choose to turn away from him and choose to sin.
- ◆ Sin is any intentional action or omission that harms our relationship with God. Personal sin is described as either mortal or venial.
- ◆ Mortal sin is a serious offense to God that a person with full knowledge willfully and freely chooses to commit.
- ◆ Venial sin is less serious matter. It wounds but does not destroy charity (love). It impedes growth in holiness and goodness.
- ◆ Sin is also social in nature in that communal structures contribute to and influence personal sin.
- ◆ Repentance is a work of grace. It is our becoming aware of the reality of sin and the desire to turn back to God.
- ◆ Our conscience prompts us to seek God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

2. 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 minor exorcism, RCIA 94F.