

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE RCIA

INQUIRY SESSION: DEVOTIONS

Inquiry Session (*Approximately 60 minutes*)

Prepare

For this session you will need to have several examples of sacramentals such as a rosary, a cross, holy medals, holy cards, statues of Saints, icons, the Advent wreath, a cross, blessed ashes, palm branches, holy oils, and books such as the *Bible*, the *Rites*, or the *Book of Blessings*, that are used in prayer. You will also need a small bowl of holy water.

You may find it helpful to review page 141 of *Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II*, in preparation for a brief discussion on devotions.

Set the space with chairs in a circle, and in the center place a prayer table covered in the color of the liturgical season. Place on the table a candle, a Bible or lectionary, the small bowl of holy water, and the examples of sacramentals.

If needed have nametags. Make refreshments available, too.

Gather (10 – 15 minutes)

1. Greet the children as they arrive. Invite each child to share his or her name and something good that has happened since the last time the group gathered.

Take time to find out how the children are doing.

Ask if they had an experience of prayer or church since the group last gathered.

2. Invite the children to think about something they consider to be a treasure and why it is a treasure to them.

3. Show the group one of your treasured sacramentals, and share why you consider it to be a treasure.

4. Read together the My Story section of the participants' handout and discuss the question found there.

Expand (15 – 20 minutes)

1. Lead the children in praying the Sign of the Cross. (You may have to teach or review the prayer with the children.) Share with the children:

- What the sign of the cross represents
- Those who are baptized were marked with the sign of the cross at their Baptism.
- The Sign of the Cross helps us to remember that we belong to God.
- The Sign of the Cross is one of our faith treasures.

2. Show the children some holy medals or a holy medal and chain. Share with the children:

- What/who the holy medal represents
- Why we might choose to wear a holy medal

3. Show and explain the other sacramentals displayed on the prayer table. Ask the children if they have seen any of these sacramentals or others at home or at use in the parish community.

4. Refer to the participants' handout **Faith Words** section, and review with the children the meaning of the word *sacramentals*. After doing so, invite the children to share any further examples of sacramentals that come to mind.

5. Explain to the children that one of the sacramentals, the rosary, is used in a special type of prayer called a *devotion*. Refer again to the participants' handout **Faith Words** section, and review with the children the meaning of the word *devotion*.

6. To further illustrate the use of a sacramental in devotional prayer, take time to say a bit more about the use of a rosary in devotional prayer. (Remember to use *Our Catholic Heritage, Levels I and II*, page 141, as your guide.)
7. Also highlight the following points.
- There are many, many devotions. Well-known examples include Eucharistic Adoration, the Stations of the Cross, and the Rosary. (*You may wish to briefly explain Eucharistic Adoration and the Stations of the Cross to the children.*)
 - Some devotions we pray together with the parish community; others can be prayed alone and at home as a family. Eucharistic Adoration, Stations of the Cross, and the Rosary may be prayed in either way – with the parish community, or alone or as a family.
 - All devotions lead us to God and remind us that we are always in the presence of God

Our Response (15 – 20 minutes)

1. Discuss with the children the importance of praying (talking with God every day). Invite volunteers to share what sacramentals on the prayer table might help them pray, and how they could help them pray.
2. Remind the children to look around their home in the coming week to see if they have any sacramentals displayed. Ask them to come to the next gathering prepared to share what sacramentals they found, and to tell about any other religious articles that their family members consider to be treasures.
3. Conclude by asking the children to describe the difference between a sacramental and a devotion, and to give examples of each.

Pray (2 – 3 minutes)

Show the children how to reverently bless themselves with the holy water while praying the Sign of the Cross. Then invite each child to come forward and to do so.