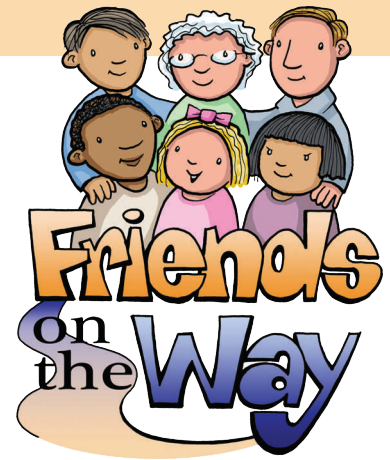


Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A



Children's RCIA Resource

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

Dismissal Session

The Dismissal Session is for catechumens only who are dismissed from worship before the Creed (RCIA #75.3). The Dismissal Session group may gather for the Catechetical Session at another time during the week.

Catechetical Session

When the Dismissal Session is immediately followed by the Catechetical Session, parents or other sponsors join the group after Eucharist. Baptized children preparing for confirmation and Eucharist may also join in the Catechetical Session (RCIA #254; Appendix III, #19). Select the session options that fit your time frame.

NOTES FOR THIS SUNDAY

Sunday's readings

- Isaiah 25:6-10a
- Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6
- Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20
- Matthew 22:1-14

Doctrine correlations

- While Scripture speaks of a wedding feast, the mystery of blessed communion with God and all who are in Christ is beyond understanding (CCC #1027).
- Jesus' invitation to feast at the heavenly banquet comes in the form of parables, but one must make a radical choice (CCC #546).

RCIA team notes

The people of God, as represented by the local church, should understand initiation is the responsibility of all the baptized. The entire community shows concern and helps catechumens and candidates throughout the process of initiation (RCIA #9). The Crossing the Ages activity helps the children engage with other community members.

CATECHIST'S NOTES

GETTING READY FOR THE SESSION

Items to prepare

- check-in sheet and nametag materials
- poster paper or white board, erasers, and erasable markers
- green cloth on table or counter space for prayer, percussion instrument
- Bibles, one set to Matthew 22
- flowers, candle in a heat-proof holder, matches
- gathering prayer cards
- questions on cards for reports, microphone (*optional*)
- Sharing Faith questions, copies of "Faith at Home"
- RSVP cards, supplies, and envelopes to make invitation

Gathering Prayer Ritual

Set a prayer focal point by placing a Bible, fall flowers, and candle on a green cloth. Print the prayer lines (adapted from the Eastern liturgy for Wednesday of Holy Week) on cards numbered in order.

Singing option

Use music from your faith community resources. The suggestion is a guide. Bring songbooks and music in a player.

Building Community

Clear an area for the game. See the dismissal session for suggestions and develop invitation scenarios for the catechumen's age levels and experiences.

Snack option

Send a reminder to the sponsor providing the snack this week.

Engaging the Word

Print the reporters' questions on separate cards. Make large identification place cards for panelists. Plan to set up a panel at the front of the room. Using posting notes, identify where furniture to be moved belongs. Bring a microphone and speaker or pretend microphone (*optional*).

Sharing Faith groups

Put the Scripture citation with the questions on cards for group leaders.

Crossing the Ages Activity option: Heavenly Invitation

On plain index cards, print RSVP cards (see the Crossing the Ages activity for a sample.) Gather scratch paper, pencils, rulers, nice paper or blank cards, pens, crayons, and business or card envelopes.

DISMISSAL SESSION

GATHERING

(15 MINUTES)

Catechumens, having heard the Sunday proclamation of the Word, are dismissed from the Mass. Greet the catechumens as they arrive. Have them check in and put on nametags. For anyone new provide nametag materials. Distribute prayer cards to readers to prepare.

GATHERING PRAYER RITUAL

Chime a percussion instrument as a call to prayer. All stand around the prayer focal point.

(+) Light the candle.

Song Suggestion: "Now" from *Give Your Gifts, Melody Book*, GIA Publications, Inc.

Have prepared catechumens read the following prayer from their cards.

**O Jesus, I hear you calling.
Your banquet is ready,
but I need to prepare my garment.
Choose me,
and transfigure the vesture of my soul.**

Invite everyone when you lift a hand to respond, "You, O God, are at my side." Prayerfully say the following verses inspired by Psalm 23, calling for the response by lifting a hand.

**The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
Your rod and staff give me courage. (response)**

**You anoint my head with oil.
My cup overflows. (response)**

**Only goodness and care follow me
all the days of my life. (response)**

Extinguish the candle flame.

CONNECTING WITH ONE ANOTHER

Invite everyone to sit in a circle. Introduce anyone new. Invite sharing about their experiences with the “Faith at Home” pages from the previous session.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

RSVP: Mention that RSVP is an abbreviation for a French term (*répondez s’il vous plaît*) meaning “Please respond” and that it is polite to respond to invitations. Explain that during the game you will give various party scenarios, and they will decide if they will accept the invitation or not. Designate sides of the room for those who would go to the party on one side of the room, and those who would not go on the other. Explain that every time you say “RSVP” they move to the chosen side. After each RSVP, allow time for movement. Encourage respect regarding one another’s decisions. Then, when you say “Party over,” everyone returns to the center after each situation.

- You get a party invitation from a class member for the same date as your great grandmother’s 80th birthday party. RSVP
- You get an invitation to a party, but you do not know the sender. RSVP
- You cannot swim but are invited to a swim party. RSVP
- You are invited to a party where the music will be in poor taste. RSVP
- You are invited to the birthday party of a good friend. RSVP
- You get a party invitation, but you need the time to do a school project. RSVP
- You are invited to a party, and no adults will be home. RSVP
- A three-year-old who idolizes you invites you to his or her fourth birthday party. RSVP

Settle everyone. Then say:

Jesus tells a parable about being invited to a heavenly banquet and includes how various guests respond.

RECALLING THE WORD

(10 MINUTES)

Have everyone sit with Bibles in a circle. Use the following as a guide. For information, refer to “Insight for the Catechist” and the reflections on the “Faith at Home” page.

Help everyone find Isaiah 25:6-10a. Explain:

When the prophet wrote this passage the people were suffering. The “veil that veils,” the “web that is woven all the nations,” and “the reproach” are descriptions about suffering and death. The prophet wrote encouraging words so that the people would have hope in salvation.

- **How does Isaiah describe the holy banquet that God offers?**
- **What is the most wonderful thing you can imagine?**
- **How might you use that image to explain that God saves us?**

Have the catechumens find Philippians 4:12-20. Explain:

This is a thank-you note that Saint Paul wrote to the Philippians.

- **What do you notice?**
- **What promise does Paul make?**

Have everyone find Matthew 22:1-14. Explain:

The evangelist Matthew combines two parables to teach a lesson.

- **How easy or difficult is it for you to understand the teachings in these parables?**
- **How does it feel to be invited to God's heavenly banquet?**
- **How have you been putting on new behaviors as you come to know Jesus' way?**

Affirm the members' comments. Conclude:

This week we talked about the wonderful feast God prepares for us. The heavenly banquet is the greatest of all celebrations for those of us who prepare.

PRAYING INTERCESSIONS

(5 MINUTES)

God created wonderful things for all people to share, so we pray for ourselves and the needs of others. When I lift my hand please respond, "God who offers salvation, hear our prayer."

- **O God, you provide rich foods for everyone. Lead us in ways of justice to end hunger.** (Lift a hand for the response.)
- **May all the faithful contribute to the support of missionaries and others who work in church vocations.** (Lift a hand for the response.)
- **Thank you for the generous invitation you offer to everyone. Send your Spirit to help us put on proper attitudes.** (Lift a hand for the response.)

Invite the members to contribute intercessions. Conclude:

**O God, you fully supply whatever we need.
Hear the prayers we have spoken and those we hold in our hearts.
May your Holy Spirit guide us, united as one in Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.**

All: **Amen.**

Option: Break for a snack or social time. If the group disperses now and meets for catechesis later in the week, collect nametags.

CATECHETICAL SESSION

The Catechetical Session follows the Dismissal Session either immediately or at another time during the week. The catechetical session is designed for catechumens and parents or sponsors to grow in faith together. The status of the catechumens never is to be confused with that of baptized children preparing for confirmation or Eucharist, who may join in this catechesis as supportive companions (RCIA, Appendix III, #19). Note: Extra time may be needed to distribute the invitations for the Crossing the Ages activity option.

GATHERING FOR CATECHESIS (5 MINUTES)

Welcome the catechumens, parents, sponsors, and any baptized children arriving from liturgy. If this Catechetical Session is not following the Dismissal Session, allow an additional ten minutes and begin with the Gathering segment in the Dismissal Session. Have those arriving check in and put on nametags.

PRAYING

Invite everyone to stand around the prayer focal point. Use the (+) prayer from the Gathering Prayer Ritual in the Dismissal Session, another prayer, or sing a gathering song from liturgy.

ENGAGING THE WORD (15 MINUTES)

Explain that the group will hold a “Many are called, but few are chosen” press conference. Choose volunteers to be interviewed: king, bride, groom, surviving family member of a first guest, guest from the street, guest without a garment, moderator. Give each a large identification tag. The others will be reporters asking questions. (*Option:* Provide a microphone with speakers or a pretend one.) Distribute the following questions among the reporter group, and others may ask some of their own.

Distribute Bibles. Ask everyone to find Matthew 22:1-14. Ask them to quietly become familiar with the passage. Help prepare for the press conference as needed. Volunteers help arrange the room.

- Surviving, family member, why do think your relative refused the invitation?
- Bride, how did you feel when you heard no one was coming?
- King, why did you burn the city?
- Groom, how do you feel about what happened?
- Guest from the street, what did you think when you were invited to the king’s party?
- Guest without a garment, why did you not put on the clothing the king provided?
- Any of you, how do you feel now?
- Any of you, what might you do differently next time?

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Isaiah 25:6-10a
Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6
Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20
Matthew 22:1-14

Insight for the Catechist

These two allegories, the parables of the wedding feast and the guest without the proper garment, conclude Matthew’s series about the kingdom of heaven. Such stories told by Jesus reveal the eschatological plan of salvation.

The lesson is directed to the chief priests and elders. The Israelite prophet had described the coming of the Messiah as a great banquet with the choicest foods and wines. Jesus made it the most joyful of celebrations, a wedding feast.

For centuries the people refused to respond to God’s call to justice and mercy. The leaders even tortured or killed the prophets who issued the warnings.

With the coming of Jesus, the heavenly invitation is extended to everyone. Those who refuse to make the baptismal commitment by putting on Christ are left out. When they realize what they have rejected, they will “wail and gnash.”

SHARING FAITH

(15 MINUTES)

Form groups of four to six mixed-age participants with Bibles. (If there are only a few participants, lead the discussion as a whole group.) Print the questions on large paper or marker board, or distribute questions on cards for an adult to lead. Circulate to offer support as needed.

CONVERSING ABOUT MATTHEW 22:1-14

- How would you put the parable lessons in your own words?
- Why does God's invitation come with an expectation, symbolized by the person who should have dressed appropriately?
- What, do you suppose, God expects from you?

With the whole group, conclude:

This parable about a wedding feast tries to explain our communion with God and with one another. While we can never fully realize everything about God, Bible stories help us to understand part of the mystery of God.

CARRYING OUT THE WORD

(5 MINUTES)

SUMMING UP

Invite everyone to stand around the prayer focal point. Encourage them to offer insights from this week's session. Summarize:

God calls us to make important choices. When we are tempted to do selfish things, God asks us to put on the ways of Christ and do what is right and good.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lead the Guardian Angel prayer. Say each line and have everyone repeat, or pray it all together.

**Angel of God, my guardian dear,
to whom God's love entrusts me here,
ever this day, be at my side,
to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.**

**Go forth from this place, and prepare to enjoy God's banquet.
And may the ever-living God bless us,**

(Make the Sign of the Cross on yourself as a model for everyone.)

**protect us from all evil,
and bring us to everlasting life.**

All: **Amen.**

Distribute the "Faith at Home" page. Collect the nametags.

Crossing the Ages Activity

(Optional activity for children and adults together: 20 minutes)

Heavenly Invitation

(Support of sponsors and entire community, RCIA #75.2)

Mention that the members will design and make invitations to God's eternal banquet to distribute to members of the faith community. Show the RSVP cards that will be included. Sample RSVP card:



How do you respond to God's call to serve and worship?

- Regrets, I am too busy right now.
- Regrets, I have school work.
- Regrets, I need to make money.
- I will briefly stop on my way to the beach.
- I will come, clothed in Christ's love and mercy.

Please RSVP to God.

Provide scratch paper, pencils, rulers, nice paper or blank cards, pens, crayons, and large envelopes. They create invitations using the line "You are invited to God's eternal banquet." They add their own designs and other wording. Everyone folds the invitation to fit the envelope and inserts it with an RSVP card. They might address the envelope to "Friend of God." Children go with adults to circulate around the facility including offices, introduce themselves, and offer the invitation to someone they encounter.



Remember Sunday's Word

Isaiah 25:6-10a
Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6
Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20
Matthew 22:1-14

Faith at Home

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At a convenient time for the family, gather around a dining table or in the living room. Silence all electronics. Place a Bible opened to Matthew 22 in the center. Begin with a moment of quiet.

REFLECTING ON ISAIAH 25:6-10A

An ancient prophet predicts that God will destroy death forever. There will be an end of sorrow as God wipes away all tears. The savior will come, and the people will feast on the finest, juiciest, richest food and drink.

- ⇒ How might people who are always hungry feel when they read these verses about delicious foods?
- ⇒ What could our family do to wipe away the tears of children who are hungry or suffering?

Help wipe away the tears for families who do not have adequate winter clothing. Remember that families on a limited budget have more money for food when you make low cost clothing available. Recruit neighbors and family to join in a multi-family yard sale. Search through closets and drawers and remove items that are too small or extras. Sort by size, and put any items in poor condition in a recycling bin. Keep all the income in one container. Use it to buy special foods for a block party or donate to the local food pantry.

REFLECTING ON PHILIPPIANS 4:12-14, 19-20

Paul writes a "thank-you" note to the Philippians who sent him financial support. Although he continues doing God's work even when he is hungry, he appreciates that he can do even more with their help.

- ⇒ How much financial support does our family donate for church salaries?
- ⇒ In what ways have we shown our appreciation to those who help us, especially to those who help us know Christ?

Together, as a family, select someone to whom you are grateful. This might be a sponsor who has helped your family become more involved in the church. Maybe a grandparent, family member, or friend has been a source of inspiration. Compose a thank-you note and send or deliver it.

REFLECTING ON MATTHEW 22:1-14

Some guests invited to feast with God are too busy. They are making money and tending to their own important dealings. We, who once were strangers, are the newly invited guests. We have heard the call “Come! All is prepared. Eat my bread and drink my wine.” There is, however, one requirement because coming to the heavenly banquet is not easy come, easy go. We make baptismal vows and put on Christ. We spread God’s love, mercy, and compassion in order to avoid misery.

- ⇒ When have we been too busy or too selfish to say “Yes” to God’s invitation?
- ⇒ Since we do not know by whom we will be seated at God’s heavenly banquet, how would we each feel about sitting next to someone whose cultural background is unfamiliar to us? Someone of a different social class? Someone who is homeless and has not had a chance to bathe?

A child decorates the garment with pictures or writes actions that show compassion, mercy, and love. All family members draw and decorate garments that symbolize putting on Christ.

