

The Catechumenate in the Early Church

Engage: Page 27

- ▶ Discuss feelings that someone might experience on the first day at a new school. **Say:** *To help us navigate, we often turn to others.* **Ask:** *What can we do to help people who want to become Catholic?* (Possible answer: pray for them)
- ▶ Read aloud the title and discuss the questions in the blue box. **Say:** *In this session we will learn about how people became Christian in the early Church. We will also learn about the Sacraments of Initiation, through which we are welcomed into the Church.*
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 28–29

- ▶ Display various membership cards and discuss the responsibilities and benefits of belonging to groups. **Say:** *Anyone can join the Church. The responsibilities that come with being a member are to believe in Jesus and to follow his teachings.*
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the title *Joining the Early Church* and the first four paragraphs. Write the word *catechumen* and underline the letters *echu*. **Say:** *This part of the word is related to the word echo. As catechumens learn about Church teachings and practices, they allow the Word of God to echo in their hearts.* Emphasize that we allow God's Word to echo in our hearts whenever we take time to pray, reflect on the Scriptures, and celebrate the sacraments.
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud *The Sacraments of Initiation*. Point out that in the early Church, the Sacraments of Initiation were celebrated at the same time. **Ask:** *How can we make the Church present in places and circumstances where it can be nourishment for the life of all people?* (Possible answer: We can make the Church present by standing up for people who are oppressed or victimized.)
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the *Past Meets Present* feature on page 29. Explain that in Baptism by full immersion, the person being baptized walks into the baptismal font, and his or her head is lowered into the water three times, once as each Person of the Trinity is named. Draw attention to the photo. **Say:** *In this church the baptismal font, which is located near the church entrance, allows for Baptism by full immersion.* Point out which method of Baptism your parish routinely uses.
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a quick review of the article.

Explore: Pages 30–31

- ▶ Display a bottle of water, a loaf of bread, and a jar of olive oil. Together brainstorm all the ways these items can be used. **Say:** *As Catholics we use these items in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist.*
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud the article title *The Sacraments of Initiation* and the section *Baptism*. Draw attention to the word *justice*. **Say:** *Justice is the virtue that guides us to give to God and to others what is due to them.* Point out that even after Baptism, people can sin by using the gift of free will to turn away from God. **Say:** *We share the grace we have received through Baptism every time we perform actions that build up God's kingdom.*

- ▶ Have your child read aloud Our Catholic Character. Draw attention to the last sentence. **Say:** *Ultimately, grace and Salvation are mysteries. Even as we strive to understand them, we must be careful not to “play God” and decide for ourselves who is or is not saved.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the section Confirmation on page 31. **Ask:** *What rites are used during the Sacrament of Confirmation? (anointing the forehead with oil, the words “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit,” laying on of hands)*
- ▶ Read aloud the section Eucharist. **Say:** *The Eucharist is the fullest sign of God’s Revelation. It also signifies what we strive for: complete union with God, which gives us the strength and desire to be Christ’s Body and Blood for others.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the Ready for Confirmation feature. **Say:** *The Gifts of the Holy Spirit that we receive in Confirmation transform us. They strengthen our desire to share the Gospel message with others through our words and actions.*
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a quick review of the article.

Reflect: Pages 32–33

- ▶ Have your child read aloud the title and the paragraphs in the left column. Discuss the different types of promises we might make, such as making a promise, pledging an oath, or taking a vow. **Say:** *If we do not keep our promises, people might think that we are not trustworthy.*
- ▶ Have your child read Our Baptismal Promises and reflect silently. **Say:** *When you have a difficult time keeping your baptismal promises, you can talk to Jesus. He will help you stay true to your beliefs.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the introductory paragraph of Where Do I Fit In? on page 33. **Ask:** *What are your best talents? With what communities do you share these talents? Point out that our talents are gifts from God and that he wants us to share these gifts with others to build up his kingdom.*
- ▶ Together read aloud Giving and Receiving in Community. Share stories about people or groups you both know who have served the Church as missionaries. Then invite your child to describe times when he or she observed or participated in customs that were not his or her own. **Ask:** *How did you feel about this experience? (Possible answers: interested, curious)* **Say:** *The many cultures that make up the human community are like different colors that make up a beautiful palette.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Gifts to Share and complete the activity independently.

Respond: Page 34

- ▶ Have your child read aloud the directions and answer the questions independently.
- ▶ Ask your child to list, define, and use in sentences the terms under Say What? Use the Glossary if necessary.
- ▶ Read aloud Now What? After your child completes the activity, **say:** *When we preach the Gospel message, we grow in our relationship with God, and we share his grace with others. Conclude by praying together the Sign of the Cross.*
- ▶ Invite your child to pray a 3-minute Retreat at www.loyolapress.com/retreat.