

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE RCIA

MYSTAGOGY: JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Fourth Sunday of Easter • Year B • April 21, 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).

Supplies

The optimum setting for this session is in the church, gathered around the baptismal font. If a different space must be used, set the space with chairs in a circle and a prayer table covered in white and containing a large white candle, a bowl of holy water, a Bible, and a statue or image of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

Catechist Preparation

1. Read the Scriptures for the fourth Sunday of Easter.
2. Reflect on what it means to be God's child. Think about the ways in which God has bestowed his love on you.
3. Reflect on Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Where or how has he led you on your journey of faith in recent days?

Word of God

Acts 4:8-12

Psalm 118: 1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29

1 John 3:1-2

John 10:11-18

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.

Deepen

1. Gather the group around the baptismal font or the prayer table.
2. Sing an Easter Alleluia sung at your parish.
3. Remind group members that through the Sacrament of Baptism, they have become children of God. Ask volunteers to share what this means. (Possible responses may include: *God is my Father; I honor my Father by obeying his commands; God loves me as his daughter/son, and so forth.*)
4. Proclaim today's Second Reading, 1 John 3:1-2. Allow for a few moments of silent reflection.
5. Pray: *God our Father, thank you for the gift of Baptism. Thank you for loving us, and for calling us your daughters and sons. Help us to live as your children by listening to your Word and by obeying your commands. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*
6. Invite all to bless themselves with the holy water as the group sings an Easter Alleluia or another Easter refrain.
7. Refer to the Deepen section of the participant handout.

Meditate

1. Invite the participants to name those who are leaders in their lives (*at school, in the workplace, in the parish, in their community, of the country, of their team, and so on*). Then ask, "Who is the leader of all children of God?"
2. Invite them to listen to the Gospel to learn more about our leader, Jesus.
3. Light the Paschal or prayer table candle and proclaim today's Gospel, John 10:11-18.
4. Ask the group to explain what a good shepherd does.
5. Invite volunteers to explain why the title "Good Shepherd" is a good title for Jesus.

6. Invite all to return to their seats, and continue the discussion as follows:
- Through Baptism you have become part of the Body of Christ, the Church. Jesus is the Head of the Church.
 - One reason “Good Shepherd” is a good title for Jesus is because Jesus watches over and cares for us, the sheep of his flock.
 - In the Gospel, Jesus says, “I know mine and mine know me.” How do we come to know Jesus? *(Answers will vary but may include that we know him through his Word, we know him through those who teach us about him, we know him when we pray, we know him when we feel at peace, and so forth.)*
7. Read and discuss the Meditate section of the participant handout.

Share

1. Read and discuss the Share section of the participant handout.
2. Invite the participants to name some of the people whom they consider to be their guides and why. What do these people say and do that makes them good guides?
3. Explain that part of our responsibility as the baptized is to be the presence of Jesus to others. Invite volunteers to name ways we can guide others to know and to believe in the Good News of Jesus by what we say and by what we do.

Do

1. Encourage the children to take some time this week to tell their guides thank you, and to pray for their guides each day.
2. Also encourage them to watch for opportunities every day to be a guide to someone else through what they say and through what they do.

Pray

- Invite all to close their eyes, to picture their guides, and to ask God to bless their guides. Conclude by praying: *Lord, we thank you for those who guide us in your ways of truth and love. Bless them. Help us be good guides to others too. Amen.*
- Conclude by singing an Easter Alleluia or refrain.

In accord with the *Code of Canon Law*, I hereby grant the *Imprimatur* (“Permission to Publish”) regarding the publication of *Young Apprentices: A Resource for the RCIA*.

Most Reverend Joseph R. Binzer, Auxiliary Bishop, Vicar General • Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio • January 30, 2015.

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