

Introduction

The period of Purification and Enlightenment is a time for reflection and prayer and a time to develop a deeper relationship with Jesus. RCIA 126 states that this is a period of more intense spiritual preparation, consisting more in interior reflection than catechetical instruction, and is intended to purify the minds and hearts of the Elect as they search their own consciences and do penance. The word intense comes from Latin and means to “stretch out for”. This period asks the Elect to stretch out for a new understanding, a new vision and to break open the tomb of self-centeredness which is the final obstacle blocking free passage of divine life. (*Brenda Hixon RCIA Spirituality 1997*)

The Purification and Enlightenment sessions in this resource focus on a deep discernment of self, an examination of conscience, the presentation of the Creed and the Our Father, and, if held during Lent, the Lenten liturgies. It is a time to listen to the voice that says “Follow me”, all the while being supported by the community.

The rite calls for at least one Penitential Rite (Scrutiny) to be celebrated during this period. The guidelines of the adult scrutinies (*RCIA 128-133*) may be followed and adapted to the needs of the young person. The Penitential Rite (Scrutiny) helps the young person to examine their lives and see where they need to make changes. The prayers for the Elect bring strength to live as followers of Jesus and prepare the young person for the Sacraments of Initiation.

The Rite of the Sacrament of Penance can be offered during this time for those who have already been baptised. This should be arranged in discussion with the parish priest or in contact with Evangelisation Brisbane. *Our Family Prays* published by Liturgy Brisbane has a simple liturgy for celebrating the Sacrament of Penance on page 106.

The Dismissal

The sessions presented in this resource reflect the presumption that the Elect are dismissed from Mass after the homily. The dismissal is a time for reflection, prayer, and faith-sharing. The young person is encouraged to share what they see, hear and feel from the scripture reading of the day.

RCIA 75 provides that the catechumens, when present in the assembly of the faithful, “... should be kindly dismissed before the liturgy of the Eucharist begins (unless their dismissal would present practical or pastoral problems) for they must await their baptism, which will join them to God’s priestly people and empower them to participate in Christ’s new worship”.

RCIA 142 provides the formula for the dismissal of the Elect.

It is recommended that catechists meet the young person at Sunday Mass and stay with them for a period of reflection on the readings when they are dismissed after the homily. If there are also baptised candidates journeying to full initiation, it may be helpful to have them dismissed as well to participate in the session with the Catechumens.

The Sessions

- Start with prayer
- Ask a question that will tune the young person into the reading they are about to hear. E.g. How does Jesus treat Zacchaeus?
- Read the gospel.
- Provide a short period of silence and then dialogue around the initial question.
- Ask a deeper question – what does the interaction reveal?
- Ask the young person to put themselves in the story and identify what Jesus is saying to them.