

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE RCIA

MYSTAGOGY: BAPTISM

Second Sunday of Easter • Year B • April 7, 2024

Introduction

A period of post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogy should be provided to assist the young neophytes and their companions who have completed their Christian initiation (RCIA 503). Mystagogy is the final period of post-baptismal catechesis intended to help the neophytes and the Christian community grow in their understanding of the Paschal Mystery through continuing to reflect on God's Word, by taking their place in the assembly for the celebration of the Eucharist, and by continuing to answer Christ's call to love others through works of charity (see RCIA 244).

This first of two Young Apprentices mystagogy sessions is offered to help neophytes and their companions continue to reflect on their experiences of the Easter Vigil, most particularly their experiences of Baptism.

Supplies

The optimum setting for this session is in the church, gathered around the Paschal candle and the baptismal font. If this is not possible, set the space with chairs in a circle around a prayer table containing a large white candle, a large glass bowl of holy water, and a Bible.

Word of God

For this session, use the readings for the second Sunday of Easter, Year B. They are as follows:

Acts 4:32-35

Psalms 118: 2-4, 13-15, 22-24

1 John 5:1-6

John 20:19-31

Gather

1. Greet the children and their families as they arrive.
2. Take time for introductions and check in with everyone to find out how they are doing.

3. As a gathering prayer, invite all to stand and to sing a portion of the Litany of the Saints that was sung at the Easter Vigil. Then lead the following prayer, adapted from the Explanatory Rites (see RCIA 228, 229, and 230). Invite all gathered to respond with a sung "Alleluia" or a spoken "Amen."

The God of power
and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
has freed you from sin
and brought you to new life
through water and the Holy Spirit.
All respond: Alleluia! (or Amen!)

God has anointed you with the chrism of salvation,
so that, united with his people,
you may remain for ever a member of Christ
who is Priest, Prophet, and King.
All respond: Alleluia! (or Amen!)

You have become a new creation
and have clothed yourselves in Christ.
You have received the baptismal garment
and are to bring it to the judgment seat
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
so that you may have everlasting life.
All respond: Alleluia! (or Amen!)

You have been enlightened by Christ.
Walk always as children of the light
and keep the flame of faith alive in your hearts.
When the Lord comes, may you go out to meet him
with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom.
All respond: Alleluia! (or Amen!)

4. Allow time for all to share one or two memories of the celebration of Baptism at the Easter Vigil.

Deepen

1. Brainstorm with the whole group all the ways that water is part of life. Be sure to include both the positive and negative aspects of water.
2. Summarize the discussion using these or similar words:
 - *Water is absolutely necessary for all living things.* Ask: What would happen to a plant or to the crops if there was no rain? What would happen to our bodies if we had no water to drink?
 - *Water is also a very powerful force.* Ask: What can happen to you if you dive into the deep end of a swimming pool but do not know how to swim? What happens when there is too much water, like a flood or a hurricane?
 - *Water is the most important symbol of Baptism. We experience the powerful force of water as it pours over us, and we experience the new life of water as we rise up as new creations in Christ.*

Meditate

1. Proclaim the Gospel for the second Sunday of Easter, John 20:19-31.
2. Remind the neophytes that they are now also disciples of the Lord. Ask them to put themselves in the Gospel story, and invite the children to share with their parents and godparents/sponsors their responses to the following questions:

Why do you think Thomas doubted what the other disciples told him?

Have you ever felt like Thomas? Have you ever doubted something your friends, your parents, or your teachers told you? When? Why?

What do you think Jesus meant when he said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe"?
3. After giving all enough time to share with parents and godparents/sponsors, invite responses from the large group.

4. Conclude this portion of the session by playing or singing "We Walk by Faith" (M. Haugen/GIA Publications) or another appropriate hymn.

Share

1. Read and discuss the Share section of the participant page.
2. Explore with the neophytes these points:
 - Baptism is the first sacrament we celebrate.
 - Baptism leads to, or is the gateway to, all the other sacraments.
 - In Baptism, we die to our old selves in order to rise anew with Christ, who is the Living Water.
 - Baptism initiates us into the family of God; we are now adopted children of God, heirs of Heaven, and brothers and sisters to all.
3. Remind the children that each Sunday, as they enter the church for Mass, they may be passing by the baptismal font or small holy water bowls at the entrances of the church. These are there so that the baptized can dip their fingers into the holy water and make the Sign of the Cross as a reminder of their Baptism into Christ.

Do

Invite all to come forward to the font or to the bowl of holy water and to make the Sign of the Cross as a reminder that they have been baptized, marked and claimed by Christ to go forth and take part in his mission to the world.

Pray

Sing or play an Easter hymn, a song about Baptism, or a song about going forth to be Christ's Body in the world.