



**RCIA**  

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**PURIFICATION  
AND  
ENLIGHTENMENT**

**9-12**  
YEARS

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## 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 child. The Penitential Rite (Scrutiny) helps the child to examine their life and see where they need to make changes. The prayers for the Elect bring strength to live as followers of Jesus and prepare the child 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 child 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 child 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 some 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 child 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 child to put themselves in the story and identify what Jesus is saying to them.

# Information on **THE RITE OF ELECTION**

**Catechumens are encouraged to attend the Rite of Election at the Cathedral or within the parish.** RCIA 105–115

The Rite of Election is where the Church makes its ‘election’, formally acknowledging the Catechumens’ readiness for receiving the Sacraments of Initiation, and the Catechumens (now the Elect) express their desire to receive the Sacraments. This ritual is designed for those adults and children over the age of reason who are not yet baptised, although there may be a blessing of baptised candidates preparing for full initiation during the Rite of Election.

“ RCIA 106

This step is called election because the acceptance made by the Church is founded on the election by God, in whose name the Church acts. The step is also called the enrolment of names because as a pledge of fidelity the catechumens inscribe their names in the book that lists those who have been chosen for initiation.

This Rite is usually held on the first Sunday of Lent in the Cathedral. If it is not possible for the child to attend the Cathedral, or if the Rite is being celebrated outside of Lent, a Rite of Election can be held at the local parish.

# INFORMATION ON THE RITE OF ELECTION

“ RCIA 107

With deliberate will and an enlightened faith they [the Catechumens] must have the intention to receive the Sacraments of the Church, a resolve they will express publicly in the actual celebration of the rite.

During the Rite of Election, the godparents and catechists give witness to the Catechumen's intention to be a follower of Christ and their readiness to receive the Sacraments of Initiation.

# Session 1: PREPARING FOR THE PENITENTIAL RITE (SCRUTINY)

The Elect attend Sunday Mass and are dismissed for the following Purification and Enlightenment session.

## Dismissal

After the Elect are dismissed from Mass, they move with the catechist to another area which has a sacred space arranged and comfortable seating for those gathered.

Today at Mass we heard readings from ... (name the readings e.g. Isaiah or Matthew).

1. Tell me something that you heard from the Mass or the readings at Mass.
2. Let's go back and look at the gospel again. Read from the Bible and as you read this, focus on what you might have seen if you had been there. Share your thoughts if you would like to.
3. Read the passage again and pay attention to what might have been heard such as background sounds, people talking. Pay attention to the questions that Jesus or the disciples ask.
4. After hearing this gospel, what will it mean for you this week? What is Jesus saying to you? Make a commitment about what you will do differently now.

## Activity Book - Gospel Space

In your Activity Book (page 29), after listening to and discussing the gospel, write down what you think Jesus is asking you to do this week.

Share a sentence, or one or two words, that summed up how you felt when you had your name written in the book of the Elect.

# SESSION 1: PREPARING FOR THE PENITENTIAL RITE (SCRUTINY)

## Looking forward to next week...

### What is the Penitential Rite (Scrutiny)?

The Penitential Rite (Scrutiny) helps the child to examine their life and see where they need to make changes. The prayers of healing for the Elect bring strength to live as followers of Jesus and prepare the child for the Sacraments of Initiation.

Scrutiny means “the thorough examination of something”.

“ RCIA 128

The scrutinies are meant to uncover, heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the Elect; to bring out, strengthen all that is upright, strong and good ... These rites should complete the conversion of the Elect and deepen their resolve to hold fast to Christ and to carry out their decision to love God above all.



Enlightenment happens when we look to the Lord and not at ourselves. The scrutinies help us to see the situation we are in, choose to change and then follow the Lord.


## Activity Book

We are encouraged during this time to reflect within. The scrutinies are an opportunity to look to Jesus who sees who we are and who we can be – he is our hope.

In the Activity Book (page 30) write or draw a prayer to Jesus inviting Jesus into your life. Share with Jesus any situation you may like to change.

## Prayer

Before we leave today, let us ask for God’s blessing upon our week with a modified prayer from Numbers 6:24-26

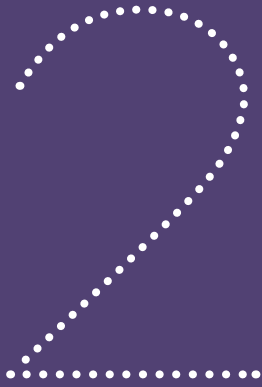
 ***In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.***

***May the LORD bless us and keep us;***

***May the LORD make his face to shine upon us, and be gracious to us;***

***May the LORD lift up his countenance upon us, and give us peace.***





## Session 2:

# THE PENITENTIAL RITE (SCRUTINY)

The Penitential Rite (Scrutiny) can be held during Mass on the third week of Lent, if the child is preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation at Easter. It is also recommended to use the readings from year A.

The Rite of the Sacrament of Penance can be offered during this time for those who have already been baptised. If the Penitential Rite (Scrutiny) is held during the Sunday Mass, we recommend that a separate Liturgy of Penance be held at another time.

The Elect attend Sunday Mass and are dismissed for the following Purification and Enlightenment session.

The rite provides the words of dismissal or, if the Elect are to remain, appropriate words of instruction can be given.

## Dismissal

After the Elect are dismissed from Mass, they move with the catechist to another area which has a sacred space arranged and comfortable seating for those gathered.  
Today at Mass we heard readings from ... (name the readings e.g. Isaiah or Matthew).

1. Tell me something that you heard from the Mass or the readings at Mass.
2. Let's go back and look at the gospel again. Read from the Bible and as you read this, focus on what you might have seen if you had been there. Share your thoughts if you would like to.
3. Read the passage again and pay attention to what might have been heard such as background sounds, people talking. Pay attention to the questions that Jesus or the disciples ask.
4. Now that you have heard this gospel, what will it mean for you this week? Has this created a new impression for you about God or the Church? What is Jesus saying to you? Make a commitment about what you will do differently from now on.

## 2 SESSION 2: THE PENITENTIAL RITE (SCRUTINY)

### Activity Book - Gospel Space

- In your Activity Book (page 31), after listening to and discussing the gospel, write down what you think Jesus is asking you to do this week.

### Activity Book

#### Sharing after the Penitential Rite (Scrutiny)

In the Activity Book (page 32), answer the following questions:

How did you feel after the Penitential Rite (Scrutiny)?

What stood out for you at the Penitential Rite (Scrutiny)?

What was God saying to you during the Penitential Rite (Scrutiny)?

## Looking forward to next week...

Next Sunday the child will be presented with a treasure of the Church, the Creed. The following week they will be presented with the Lord's Prayer.

The Presentation of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer are the handing over of our ancient treasure to the newest treasure of the Church, the Elect.

*(Barbara Hixon, RCIA Spirituality p 119)*

The Creed is the summary of our faith and is professed by Catholics around the world. It comes from the Latin word *credo* which, when literally translated, means "I believe".

## Prayer

Before we leave today, let us ask for God's blessing upon our week with a modified prayer from Numbers 6:24-26.



***In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.***

***May the LORD bless us and keep us;***

***May the LORD make his face to shine upon us, and be gracious to us;***

***May the LORD lift up his countenance upon us, and give us peace.***



# Session 3: THE PRESENTATION OF THE CREED

With the catechumenal formation of the Elect completed, the Church lovingly entrusts to them the Creed. The Creed is presented during the Sunday Mass; the Elect listen to the Creed and are then dismissed.

## Dismissal

After the Elect are dismissed from Mass, they move with the catechist to another area which has a sacred space arranged and comfortable seating for those gathered. Today at Mass we heard readings from ... (name the readings e.g. Isaiah or Matthew).

1. Tell me something that you heard from the Mass or the readings at Mass.
2. Let's go back and look at the gospel again. Read from the Bible and as you read this, focus on what you might have seen if you had been there. Share your thoughts if you would like to.
3. Read the passage again and pay attention to what might have been heard such as background sounds, people talking. Pay attention to the questions that Jesus or the disciples ask.
4. Now that you have heard this gospel, what will it mean for you this week? Has this created a new impression for you about God or the Church? What is Jesus saying to you? Make a commitment about what you will do differently from now on.

## Activity Book - Gospel Space

In your Activity Book (page 33), after listening to and discussing the gospel, write down what you think Jesus is asking you to do this week.

## Exploring

### What we have received today - The Creed

“ YOUCAT 27

The Creed goes back to the time of Jesus, who commanded his disciples to baptise. They required people seeking Baptism to make a profession of a definitive faith, namely faith in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that is the Trinity.

In it are all the treasures of what we believe.

The first believers said the Creed with tears in their eyes as they went down into the baptismal waters. It was personal, heartfelt, and precious. It was said at the moment they threw their hat in with the Christian community—at the moment they were saying “Yes” to the maker of heaven and earth and “No” to all the other powers that tried to lay claim on their lives.

“ YOUCAT 27

The Creed gives us a set of beliefs that build the foundation of the faith Christ passed on to the apostles. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, leaving the apostles to continue His mission on earth through the Church, He gave the apostles a mission.



Matthew 28:19- 21

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

## Activity Book

In your Activity Book (page 34), answer the following questions:

What stands out for you when you hear the Creed?

What is God inviting you to do?



## Prayer

Before we leave today, let us ask for God's blessing upon our week with a modified prayer from Numbers 6:24-26.



***In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.***

***May the LORD bless us and keep us;***

***May the LORD make his face to shine upon us, and be gracious to us;***

***May the LORD lift up his countenance upon us, and give us peace.***



## Session 4:

# THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Presentation of the Lord's Prayer is to be held during the Sunday Mass in the presence of a community of the faithful.

## Dismissal

After the Elect are dismissed from Mass, they move with the catechist to another area which has a sacred space arranged and comfortable seating for those gathered. In your sacred space, have a purple cloth, a candle, Bible and the cross.

Today at Mass we heard readings from ... (name the readings e.g. Isaiah or Matthew).

1. Tell me something that you heard from the Mass or the readings at Mass.
2. Let's go back and look at the gospel again. Read from the Bible and as you read this, focus on what you might have seen if you had been there. Share your thoughts if you would like to.
3. Read the passage again and pay attention to what might have been heard such as background sounds, people talking. Pay attention to the questions that Jesus or the disciples ask.
4. Now that you have heard this gospel, what will it mean for you this week? Has this created a new impression for you about God or the Church? What is Jesus saying to you? Make a commitment about what you will do differently from now on.

## Activity Book - Gospel Space

In your Activity Book (page 35), after listening to and discussing the gospel, write down what you think Jesus is asking you to do this week.

## Exploring

### What we have received today - The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer comes from the lips of Jesus, from the Sermon on the Mount in the gospel of Matthew where Jesus teaches the disciples to pray, "Our Father..." (Matthew 6:9-43). In Luke's gospel we also hear Jesus teaching the disciples to pray.

This prayer is Jesus revealing his heart to the disciples. When we learn to pray like Jesus, we become like Jesus.

“ Pope John XXIII

To know how to say the Our Father and to know how to put it into practice; this is the perfection of Christian life.

This prayer is prayed by all Christians – stop and think that this prayer is prayed by millions of people across the world.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
Amen.**

## Activity Book

This prayer is Jesus revealing his heart to the disciples. In the space provided in your Activity Book (page 36), write down how we can become more like Jesus.

**For example:**

- When we hear the words, '*give us this day our daily bread*': we can talk to God about things that worry us. When we hear the words, '*And forgive us our trespasses*', we can say we are sorry when we do something wrong and we can forgive others who upset us.
- The '*Our Father*' begins with praise and worship and it nourishes us, asks God to be with us, allows us to petition God for our needs and helps us to know that God is with us.

## Prayer

Before we leave today, let us ask for God's blessing upon our week with a modified prayer from [Numbers 6:24-26](#).



*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

*May the LORD bless us and keep us;*

*May the LORD make his face to shine upon us, and be gracious to us;*

*May the LORD lift up his countenance upon us, and give us peace.*





## Session 5: **PREPARATION FOR INITIATION**

If the Purification and Enlightenment period is taking place during Lent, this Sunday will be Palm Sunday.

If this is Palm Sunday, explain the reasons for the palms. At the beginning of the Sunday Mass we all receive palms in memory of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The reason we call this 'Palm Sunday' is because of the palm branches that people waved joyfully in the air and laid down on the ground in front of Jesus.

### Dismissal

After the Elect are dismissed from Mass, they move with the catechist to another area which has a sacred space arranged and comfortable seating for those gathered.

Today at Mass we heard readings from ... (name the readings e.g. Isaiah or Matthew).

1. Tell me something that you heard from the Mass or the readings at Mass.
2. Let's go back and look at the gospel again. Read from the Bible and as you read this, focus on what you might have seen if you had been there. Share your thoughts if you would like to.
3. Read the passage again and pay attention to what might have been heard such as background sounds, people talking. Pay attention to the questions that Jesus or the disciples ask.
4. Now that you have heard this gospel, what will it mean for you this week? Has this created a new impression for you about God or the Church? What is Jesus saying to you? Make a commitment to what you will do differently from now on.

# 5 SESSION 5: PREPARATION FOR INITIATION

## Activity Book - Gospel Space

In your Activity Book (page 37), after listening to and discussing the gospel, write down what you think Jesus is asking you to do this week.

## Exploring

These readings on Passion Sunday give us an account of how people approached Jesus then, and how we approach him now.

How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus entered the city?

They were overwhelmed with joy and excitement.

What did the Pharisees think of Jesus?

They seemed jealous, concerned, and a little indignant.

It was a scene of great celebration. Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead and the crowds gathered for the Passover feast. Jesus was celebrated and popular. The crowds were hysterical and there was shouting, singing, and anticipation. No one, except Jesus, knew what was going to happen next.

If a similar scene were to take place today, how do you think the crowd would react?



## Activity Book

In your Activity Book (page 38), is the following prayer that you can pray each day as you prepare for your Baptism, Confirmation and first Communion:



***Loving God,  
as I continue on my journey of faith,  
help my ears to be open to your word and let my lips share your word with those I meet.  
I ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.***

## Prayer

Before we leave today, let us ask for God's blessing upon our week with a modified prayer from Numbers 6:24-26.



***In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
May the LORD bless us and keep us;  
May the LORD make his face to shine upon us, and be gracious to us;  
May the LORD lift up his countenance upon us, and give us peace.***

# Further Information on **PREPARATION FOR INITIATION**

## Background Information

The Elect are to be advised that on the day of the Sacraments of Initiation, especially if it is Holy Saturday, they should refrain from their usual activities, spend their time in prayer and reflection and, as much as they can, observe a fast.

Refer to RCIA 285 for the structure of the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation for children who have reached catechetical age. The structure of the Easter Vigil is below:

- The Mass begins in total darkness with the parish community assembling outside for the blessing of the fire. Each member of the assembly holds an unlit candle, except for the Elect who will be given their candle during the Liturgy of Baptism.
- As the celebrant processes inside proclaiming the Light of Christ, a member of the community lights a taper from the Easter candle and gradually the candles of each member of the assembly are lit.
- The Liturgy of the Word, including the homily, takes place.
- The Liturgy of Baptism begins with calling forth those to be baptised.
- The whole assembly renews their baptismal promises and the celebrant sprinkles all with newly blessed baptismal water.
- Candidates are called to profess their belief in the Creed.
- The Rite of Confirmation is celebrated with the laying on of hands and anointing with Chrism.
- The Eucharist is celebrated and the newly baptised, along with the candidates, share at the table for the first time.

## Rituals

The Ephphetha Rite and the Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens can be celebrated on the Easter Saturday in preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation or on a retreat day before the Sacraments of Initiation.

## Ephphetha Rite

Ephphetha means “to be opened”.

The Ephphetha Rite can be found at RCIA 184.

### “ RCIA 184

By the power of its symbolism the ephphetha rite, or rite of opening the ears and mouth, impresses on the Elect their need of grace in order that they may hear the word of God and profess it for their salvation.

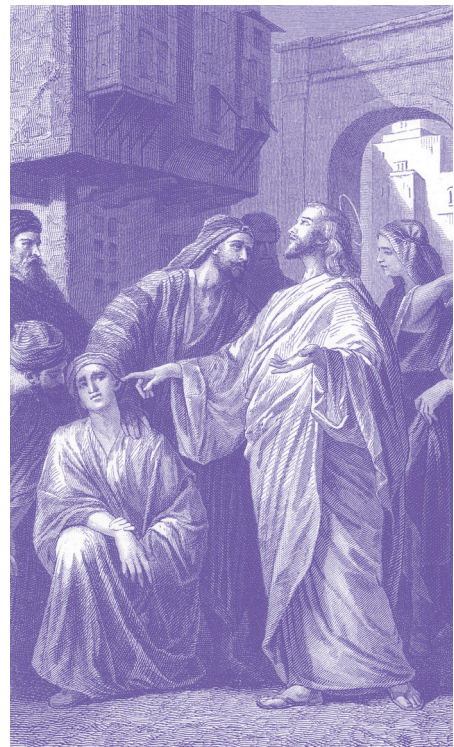
Read the story of Jesus curing the man who could not hear or speak.



### Mark 7:31-37

#### Jesus Cures a Deaf Man

Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphetha,” that is, “Be opened.” And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, “He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”



The Elect come before the celebrant. A suitable song may be sung as the celebrant touches the right and left ear and the closed lips of each of the Elect with his thumb and says the following:

### “ RCIA 186

Ephphetha: that is, be opened, that you may profess the faith you hear, to the praise and glory of God.

## Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens

The anointing with oil symbolises the need for God's help and strength so that, despite the difficulties of the past and the challenges to come in the future, the Catechumens will confidently profess their faith and hold fast to it throughout their lives.

## Preparation for the Sacraments

It is a good idea to practice some of the key parts of the liturgy for the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation.

These include:

- Profession of Faith

At your Baptism, you will be asked if you believe in statements of faith that are contained in the Creed. Listen carefully and think about the questions you will be asked.

- You will be asked if you reject Satan, all his works and his empty promises.
- You will be asked if you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
- You will be asked if you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father.
- You will be asked if you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

To each of the questions, the response is 'I do'.

## Celebration of Confirmation

During the anointing with Chrism, the godparent or sponsor places their right hand on the shoulder of the child.

The celebrant makes the sign of the cross on the child's forehead and says: N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

The response is: ***Amen.***

The celebrant adds: Peace be with you.

The response is: ***And with your spirit.***

## Receiving Communion

It is also a good idea to practice how to receive Communion – both the bread and the wine.

## Prayer

Adapted from RCIA 228



*All powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
by water and the Holy Spirit  
you will free your sons and daughters from sin  
and give us new life.*

*Send your Holy Spirit upon us  
to be our helper and guide.*

*Give us the spirit of Wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of right judgement and courage,  
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.*

*Fill us with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

*Amen.*