

Inquiry Session: Heaven

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA

Inquiry Session

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Prepare

Set the space and provide a focal point with a candle and a Bible, marking the Scripture citations noted in the participant materials. Provide name tags, and have some refreshments available. If the group is larger than five or six people, guide the participants to share in smaller groups.

Gather

1. Greet the participants as they arrive, and take time for introductions as the session begins. Survey the group to see how everyone is doing. Ask if anyone has any questions, then invite them to share, in small groups, any experiences of prayer, worship, or God they have had since the last session.
2. Invite the group to read Reflect on Your Experience. Share a story of a special time in your life when everything seemed to come together. Then invite the participants to share with another person a similar story from their own lives.
3. Have volunteers share their experiences with the larger group. Explore together if there are any common elements in the stories.

Expand

1. Have the participants share their thoughts about Heaven—what they've heard, what they understand, and what questions they may still have.
2. Read and discuss Hear the Good News About Heaven. Include the following points in your conversation:
 - Explore the concept of living in intimate communion with God.
 - Read 1 Corinthians 2:9–10 and discuss its implications for understanding Heaven.

3. Read aloud each Scripture passage in Read the Word of God, followed by a moment of silent reflection. Then discuss each passage using these or similar questions:

- What message do you hear in the passage?
- What does the passage reveal about Heaven?

Reflect and Share

1. Invite the participants to read Respond Through Action. Encourage them to reflect silently on the questions. After a few moments of silent reflection, ask for volunteers to briefly share some of their reflections.
2. Discuss with the group that this earthly life is temporary, but Heaven is eternal. We are pilgrims traveling on earth who are on a journey toward eternal life in Heaven. Explain that Christ is “the way” in and through whom we seek union with God in Heaven.
3. Share the information about Saint Stephen in Witness to the Gospel. Share with the group the difference between honoring the saints and worshipping God, and remind them that the Catholic Church celebrates the saints on All Saints Day, which is November 1.

Pray

Lead a brief litany of saints. Name a saint, and then invite the group to respond, “pray for us” (St. Joseph . . . pray for us). Continue the prayer, adding other saints' names. Conclude the litany with these or similar words: *All you holy men and women, pray that we may be strengthened to make good choices. We want to follow Christ in this life and be with God forever in Heaven. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*