

Guide for Catechists

Journey 2014

St. Paul's Episcopal Church Bellingham, Washington



"Catechesis is not so much instruction,
as it is nurturing and encouraging people to respond to the scriptures
as they connect to their lives."

Journey Notebook, "The Catechumenate Team"

Calendar

Date	Gospel / Event	<i>Public Rite (Prayer)</i>
Inquiry: Setting Out		
TBD	Meals in Homes	<i>Invitations</i>
17 Nov	Dinner in GH: Invitation to Journey	
1 Dec		<i>Admission</i>
Advent / Catechumenate: On the Road		
12 Jan	Mt 3.13-17 Jesus' Baptism	<i>Welcome</i>
19 Jan	Jn 1.29-42 John Testifies	
26 Jan	Mt 4.12-23 Calling Disciplines	
2 Feb	Mt 5.1-12 Beatitudes	
9 Feb	Mt 5.13-20 Light of the World	
16 Feb	Mt 5.21-37 Tear it out!	
	<i>5 March Ash Wednesday</i>	<i>Enrollment*</i>
Intense Preparation: Coming Home		
9 Mar	Mt 4.1-11 Temptation	<i>Enrollment</i>
16 Mar	Jn 3.1-7 Nicodemus	
23 Mar	Jn 4.5-42 Woman at Well	<i>Creed</i>
30 Mar	Jn 9.1-41 Man Born Blind	<i>Prayer</i>
6 Apr	Jn 11.1-45 Raising Lazarus	<i>Our Father</i>
	<i>17 April Maundy Thursday</i>	<i>Service*</i>
	<i>18 April Good Friday</i>	
	<i>19 April Easter Vigil</i>	<i>Baptism</i>
Mystagogy		
27 Apr	Mystagogy Discussion	
TBD	Service Opportunities	
	<i>8 June Commissioning of baptized & whole church*</i>	

* For those seeking Reception / Reaffirmation / Confirmation

Concerning the Role of the Catechist

Thank you for agreeing to be a Catechist for Journey this year. In doing so you are fulfilling a sacred trust, passing on the faith which you received from others. Being a catechist implies certain duties:

1. Pray for those in your group.

What greater service can we render another than to hold them up before the loving throne of our God daily?

2. Show up!

Both physically and emotionally: your consistent, emotionally available presence is the most important thing you bring to your group.

3. Answer two specific questions for your group.

a. Do I belong here?

Everyone will arrive wondering if Journey is right for them, whether they will find acceptance and community with their group. We answer this question by demonstrating hospitality, enacting our baptismal covenant by seeking and serving Christ in all persons and respecting the dignity of every human being.

b. Is there order here?

As a Catechist, you are responsible to lead your group. It is not a question of pride or making a power grab: it is simply a question of carrying out your responsibility to care for others. You are like a traffic cop, ensuring that the group dynamics allow each person to speak and no-one to dominate. You may wish to do this by introducing explicit group norms (e.g., as found on the back cover of this guide), or you may wish to guide the group as it establishes these norms implicitly.

4. Be prepared not to answer questions.

"I don't know" is very acceptable answer for a Catechist to offer and creates space for others to encounter answers within. The purpose of the Catechumenate is not to convey information. Rather the purpose is to create a safe space where people growing in faith can take time to observe what happens at the intersection of the Gospel and their own lives.

5. Be ready to tell your own story on the first week.

You will be setting the tone: please model preparation, openness, and appropriateness with just a little daring. Ideally your story will be told within 5-10 minutes.

Weekly Plan

You will be leading a small group discussion intended to invite people to encounter the Gospel story in their own lives. Please take some time during the week to prepare so that you can lead the group in a calm, unhurried, confident manner.

Beginning

Open with prayer, perhaps using the day's collect.

Telling Stories / Icebreaker

Each week, two volunteers should be recruited to tell their stories the following week until all have told their story.

When a story is told, it should be followed by a moment of silence and an expression of thanks to the teller. Questions should not be asked.

When there are no stories to tell, an icebreaker is simply designed to get people reconnected and talking after a week apart.

Observing Scripture

Cause the Gospel lection to be read. Take a few moments to establish that the lection has been understood: perhaps by asking for a volunteer to summarize it and others to comment on what struck them. Or you may choose to follow the pattern of "Aural Bible Study" on the facing page. Do not get stuck at this stage! (Other passages and Catechism references are provided in this handbook for your reference as you prepare.)

Questions

The questions provided are suggestions: feel free to use your own. These are designed with two purposes in mind:

1. to generate a free-flowing conversation
2. to invite a very personal encounter with the Gospel

At the end of each meeting:

If you are meeting with the baptized only, conclude with silent prayer followed by the day's collect. If meeting with those seeking baptism, observe the following instructions from the *Book of Occasional Services*:

At the conclusion of each session, a period of silence is observed, during which the catechumens pray for themselves and one another. Sponsors and other baptized persons present offer their prayers for the catechumens. The instructor then says one or two of the following or some other suitable prayers, and concludes by laying a hand individually on the head of each catechumen in silence. (BOS 119, During the Catechumenate)

Catechist Resources

- <http://www.lectionarypage.net/>
- *Book of Occasional Services*, pp. 114-130, The Catechumenate
- Perason & Szoke, eds., *The Prayer Book Guide to Christian Education*
- Linda Grenz, *A Guide to the New Church's Teaching Series*

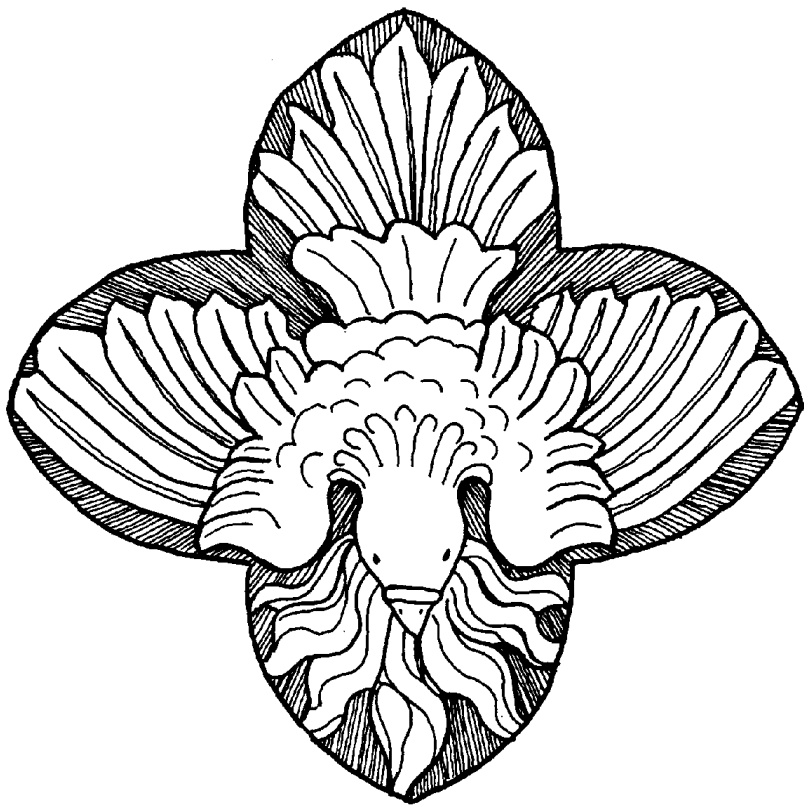
Example Ice Breakers

- What was your favorite part of today's liturgy? Why?
- Have you ever gotten something new (e.g., car, computer, etc.) but wished you still had the old one instead?
- Tell us (briefly!) about someone you admire.
- How is God calling you, personally, to give?
- What is your most meaningful experience of the Bible?

Aural Bible Study

- One person reads the passage.
- Following a moment of reflection, each person says a word or short phrase from the passage which caught their attention.
- A different person reads the passage.
- Following 3-5 minutes of silent reflection on the question, "Where does this passage touch my life today?" each person shares, "For me..."
- A different person reads the passage.
- Following 3-5 minutes of silent reflection on the question, "From what I have heard and shared, what does God want me to do or be this week? How does God want invite me to change?" each person shares, "For me..."
- Ask each person to pray in turn for the fulfillment of what the person to their left shared. Close with the Lord's prayer.

Note to catechist: Discussion questions follow. Please remember you don't have to use them! The point is to generate conversation about the Gospel. If something catches and sparks a (remotely relevant) conversation, let it flow and discover where it goes. This may be God's Spirit leading your group!



12 January: First Sunday after the Epiphany, Year A
The Baptism of our Lord

Isaiah 42:1-9
Psalm 29

Acts 10.34-43
Matthew 3.13-17

Catechism: BCP 858, Holy Baptism

Father in heaven, who at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit: Grant that all who are baptized into his Name may keep the covenant they have made, and boldly confess him as Lord and Savior; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

Telling Stories

Catechist & One prepared Sponsor
Recruit two volunteers for next week.

Observing Scripture

Questions

1. What is baptism?
2. In baptism, how do we acknowledge God?
3. In baptism, how does God acknowledge us?

(As we see in Christ our example, in baptism God sends the Holy Spirit upon us and acknowledges us as the object of God's delight!)

Blessing of the Catechumens

O God, the creator and savior of all flesh, look with mercy on your children whom you call to yourself in love. Cleanse their hearts and guard them as they prepare to receive your Sacraments that, led by your Holy Spirit, they may be united with your Son, and enter into the inheritance of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

19 January: Second Sunday after the Epiphany, Year A

Isaiah 49.1-7
Psalm 40.1-12

1 Corinthians 1:1-9
John 1.29-42

Catechism: BCP 857, The Sacraments

Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Telling Stories

Recruit two volunteers for next week.

Observing Scripture

Questions

1. From who did you first hear about Jesus the Messiah?
2. When did you first hear Jesus calling you to be a disciple?
3. Jesus changes people: sometimes that change is represented by a new name. What new name or identity did you receive or do you desire from Jesus?

Blessing of the Catechumens

O God of truth, of beauty, and of goodness, we give you thanks that from the beginning of creation you have revealed yourself in the things that you have made; and that in every nation, culture, and language there have been those who, seeing your works, have worshiped you and sought to do your will. Accept our prayers for these your servants whom you have called to know and love you as you have been perfectly revealed in your Son Jesus Christ our Redeemer, and bring them with joy to new birth in the waters of Baptism; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

26 January: Third Sunday after the Epiphany, Year A

Isaiah 9.1-4

1 Corinthians 1.10-18

Psalms 27.1, 5-13

Matthew 4:12-23

Catechism: BCP 855, The Ministry

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Telling Stories

Recruit two volunteers for next week.

Observing Scripture

Questions

1. What was it that first attracted you to the Good News about Jesus?
2. What have you left or do you anticipate leaving as you strive to follow Jesus?

(Repentance, turning around, is a difficult thing. There's a definite cost/benefit analysis to be worked out in one's life of faith!)

Blessing of the Catechumens

O God of righteousness and truth, you inaugurated your victory over the forces of deceit and sin by the Advent of your Son: Give to these catechumens a growing understanding of the truth as it is in Jesus; and grant that they, being cleansed from sin and born again in the waters of Baptism, may glorify with us the greatness of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

2 February: Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, Year A

Micah 6.1-8

Psalm 15

1 Corinthians 1.18-31

Matthew 5.1-12

Catechism: BCP 845, Human Nature

Almighty and everlasting God, you govern all things both in heaven and on earth: Mercifully hear the supplications of your people, and in our time grant us your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Telling Stories

Recruit two volunteers for next week.

Observing Scripture

Questions

1. Which of the beatitudes is most comforting to you? Why?
2. Do you wish one of the beatitudes wasn't there? Why?

Blessing of the Catechumens

O God, in your pity you looked upon a fallen world, and sent your only Son among us to vanquish the powers of wickedness. Deliver these your servants from slavery to sin and evil. Purify their desires and thoughts with the light of your Holy Spirit. Nourish them with your holy Word, strengthen them in faith, and confirm them in good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

9 February: Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany, Year A

Isaiah 58.1-9a, (9b-12)

1 Corinthians 2.1-12, (13-16)

Psalms 112.1-9, (10)

Matthew 5.13-20

Catechism: BCP 847, The Ten Commandments

Set us free, O God, from the bondage of our sins, and give us the liberty of that abundant life which you have made known to us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Telling Stories

Recruit two volunteers for next week.

Observing Scripture

Questions

1. How is your faith visible in the world? Are you comfortable with that?
2. What does it mean to be more righteous than the Pharisees?

Blessing of the Catechumens

Look down in mercy, Lord, upon these catechumens now being taught in your holy Word. Open their ears to hear and their hearts to obey. Bring to their minds their past sins, committed against you and against their neighbors, that they may truly repent of them. And in your mercy preserve them in their resolve to seek your kingdom and your righteousness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

16 February: Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany, Year A

Deuteronomy 30.15-20

1 Corinthians 3.1-9

Psalm 119.1-8

Luke 5.21.37

Catechism: BCP 847, The New Covenant

O God, the strength of all who put their trust in you: Mercifully accept our prayers; and because in our weakness we can do nothing good without you, give us the help of your grace, that in keeping your commandments we may please you both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Telling Stories

Recruit two volunteers for next week.

Observing Scripture

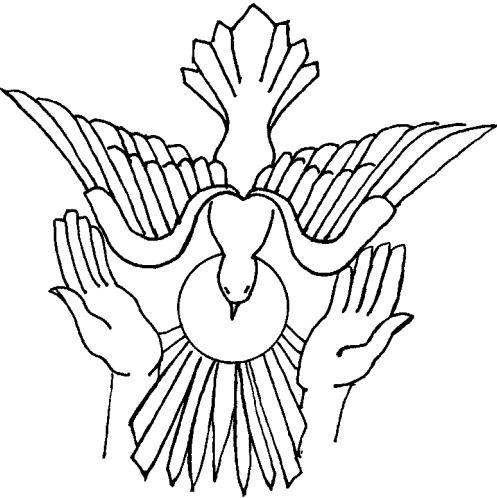
Questions

1. Does Jesus intend to make us feel guilty with these words?
2. As a follower of Christ, how do you encounter anger? Lust? Marriage and divorce?
3. What is the higher standard to which Christ calls you?

Blessing of the Catechumens

Drive out of these catechumens, Lord God, every trace of wickedness. Protect them from the Evil One. Bring them to the saving waters of baptism, and make them yours for ever; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Break to initiate those seeking baptism/reaffirmation, Lent begins.)



9 March: First Sunday in Lent, Year A

Genesis 2.15-17; 3.1-7

Romans 5.12-19

Psalm 32

Matthew 4.1-11

Catechism: BCP 856, Prayer and Worship

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

What is your experience of the spiritual disciplines? Have you adopted one for Lent?

Observing Scripture

Questions

1. What does the devil offer you in your desert times?
2. What resources help you to remain true to your deepest commitments when temptation strikes?

Blessing of the Catechumens

Lord Jesus Christ, loving Redeemer of all, you alone have the power to save. At your Name every knee shall bow, whether in heaven, on earth, or under the earth. We pray to you for these catechumens who seek to serve you, the one true God. Send your light into their hearts, protect them from the hatred of the Evil One, heal in them the wounds of sin, and strengthen them against temptation. Give them a love of your commandments, and courage to live always by your Gospel, and so prepare them to receive your Spirit; you who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

16 March: Second Sunday in Lent, Year A

Genesis 12.1-4a

Romans 4.1-5, 13-17

Psalm 121

John 3.1-17

Catechism: BCP 849, God the Son

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

When have you seen redemption in action?

Observing Scripture

Questions

1. What do you wish to ask God at night, when no one is listening?
2. Where in your life could you use a new beginning, a second birth?

Blessing of the Catechumens

Most merciful God, behold and sustain these catechumens who seek to know you more fully: Free them from the grasp of Satan, and make them bold to renounce all sinful desires that entice them from loving you; that, coming in faith to the Sacrament of Baptism, they may commit themselves to you, receive the seal of the Holy Spirit, and share with us in the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

23 March: Third Sunday in Lent, Year A

Exodus 17:1-7

Romans 5.1-11

Psalm 95

John 4.5-42

Catechism: BCP 851, The Creeds

or BCP 848, Sin and Redemption

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

What was your experience of this morning's liturgy?

Which line from the creed is most meaningful to you?

Which line from the creed is most difficult for you?

Observing Scripture

Questions

1. What surprised you most when you first began to learn what the Gospel is really about?
2. How do you feel about the Christ knowing "everything you've ever done"?
3. Are you ever tempted to hide behind the forms of religion when Jesus gets too personal?

Blessing of the Catechumens

Lord God, unfailing light and source of light, by the death and resurrection of your Christ you have cast out hatred and deceit, and poured upon the human family the light of truth and love: Look upon these catechumens whom you have called to enter your covenant, free them from the power of the Prince of darkness, and number them among the children of promise; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

30 March: Fourth Sunday in Lent, Year A

1 Samuel 16.1-13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5.8-14

John 9.1-41

Catechism: BCP 846, God the Father

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

Have you ever lost anything vitally important to you?

Observing Scripture

Questions

1. Do you ever feel misunderstood because of your faith?
2. How do your failings make you more receptive to God's work in your life?
3. Where do your strengths handicap you in your relationship with Christ?

Blessing of the Catechumens

Stir up, O Lord, the wills of these catechumens, and assist them by your grace, that they may bring forth plenteously the fruit of good works, and receive from you a rich reward; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

6 April: Fifth Sunday in Lent, Year C

Ezekiel 37.1-14
Psalm 130

Romans 8.6-11
John 11.1-45

Catechism: BCP 861, The Christian Hope

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Ice Breaker

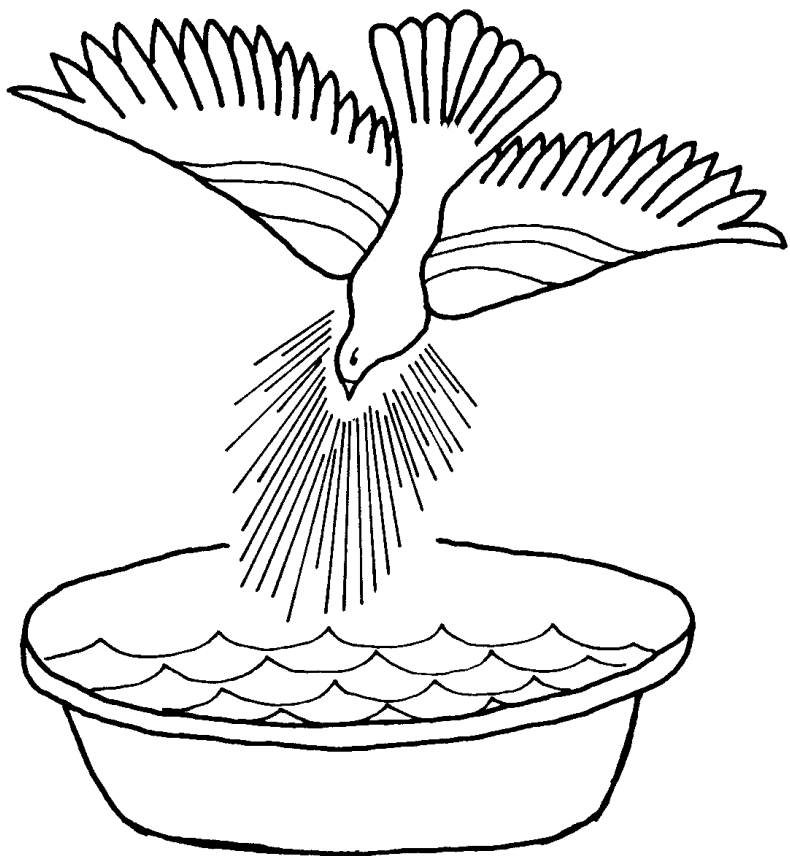
What is a great sacrifice you have made for a greater goal?

Observing Scripture

Questions

1. Why did Jesus choose to endure the pain of his friend's death? Did he have a choice?
2. Has Jesus ever left you to die before raising you up?

Reconvene with the group for Compline



Guide to Fruitful Discussion

1. Listen to and consider each contribution
2. Allow others to speak
3. Disagree without confrontation
4. Focus on the topic
5. Keep personal stories within the group (confidentiality)

THE GOAL IS NOT CONSENSUS



Thanks for help building this booklet to
Journey leaders and participants of previous years.

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