

Inquiry Session: Mary

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA

Inquiry Session

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Prepare

Set chairs in a circle with a candle and a Bible in the center. In the Bible, bookmark the Scripture citations noted in the participant materials. Provide name tags and refreshments.

Gather

1. Greet the participants as they arrive, and take time for introductions as the session begins. Ask if anyone has any questions, then invite them to share an experience of prayer, worship, or God they have had since the last session.
2. Read the Reflect on Your Experience section in the participant handout. Allow time for reflection, then ask all present to share with another person. Collect some feedback from the group.

Expand

1. Ask the group to share what they have heard and/or what they already know about Mary. Encourage them to voice any questions they have about the Catholic understanding of Mary.
2. Read and discuss Hear the Good News About Mary. Include the following points in your conversation:
 - Mary was betrothed to Joseph, a carpenter. She lived in the village of Nazareth in the territory of Galilee.
 - On March 25, we celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation. The feast celebrates Mary's *fiat*, her "yes" to becoming the Mother of God. The angel Gabriel, God's messenger, greeted Mary with the words: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee."
 - We profess in our Creed that by the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary conceived and bore her son, Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity.

- Through Baptism, we become members of the family of God. Mary becomes our spiritual Mother. As Mother, she intercedes for all who ask her help.

3. Read aloud each Scripture passage in Read the Word of God, followed by some silence. Discuss each passage using these or similar questions:

What message is found in this passage?

What does this passage tell us about Mary and her role?

If you were one of the people in the passage, who would you be? How would you respond to Mary?

4. Encourage the participants to share some of the points raised in their discussion. Summarize their insights and make a list of any questions that remain.

Reflect and Share

1. Ask small groups to read Respond Through Action and Witness to the Gospel. Invite them to share their insights and responses. Ask: What questions does the story of Saint Elizabeth Seton raise for you?
2. Mary has many titles. Share with the participants the Litany of Loreto and discuss the many titles and attributes for Mary.
3. If there is time, have two or three parishioners share briefly about their devotion to Mary, and allow time for questions.
4. If possible, give everyone a rosary and a card that tells them how to pray the rosary. Allow time for questions and clarifications.

Pray

Briefly explain the scriptural and historical background of the Hail Mary prayer, and give examples of occasions when it is prayed. Give everyone a copy of the words. Invite the participants to pray it together, or to listen while it is prayed.