

Inquiry Session: Saints

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA

Inquiry Session

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Prepare

Set chairs in a circle, and provide a prayer space with a candle, a Bible, and prayer cards and/or statues and medals representing various saints. Bookmark the Scripture noted on the participant page. If possible also have a book of saints' lives on display. Provide name tags and refreshments.

Gather

1. Greet the participants as they arrive, and take time for introductions and conversation. Ask if anyone has any questions, then invite them to share experiences they have had of prayer, worship, and/or God since the last session.
2. Provide time for quiet reflection on the Reflect on Your Experience section. Invite them to share in pairs. Collect feedback from the group. Encourage them to share what they know and/or have heard about saints and their role in the Catholic faith. Invite their questions about the saints.

Expand

1. Read and discuss the Hear the Good News about the Saints section. Include the following points:
 - Saints are people of faith and discipleship. They exhibited a quality (virtue) in their lives that has attracted others and is worthy of imitation. (Give some examples, such as Maximilian Kolbe, Francis and Clare of Assisi, Elizabeth Anne Seton, or one of the Apostles, and name their qualities.)
 - We are all called to be saints, that is, to live holy lives.
 - All persons in Heaven are saints. Some are formally recognized and canonized by the Church. This approval by the Church assures that this individual is worthy of public veneration.
 - The canonization process is usually long and involved. A person's cause (call for

canonization) is put forth by a group that has done considerable research, which is then examined. If successful, this leads to beatification (the title "blessed") followed by another intense investigation leading to canonization (the title "saint").

- The calendar of the Church assigns specific days on which to remember and honor the saints. There are local variations as well as a universal calendar.
 - Catholics do not pray to statues. Images, icons, and statues are reminders of the saint, and an aide to devotion. Superstition and magic (the desire to manipulate the outcome of prayer or control God) have no place in the authentic practice of the Catholic faith.
2. Read aloud each Scripture citation, followed by some silence. Discuss each passage using these or similar questions:

What message do you hear in this passage?

What does this passage tell us about the universal call to holiness?

Reflect and Share

1. Ask the participants to read Respond Through Action and Witness to the Gospel. Invite responses and questions.
2. Invite several parishioners to be present and share who their favorite saint is and why. Ask them to tell something about the saint's life.
3. Ask the group to reflect on the following questions:

What are you beginning to understand about the role of saints in the Catholic faith?

What are some benefits of having an intercessor on your behalf, such as an advocate at work or in public life, someone who believes in you and promotes your welfare?

Pray

Introduce the participants to the Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi, and pray it together.