

LIGUORI CHRISTIAN INITIATION PROGRAM

# Journey of Faith



**FOR CHILDREN**

**ENLIGHTENMENT AND MYSTAGOGY LEADER GUIDE**



***Journey of Faith for Children, Enlightenment and Mystagogy Leader Guide (827198)***

*Imprimi Potest:* Stephen T. Rehrauer, CSsR, Provincial, Denver Province, the Redemptorists

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# Enlightenment and Mystagogy: A Review

## The Period of Purification and Enlightenment

Since the earliest centuries, the Church has set aside the season of Lent as a particular time for repentance, conversion, and preparation for the sacraments. The RCIA process and the celebration of baptism is centered on the Easter Vigil, with the rites of election and calling, scrutinies, and the entire catechumenate scheduled in relation to that feast (RCIA 17, 20–26; CCC 1168; CIC 856).

Because repentance and conversion require personal and internal preparation, the *Journey of Faith for Children, Enlightenment* lessons focus on guided, prayerful reflection. The lessons will assist the children in their internal preparation for the sacraments by guiding them through reflections on their actions and the effects of those actions, and will encourage the children to live out their faith in hands-on ways.

“[Enlightenment] is a period of more intense spiritual preparation, consisting more in interior reflection than in catechetical instruction, and is intended to purify the minds and hearts of the elect as they search their own consciences and do penance” (RCIA 139).

While the elect do not fully possess the graces and gifts of discipleship during the period of purification and enlightenment, they should begin to feel ownership of their Christian faith. Baptized candidates, as members of the Christian Church, should begin to identify themselves as Catholic and express their faith in keeping with sacred tradition.

The sessions and events during the enlightenment period should allow participants to experience Lent along with members of the parish community, who are also undergoing spiritual renewal and preparing to celebrate the paschal mystery more deeply (RCIA 138). At the Easter Vigil, the faithful will renew their baptismal vows as the participants profess their faith in Christ and the Catholic Church. This unity and integration will grow throughout the period of mystagogy, which usually corresponds to the Easter season.

## Rites and Sacraments During the Period of Enlightenment

The enlightenment and purification period begins with the rite of election. Please refer to the *Catechumenate Leader Guide* and other *Journey of Faith for Children* materials for details.

### The Scrutinies

Rather than examination, interrogation, or harsh judgment, “the scrutinies...are rites for self-searching and repentance,” designed “to inspire in the elect a desire for purification and redemption” (RCIA 141, 143). The prayers and intercessions encourage the elect to strive for the narrow gate (Matthew 7:13–14, Luke 13:24–28). Through the exorcisms, they “are freed from the effects of sin and from the influence of the devil” (RCIA 144). Having previously been instructed in the nature of sin and expressed their desire and commitment to receive the sacraments of initiation, participants are strengthened and sent forth to make their discipleship a reality.

The questions, activities, and other material in these guides help to prepare each child for this stage in their faith journey. The bishop or priest will “question the candidates individually” in the formula for the profession of faith at the Easter Vigil (RCIA 224–25). Should a participant express doubts or concerns about their conversion, meet with him or her privately to determine what additional support can be provided.

### The Presentations

The *Presentation of the Creed* should be celebrated during the week following the first scrutiny and, whenever possible, within a Mass so that the faith community may be present (RCIA 157, Canon 837). It prepares the elect to memorize the Creed, for the *Recitation of the Creed* (see Preparation Rites), and to profess their faith on the day of their baptism (RCIA 148).

During the *Presentation of the Creed*:

- The prescribed readings, which replace the regular weekday readings, are proclaimed during the Liturgy of the Word (RCIA 158).
- After the homily, the priest calls the elect forward to receive the words and mysteries of the Creed. The Nicene or Apostles’ Creed may be used, depending on the parish’s tradition (RCIA 160).
- The priest begins to recite the Creed, and the assembly joins in.
- The priest prays over the elect and dismisses them prior to the Liturgy of the Eucharist. If they are to stay, he reminds them that they cannot participate fully but that they remain “as a sign of our hope that all God’s children will eat and drink with the Lord...” (RCIA 163).

The *Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer* should be celebrated during the week following the third scrutiny or in the preparation rites. It prepares the elect to make the prayer their own as they join the congregation in praying it prior to their first Eucharist (RCIA 149).

During the *Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer*:

- The prescribed readings, which replace the regular weekday readings, are proclaimed during the Liturgy of the Word (RCIA 179).
- Just prior to the Gospel reading, the deacon or assisting minister calls the elect forward. Matthew’s Gospel account of the Lord’s Prayer is proclaimed.
- After the homily, the priest prays over the elect: “Deepen the faith and understanding of these elect, chosen for baptism. Give them new birth...so that they may be numbered among your adopted children” (RCIA 182).
- The priest dismisses the elect prior to the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

## Preparation Rites on Holy Saturday

The number and arrangement of these rites will depend on the needs of your elect, timing and ability, and other factors (RCIA 185–86). The Church offers the following model for your benefit (RCIA 187–92):

1. Begin with an appropriate gathering song.
2. The celebrant greets everyone with a suitable formula or words.
3. Scripture readings are chosen from the rites and proclaimed, with psalms or hymns in between if needed.
4. The celebrant gives a brief homily or explanation of the texts.
5. The various rites are celebrated. These may include the *Presentation of the Lord's Prayer*, the *Recitation of the Creed*, the *Ephphetha Rite*, and/or the rite of *Choosing a Baptismal Name*.
6. The celebrant concludes with the prayer of blessing and dismissal.

## The Easter Vigil

The feast of Easter, in particular the Easter Vigil liturgy, is the highlight of the Church year. Given its prominence and his prerogative to initiate (baptize) those fourteen years old or older, the bishop is the preferred celebrant (RCIA 207, Canon 863). "Adult candidates, including children of catechetical age, are to receive baptism, confirmation, and eucharist in a single eucharistic celebration" (*National Statutes for the Catechumenate* 14). This trifecta of sacraments is a distinct feature of the RCIA process and reflects the unified nature of Christian initiation (Canon 842).

If a mixed group of the elect and baptized candidates are to celebrate the sacraments together, "the condition and status of those already baptized should be carefully respected and distinguished" (*National Statutes* 26, 33–34). Whenever this is the case, your RCIA process should reflect the difference between these two groups from the beginning. Continuing it through the Easter Vigil should not be hard. The bishop or priest may already have solutions.

The Vigil Mass and sacraments of initiation are discussed in the *Journey of Faith, Inquiry Leader Guide*, lesson C1: *The RCIA Process and Rites*, and lesson E7: *The Meaning of Holy Week*. You may also refer to RCIA 206–43 and *Lectionary* no. 41.

Additional steps and points are detailed here:

- The celebration of baptism begins with a presentation of the elect with their godparents, and a litany of the saints.
- The celebrant blesses and prays over the baptismal waters.
- The elect renounce sin and make a profession of faith. "Adults are not saved unless they come forward of their own accord and with the will to accept God's gift through their own belief. The faith of those to be baptized is not simply the faith of the Church, but the personal faith of each one of them..." (RCIA 211).
- The elect are baptized, preferably by immersion (*National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, 17). Whether baptism is by full or partial immersion or simply by pouring, it should "take on its full importance as the sign of that mystical sharing in Christ's death and resurrection through which those who believe in his name die to sin and rise to eternal life .... [T]his washing is not a mere purification rite but the sacrament of being joined to Christ" (RCIA 213).
- The newly baptized are anointed with oil and clothed in a white garment. Godparents are presented with a candle lit from the Easter candle.
- The celebrant invites the newly baptized to receive confirmation. Afterward, the assembled faithful renew their baptismal promises. If the combined rite is used, the renewal will come first, followed by confirmation.
- Now previously baptized candidates come forward and profess their faith. The sacrament of confirmation is conferred with the laying on of hands and anointing with chrism.
- As the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins, neophytes should take part in the procession of the gifts to the altar (RCIA 241). The entire RCIA group and its supporters—neophytes, leaders, catechists, sponsors, godparents, and family members—should receive the Eucharist under both forms (RCIA 243, 594).

## E2: Living Lent

**Catechism:** 571–605, 1434–39

### Objectives

- List the major themes of Lent (repentance, sacrifice, growth, and overcoming temptation).
- Begin to practice fasting, prayer, and almsgiving in an age-appropriate way and with understanding of their significance to the Lenten season.
- Begin to list some of the major symbols of Lent, including ashes, the color purple, palm leaves, and the crucifix.

### Leader Meditation

*Matthew 4:1–11*

Recall times when you have felt you were in a desert—times that were difficult and seemingly lifeless. Why are these the times we are most tempted to turn away from Christ and look for comfort elsewhere? In what places or in what things have you been tempted to find comfort? What brought you back to Christ?

### Leader Preparation

- Read the lesson, this lesson plan, the Scripture passage, and the *Catechism* sections.
- Show participants any physical symbols of Lent (ashes, palm leaves, images of the stations of the cross, and so on) and a liturgical calendar.
- Bring sticky notes or index cards, one for each child.
- Be familiar with the following vocabulary terms: fasting, almsgiving, ashes, purple, rose, Palm Sunday. The definitions are in this guide's glossary.

### Welcome

Greet the children as they arrive. Check for supplies and immediate needs. Solicit questions or comments about the previous session and/or share new information and findings. Begin promptly.

### Opening Scripture

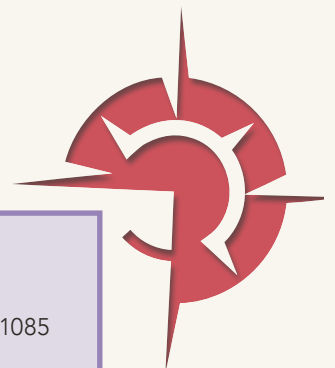
*Matthew 4:1–11*

Light the candle and read aloud. Ask the children what they think it means to have a “desert experience” without actually being in a desert.

*It could mean feeling very alone or isolated, like Jesus was all alone in the desert. It could mean not having access to things you need, both physical things like food or shelter or spiritual things like God's presence during your prayers. A desert experience could also be positive, like spending time alone with God or choosing to give up physical things (like a special food treat or screen time) to have more time for spiritual things like going to Mass or reading a book about the life of a saint.*

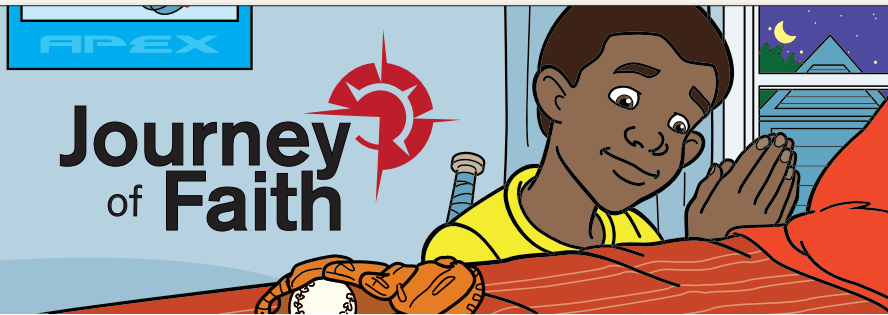
The event of the Cross and Resurrection abides and draws everything toward life.

CCC 1085



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Journey of Faith for Children, Enlightenment and Mystagogy Leader Guide



# Journey of Faith

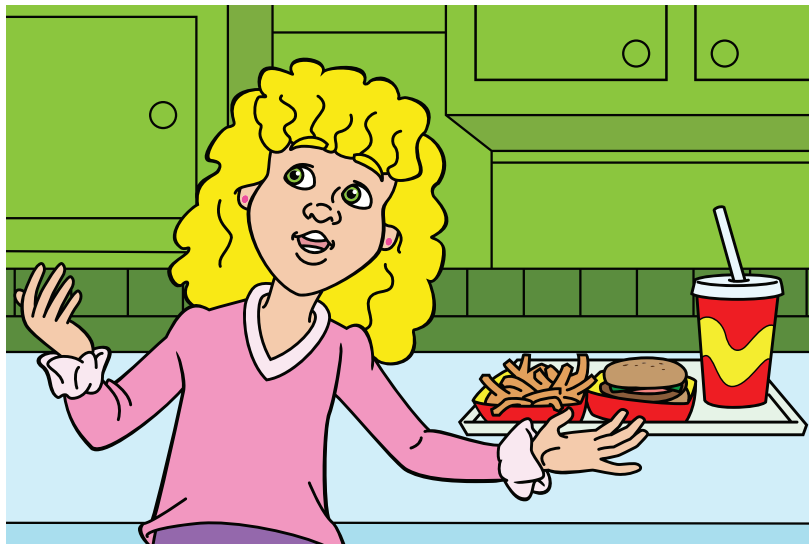
ENLIGHTENMENT E2

## Living Lent

"Oh, no!" Tanya gasped. "I forgot it's a Friday during Lent and I got a hamburger for lunch. What should I do?" she asked Tomás.

"Um," Tomás thought. "Mrs. Evans said Lent is about giving things up and doing good deeds to be more like Jesus. Maybe you could give the hamburger to someone who can eat meat today and doesn't have lunch yet?"

"Good idea!" Tanya said with a smile.



CHILDREN

CCC 571-605, 1434-99



## We Journey With Jesus

As you discuss the events of Lent, ask the children what they remember about Lent from the lesson on the Church year. If you have a liturgical calendar in your room, show the children what days each of these events falls on. Encourage the children to add special Church holy days into their planners (if they have one from school) or onto their family calendar. If you have a class calendar, highlight the holy days there, too.

## Jesus in the Wilderness

Depending on the average age of the children in your class, you may want to read these Bible accounts directly from Scripture (Luke 3:21–22, 4:1–15). If you'd prefer a more active variation on this lesson, you can split students up into small groups and ask them to prepare a skit. Depending on how many children are in your class, you can ask them to prepare one skit, different variations on the story (like a Bible-times version and a modern variation), or assign different parts of the story.

If you read the Bible account as a group, you can encourage the children to interact by asking them to repeat Jesus' words in response to Satan's temptations. These words are quoted from Scripture in the lesson handout adaptation of the Bible account, so you can ask the children to highlight or underline Jesus' responses in their own text.

Give the children time to answer the first reflection questions about temptation on their own. Instead of having volunteers share their response, lead a miniprayer of reflection after the children have had time to write something down. You can pray simply, "Jesus, thank you for helping us avoid temptation," or, "Jesus, I'm sorry for the times I give in to temptation." Or choose a prayer on your own.

### We Journey With Jesus

During Lent, the Church follows the path of Jesus. We think about his death on the cross. We remember his suffering and death. We reflect on his death as a great act of love and forgiveness. Our Lenten journey ends with a celebration of Jesus' glorious resurrection on Easter.

This Lent, you will become closer than ever to Jesus. On this special Easter Vigil, you will respond to God's love with your own special "yes."

### Jesus in the Wilderness

**LUKE 3:21-22; 4:1-15**

When Jesus was beginning his ministry, he went to John the Baptist and was baptized in the Jordan River. A voice from heaven said, "You are my beloved Son" (3:22). When the people heard, some of them wondered if Jesus was the Savior. After his baptism, Jesus went into the wilderness to prepare. Instead of eating, he prayed, and the devil tempted him, saying, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread" (4:3). Although Jesus was hungry, he wasn't fooled. He answered, "One does not live by bread alone" (4:4, see also Deuteronomy 8:2–4).



The devil then took him up a mountain, where he could look down on kingdoms of the world. The devil said, "All this will be yours, if you worship me" (4:7). Jesus replied, "Worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve" (4:8). Finally the devil placed Jesus on top of the Temple and said, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for...[God] will command his angels...to guard you" (4:9–10). But Jesus said, "[The Bible] also says, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test'" (4:12).

Then the devil left, and angels came to care for Jesus. When he left the wilderness, he was strong and ready to do God's will.



**When have you been tempted to do something bad?**

**How did you say "no" to temptation and "yes" to doing good?**

### Four Ways to Resist Temptation

#### READ GOD'S WORD

When Jesus was tempted, he quoted God's word. The Bible offers many passages that help us do good and know what God's will is, including rules, comfort, and strength to resist temptation. During Lent, spend some extra time reading the Bible.



**What kind of help do you need from the Bible?**

Remind the children that Lent is a time of forgiveness, and those children who are able to go to reconciliation will have that opportunity to tell Jesus they're sorry and receive forgiveness in a special way. Children who cannot yet receive reconciliation can still pray to Jesus on their own.

Next, ask the children to complete the second reflection question with a partner or in a small group. Ask each pair or group to share one way they can say "no" to temptation and "yes" to living like Jesus.

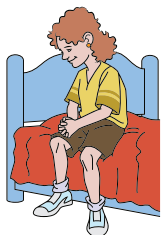
### Read God's Word

As a group, answer the reflection question. If the children need help, ask them to think about what the Bible teaches us (God's laws and how to live like Jesus) and how those things can help us say "no" to the devil.

*We can be reminded what God's rules for us are and why God wants us to follow his rules. We can see what life looks like when we live like Jesus and why it's important to treat ourselves and others the way Jesus taught us. We can see how Jesus and his followers said "no" to the devil, and we can use them as inspiration to say "no" on our own.*

**PRAY**

Jesus often prayed alone. He knew his strength came from heaven. Prayer is a great source of strength for us, too. This Lent, remember to pray every day.

**ALMSGIVING**

**Almsgiving** means giving money or things like food and clothing to the poor. Lent is a good time to help the needy in your area. By donating your time, money, or things to others, you are caring for your neighbor like Jesus asks.



*How do you like to pray?*

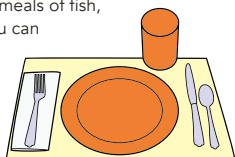
*What do you want to pray for this Lent?*



*What can you give to others this Lent?*

**FAST**

Jesus fasted in the wilderness as a way to grow closer to God. **Fasting** means to eat smaller meals or only one meal during the day as a way of growing closer to God. Adults fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday during Lent. We also abstain from meat during Fridays in Lent and eat simpler meals of fish, pasta, or veggies. You can fast during Lent by giving up a special treat or dessert, or passing up second helpings.



*What could you give up this Lent to grow closer to God?*

**Lenten Symbols****ASHES**

On Ash Wednesday, we go to a special Mass where the priest blesses **ashes** and then makes the Sign of the Cross on our foreheads with them. The ashes are made from blessed burned palms from last year's Palm Sunday. They remind us to turn away from sin and that without God, we are like dust or ashes—lifeless.

**COLORS**

For most of Lent, the priest wears purple when he is saying Mass.

**Purple** is the color of repentance, being sorry. On the fourth Sunday of Lent, the priest wears rose, which signals to us that the joy of Easter is almost here.

**PALMS**

On **Palm Sunday**, a week before Easter, the Church begins Holy Week. We wave palm branches in remembrance of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-19). The palms remind us to honor Jesus as our king.



ENLIGHTENMENT

JOURNEY OF FAITH

**Pray**

Give the children time to respond to the first reflection question on their own. If they aren't sure how to respond, encourage them to think of all the ways you've prayed as a group during these sessions.

Then ask the children to respond to the second reflection question by writing one special intention on a sticky note or index card. Tell them not to write their name on it and then collect the children's intentions. Use this for your closing prayer today.

**Fast**

Clarify that fasting means making healthy food choices and giving up extra portions or special treats. Emphasize that the children should always let their parents know if they want to fast, or better yet, fast as a family. If for some reason the children can't fast (such as a medical condition), it's OK to not fast. Jesus doesn't want us to hurt our bodies, and there are other things we can fast from besides food (like screen time and gossip).

Answer the reflection question as a group by listing all the things the children can fast from this Lent. Include food, but don't limit your discussion to food.

**Almsgiving**

Answer the reflection question as a group by listing all the things (including but not limited to money) the children can give to others this Lent.

**Lenten Symbols**

If you were able to bring in some common symbols of Lent, pass those around now or ask the children to walk up to a common area (like a desk or table in the front of the room) to look at them up close. You can also take a short trip into your parish church if it's empty at this time and there are symbols of Lent to observe.

## Final Activity

As you wrap up your lesson, save time for the children to complete the final activity or encourage them to complete the activity at home. Walk around as the children work, encouraging correct answers and clarifying any confusion.

The correct answers appear below.



### WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Draw a line to connect each word on the left with its meaning on the right.

Palms	Desire or attraction to sin
Almsgiving	Going without food
Ashes	Speaking and listening to God
Fasting	The written word of God and stories of God's people
Prayer	What the crowd waved at Jesus
The Bible	Giving money or food to the poor
Temptation	Burned palms

### In Short



- The major themes of Lent include: repentance, sacrifice, growth, and overcoming temptation.
- The practices of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving are central to Lent.
- Many symbols are associated with Lent.

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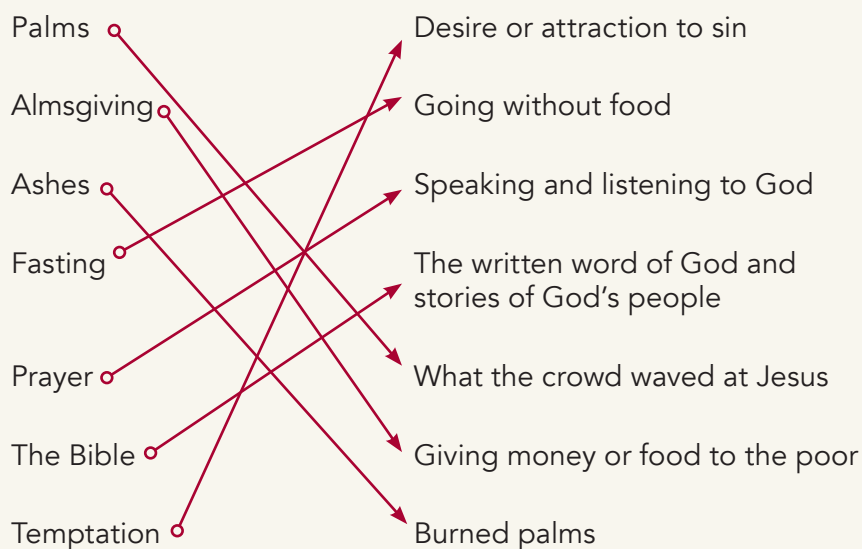
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## **Closing Prayer**

Ask the children to fold their hands and bow their heads. Then read each of the petitions you collected earlier in this session. Pray one decade of the Sorrowful Mysteries for these intentions.

## **Take-Home**

Ask the children to go home and create a "Lent action plan" with their families. Their action plan should include at least one thing they can pray for as a family, one thing they can fast from as a family, and one thing they can sacrifice for others as a family, such as a physical thing or time spent doing service work.