
GUIDELINES FOR THE
RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO



Diocese of OWENSBORO

February 2, 2020

Dear RCIA Coordinator and Team,

Greetings and the blessing of God to you!

It is my joy to commend you for your service to the Church and share this newly updated resource for the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults for our Diocese. Special thanks to the Diocese of Covington for all their work in creating a manual that we have made our own.

Your role in the life of the Church is beyond measure. As you seek to pass on the truths of the Church through the RCIA process, I encourage you to begin by leading our inquirers to personal encounter with Christ. As Pope Francis said in his address to the International Catechetical Congress on September 27, 2013, *“Even if at times it (catechetical teaching) can be difficult, if it is so much work, if it presses upon us and we do not see the results we wish, still to educate in the faith is beautiful! The faith is perhaps the most beautiful heritage that we can give because it makes you grow. To help adults to know and to love the Lord ever more is one of the most beautiful educational adventures, for it comprises the Church!”*

Thank you for the gift of your time and talent to this essential ministry of the Church. I hold each of you in prayer and ask God to continue to bless you and help you grow in your faith.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William F. Medley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Reverend William F. Medley
Bishop of Owensboro

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The Diocese of Owensboro, Kentucky is indebted to the work of the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky on their RCIA Policies and Guidelines Manual. Permission to utilize their work and adjust it for our diocese was given by Mr. Isaak Isaak, the Director of Catechesis and Faith Formation for the Diocese on May 28, 2019.

We acknowledge that the following manual was authored and edited by a team of clergy, RCIA leaders, and Diocesan officials from the Diocese of Covington and give them full credit and appreciation for their excellent work and the opportunity to tweak it for the Diocese of Owensboro.

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INTRODUCTION

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the process established by the Catholic Church by which individuals become members of the Church. The pinnacle moment of the process is the celebration of the sacraments of initiation (baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist) normally celebrated at the Easter Vigil. In the reception of these sacraments, an individual becomes a full member of the Catholic Church. However, the RCIA is a spiritual journey which begins well before the celebration of the sacraments of initiation and continues beyond the Easter Vigil and extends into the entire earthly life of every member of the Church.

“The initiation of catechumens is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful” (RCIA Introduction, no.4). It consists of four major periods punctuated by liturgical rites. In very simple form, the structure of the RCIA looks like this:

1. [Period of the Precatechumenate](#)
2. [Rite of Acceptance](#)
3. [Period of the Catechumenate](#)
4. [Rite of Election](#)
5. [Period of Purification and Enlightenment](#)
6. [Rites \(Celebration\) of the Sacraments of Initiation](#)
7. [Period of Mystagogy](#)

Implementation

In implementing the RCIA process, three equally important aspects of the process should be considered: pastoral, catechetical, and liturgical. These three aspects can be explained as follows:

- A. *Pastoral Aspect* – The pastoral aspect of the RCIA is critical to the process and to the conversion of the participants both within the RCIA process and during their entire lives as Catholic Christians. The parish community, under the direction and leadership of the pastor and RCIA Coordinator, must begin pastoring the inquirers from the first moment they express interest in the Church. Each person who comes to the RCIA process will differ in his or her lifestyle, state in life, religious background, and motivation for seeking the Church. The pastoral aspect focuses on the individual person and where conversion needs to take place in order that their hearts are open to the graces of the Sacraments. We need to know the participants in order to serve each of them as individuals. People will learn about the Church not only from our formal catechesis, but also through our welcome and witness. The parish community should love them into the Church.

Some examples of pastoral concerns that should be given attention during the RCIA process (not a complete list):

- Welcoming the participants
- Respecting where each person is in the conversion process

- Assisting them in the conversion process
- Dealing with pastoral issues such as verifying baptismal status, identifying and regularizing marriage irregularities, and caring for the pastoral needs of the person.
- Discerning readiness to move to the next period at each stage of the process

B. *Catechetical Aspect* – The catechetical aspect of the RCIA generally gets the most attention. Often the RCIA is mistakenly viewed as a purely catechetical process– those classes people take to become Catholic. While it is not the only aspect of the RCIA, the catechetical aspect is certainly important and is the dominant aspect during the catechumenate stage of the RCIA. It is important to note that catechesis is much more than simply imparting knowledge of the teachings of the faith. The methodology and scope of catechesis varies by the different periods of the RCIA process. These variations will be highlighted throughout this manual.

C. *Liturgical Aspect* – The liturgical aspect of the RCIA refers to the preparation for and celebration of the rites. This includes both the major rites which are the bridges between each stage of the process, as well as the minor rites, such as the anointing with the Oil of Catechumens, the presentations of the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, the Scrutinies, and blessings and exorcisms. Participation in the Mass and celebrations of the liturgy of the Word within the catechumenate are also considered in the liturgical aspect of the RCIA.

Pastors and RCIA Coordinators must pay particular attention to the proper celebration of these rites within the RCIA. While some rites are required and some are optional, as many as possible should be celebrated for the benefit of the catechumens and candidates, who should be given adequate explanation and instruction as to their meaning prior to their celebration. Catechumens and candidates should also have an opportunity to reflect on their meaning, significance and impact on their Christian journey after the rites are celebrated. This understanding and reflection will allow them to experience more profoundly the liturgical aspect of the catechumenate.

Why is this liturgical experience so important for the catechumens and candidates during their formation? We, as Catholic Christians, are a liturgical people. The Latin phrase, *lex orandi, lex credendi* sums this up: the law of prayer is the law of belief. For Catholic Christians, what we pray is what we believe. The beliefs of the Church are present and evident in the liturgy, whether in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, Liturgy of the Hours (the prayer of the Church), the rites proper to the reception of the Sacraments, or any of the other minor rites and blessings given by the Church to her ministers for use in celebrating with her members, including those belonging to the RCIA. The catechesis of the RCIA should enrich and expand on what is already present in the liturgical prayer of the Church.

History

A brief history of the Catechumenate is available in [Appendix I](#).

A Note Regarding Important Terminology

One encounters the use of both terms *sponsor* and *godparent* when referring to those who support a person seeking full initiation into the Catholic Church. The term *sponsor* is used more often because this encompasses all those who support the catechumens or candidates, while a *godparent* is a term used to describe a more specific subset of the sponsors, who fulfill a very specific role. In other words,

every godparent is a sponsor, but not all sponsors will be godparents. A more detailed explanation can be found in section of this manual titled “[RCIA Sponsors and Godparents](#).” This manual will use the term *sponsor* throughout to refer to both sponsors and godparents, except where it is necessary to make a distinction.

Abbreviations Used in this Manual

RCIA	<i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults</i>
CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
CIC	<i>Codex Iuris Canonici</i> , “Code of Canon Law”
CT	<i>Catechesi tradendae</i> , “On Catechesis in Our Time”; Apostolic exhortation issued October 16, 1979 by Pope John Paul II
LG	<i>Lumen gentium</i> , “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church,” Vatican II
GDC	<i>General Directory for Catechesis</i>
NDC	<i>National Directory for Catechesis</i>
USCCA	<i>United States Catholic Catechism for Adults</i>

Note: All quotations from the RCIA ritual book are taken from the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* © 1988, Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications.

THE PARISH RCIA TEAM

The Church instructs that the RCIA process should involve the whole community: “The initiation of catechumens is a gradual process that takes place *within the community of the faithful*, the faithful provides an example that will help the catechumens to obey the Holy Spirit more generously” (RCIA, no. 4, emphasis added). There should be involvement from the faithful in many aspects of the RCIA process. The catechumens should have an opportunity to meet a variety of people from the parish community who will offer the witness of their Christian lives. Some members of the community should be called to serve on the parish RCIA team, whose role is to assist the pastor and RCIA Coordinator in welcoming, forming, and praying for the catechumens to lead them to become members of the Body of Christ.

Discernment and Invitation of Potential Team Members

Pastors and/or pastoral team come to know their parishioners through their attendance at weekly Sunday Mass, their participation in parish ministries, and their presence at other various parish worship services. These connections with parishioners are opportunities for pastors to discern potential RCIA team members. Team members should be:

- Fully initiated, active, practicing Catholics who are participating in the sacramental life of the Church.
- Catholics who know, believe, and are living their daily lives faithful to the teachings and beliefs of the Catholic Church.
- Catholics who recognize and accept their own ongoing conversion through daily prayer and frequent examination of their relationships with God and others.
- Catholics who are willing and eager to share their faith experiences with others.
- Catholics who have varying gifts and talents needed within the RCIA process.
- Catholics who are willing to learn more about their Church and the RCIA and to commit themselves to the RCIA process.
- Catholics who are able to work pastorally with the participants, sponsors, RCIA team, RCIA director or coordinator, and the pastor. This involves acting in prudence, charity and humility in matters of catechesis and discernment and ultimately submitting to the judgment of the RCIA Coordinator and pastor in all matters.
- Some team members may need to meet additional requirements based on their specific role on the team (see “[Education of Team Members](#)” section below).

If someone other than the pastor will be overseeing the RCIA (director or coordinator), the person should be chosen by the pastor whether the position is paid or volunteer. An application and interview process should be used. Qualifications for this position should include all those listed for any team member. Additional qualifications for a coordinator or director of RCIA are as follows:

- Directors or Coordinators of any RCIA program must hold at a minimum the Advanced Certification from the Diocese of Owensboro or a B.A. in Theology, and optimally a Masters in Theology or other related degree. Other specialized education or training may be considered with the understanding they are working toward Advanced Certification in the Diocese.
- Previous experience working with the RCIA process as a team member or coordinator.
- Knowledge of the RCIA process through past education and experience.
- Organizational, leadership, communication, and management skills.
- Pastoral skills for working with RCIA non-Catholics, team, parish staff, and parishioners.

Steps in identifying and inviting potential team members:

1. The pastor, RCIA Coordinator, or other existing RCIA team members may identify parishioners who are potential team members and recommend them to the RCIA Coordinator.
2. The RCIA Coordinator would then meet with the potential team member to discuss the RCIA process and complete the [Interview Questions for a Potential Team Member](#) form (found in the [Appendix III](#)).
3. The pastor, the RCIA Coordinator, and possibly other existing RCIA team members should discern together, and the RCIA Coordinator should make a recommendation to the pastor for final approval.
4. Upon approval by the pastor, the RCIA Coordinator should extend a formal invitation to be part of the RCIA team.

Education of Team Members

The *National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC) calls for the initial and ongoing formation of catechists. It states, “Programs of formation should be designed to help them acquire the knowledge and skills they need to hand on the faith to those entrusted to their care and assist them in living as disciples in Christ,”(NDC, p. 235). In addition to acquiring knowledge and skills, “Catechists are called to continual conversion and growth in their faith and for this reason are called to ongoing spiritual formation” (NDC, p. 236).

The *Code of Canon Law* (CIC) states: “Local ordinaries are to see to it that catechists are duly prepared to fulfill their task correctly, namely, that continuing formation is made available to them, that they acquire a proper knowledge of the Church’s teaching, and that they learn in theory and practice the norms proper to the pedagogical disciplines” (CIC, no. 780).

Diocesan Catechist Certification Process

The requirements outlined below must be fulfilled only by RCIA team members who will act as catechists – teaching the faith during catechetical sessions.

The *National Directory for Catechesis* states that bishops have the primary responsibility for catechesis in the local church and, more specifically, for the formation and certification of catechists (NDC, p. 218). As the bishop’s delegate, the pastor has a more concrete and practical role to play in carrying out this responsibility. The Directory goes on to state that pastors are to ensure that catechists are well formed for their task (NDC, p. 221). At the parish level, the catechetical leader administers the process which includes a supervision component, a mentoring relationship with his/her catechists, assisting the catechists in the assessment of learning needs, monitoring of progress, record keeping, and submission of applications to the Department of Catechesis and Formation for approval and the issuing of the certificate. The catechetical leader also works with the catechists in their ongoing formation process.

To comply with CIC no.780, the Diocese of Owensboro has established a catechist certification process based on the guidelines of the *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC, no. 238) which lists the dimensions of formation as being, knowing, and know- how. We choose the categories of catechist, which is human/spiritual, content, which is intellect, and pastoral. Designed to promote catechists’ growth in faith, it also supplies them with the information and ability to fulfill their responsibilities. Active involvement in Diocesan and parish life offers many opportunities for ongoing spiritual and intellectual development and learning is a lifelong journey for all catechists.

Certification as a catechist in the Diocese of Owensboro is a means of publicly recognizing the commitment that a catechist has made to continuous formation in faith, knowledge and skills. It is the bishop who, through his administrative staff, certifies catechists. Attaining certification attests that the catechist has met a standard of preparation and competency that has been established by the diocese and called for in the *General Directory for Catechesis*. Catechists who become certified can be proud of what they have accomplished and feel confident that they are fulfilling the requirements of the local Church for this vital ministry.

Basic Certification requirements for catechists in the Diocese of Owensboro (ten hours, plus Safe Environment):

1. Person of the catechist (three hours)
2. Content of the Faith (four hours)
3. Pastoral Skills (three hours)
4. Safe Environment Training (if working with children)

Once Basic Certification is achieved, each catechist works toward accumulating fifty additional hours toward Advanced Certification in five years:

1. Training related to the person of the catechist (fifteen hours)
2. Content of the Faith (twenty hours)
3. Pastoral skills and methods (fifteen hours)

Basic presentation/teaching skills should be a prerequisite or training should be made available to acquire these skills.

Education of Team Members About the RCIA Process

All members of the RCIA team, regardless of whether they are catechists, should have a knowledge and understanding of the RCIA process. All team members should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the periods of RCIA and the importance and celebration of the major liturgical rites.
2. Recognize the differences between catechumens, candidates in RCIA and make adaptations as needed.
3. Incorporate active listening into discernment throughout the initiation process.

Based on each team member's role, the knowledge and skills to lead or assist with the following tasks may need to be acquired through training at the parish level or through various diocesan workshops or other approved courses:

1. Facilitate a dismissal session based on the Sunday scriptures.
2. Facilitate a catechetical session based on a sound catechetical process (catechists only).
3. Plan and lead a service of the Word during the catechumenate, including the presentations, anointings and minor exorcisms.
4. Invite and train parishioners in the responsibility to sponsor catechumens and candidates on the RCIA journey.
5. Incorporate opportunities for social outreach ministry for catechumens and candidates.
6. Promote parish reflection and welcome in the mystagogical period by planning sessions for neophytes and parishioners.

7. Design ways to lead the assembly into effective participation in the rites.

Other resources to assist RCIA team members in developing their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith:

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
2. *The Compendium to the Catechism of the Catholic Church*
3. *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*
4. *General Directory for Catechesis*
5. *National Directory for Catechesis*
6. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website (www.usccb.org)
7. Catholic media outlets

Spiritual Formation of Team Members

The spiritual formation of catechists was addressed by the Office of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples in the document “Guide for Catechists” promulgated by Pope John Paul II in June 1993. Section II of the “Guide for Catechists,” entitled “The Catechist’s Spirituality” addresses the spiritual formation of any catechist and its wisdom and instruction can be applied to the members of the RCIA team, whether serving as catechists or in another team role.

“Catechists must have a deep spirituality, i.e. they must live in the Spirit, who will help them to renew themselves continually in their specific identity” (Guide for Catechists, no. 6). The catechist’s spirituality “should bear the marks of: openness to God’s word, to the Church and to the world; authenticity of life; missionary zeal; and devotion to Mary” (Guide for Catechists, no. 6).

- Openness to the Word – “The office of catechist is basically that of communicating God’s word, and so the fundamental spiritual attitude should be one of openness to this word, contained in revelation, preached by the Church, celebrated in the liturgy and lived out in the lives of saints. This is always an encounter with Christ, hidden in his word, in the Eucharist and in our brothers and sisters” (Guide for Catechists, no. 7).
- Openness to the Church – “As People of God and the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church requires from catechists a deep sense of belonging and responsibility, inasmuch as they are living and active members of it; The catechist’s service is never an individual or isolated act, but is always deeply ecclesial. Openness to the Church is expressed in the attachment and obedience to the Roman Pontiff, the center of unity and the bond of universal communion, so also to the bishop, the father and guide of the particular Church” (Guide for Catechists, no. 7).
- Openness to the World – “Catechists, therefore, will be open and attentive to the needs of the world, knowing that they are called to work in and for the world, without however belonging completely to it (cf. Jn. 17:14-21) they must be thoroughly involved in the life of the society about them... But they must keep a supernatural outlook on life and trust in the efficacy of God’s word, which does not return to Him without ‘succeeding in what it was sent to do’ (Is. 55:11)” (Guide for Catechists, no. 7).
- Authenticity of Catechesis through the Life of the Catechist – “The work of the catechists involves their whole being. Before they preach the word, they must make it their own and live by it... The truth of their lives confirms their message” (Guide for Catechists, no. 8). Therefore, catechists must have a lived faith which includes a life of prayer, participation in the sacramental life of the Church, and service to the Church and the larger community.
- Missionary zeal – “Catechists should have a strong missionary spirit—a spirit that will be all

the more effective if they are seen to be convinced of what they say and are enthusiastic and courageous, without ever being ashamed of the gospel” (Guide for Catechists, no. 9).

- Devotion to Mary – “One can say with reason and joy that Mary is a ‘living catechism,’ ‘mother and model of catechists’” (Guide for Catechists, no. 10). “The spirituality of catechists will be enriched by a deep devotion to the Mother of God” (Guide for Catechists, no. 10).

The following are suggested means by which a catechist may achieve the spiritual formation as described above:

- Reading Scripture
- Participate faithfully in Mass and Holy Communion on Sundays and holy days of obligation
- Participate in Mass and Holy Communion daily when possible or meditate on the daily Mass readings
- Make a weekly holy hour or visit to the Blessed Sacrament
- Seek regular spiritual direction from the pastor or parish priest or another qualified spiritual director
- Fulfill the precepts of the Church
- Engage in daily spiritual reading
- Make an examination of conscience and act of contrition daily, upon retiring
- Receive the sacrament of reconciliation at least once a month
- Attend a weekend retreat annually
- Engage in study of and devotion to the lives of the saints, accompanied by regular prayer for their intercession
- Participation in other devotions:
 - Pray the Holy Rosary and/or the Divine Mercy Chaplet
 - Pray the Morning Offering to the Sacred Heart of Jesus
 - Pray the Morning and Evening Prayer from the “Liturgy of the Hours”
 - Pray the Angelus

Organizing the RCIA Team

The RCIA team may be large or small depending on the size of the parish and the number of catechumens/candidates that the parish usually has in the process. If the team is large, it may be helpful to assign specific roles or tasks to various team members both to keep the process organized and to give each team member a sense of purpose and direction. Each RCIA Coordinator is encouraged to develop a team structure that works for the specific parish and should ensure that all team members are familiar with the duties of their role or position and are properly prepared and trained to carry them out. Below are some possible roles that may be assigned to members of the RCIA team.

Evangelization Coordinator – Coordinates all efforts to promote the RCIA process:

- Within the parish to educate the faithful about RCIA and encourage them to evangelize to their family, friends, neighbors and co-workers.
- To the general public to inform the larger community about the Catholic Church and invite them to *come and see*.

Precatechumenate Chairperson – Primary team member responsible for the precatechumenate period. Responsibilities may include, but would not be limited to:

- Maintaining contact with inquirers from the time of their initial interview until they celebrate the rite of acceptance and formally enter the catechumenate period.
- Inviting inquirers to parish liturgical celebrations and social events.
- Meeting with inquirers periodically to help them discern their call to the Church and to answer questions that may arise as they become familiar with the parish community and Catholic worship.
- Assisting the RCIA Coordinator in discerning the readiness of the inquirers to celebrate the rite of acceptance and enter the catechumenate period.
- Other duties as needed based on parish needs.

Catechumenate Chairperson – Primary team member responsible for the catechumenate period. Since the catechumenate period is the main focus of the RCIA process and the longest period, this position will usually be held by the pastor or RCIA Coordinator.

- Develop an ongoing curriculum for catechumenate sessions and assemble materials and resources for each session.
 - Identify topics to be covered and general resources/materials to be used:
 - Materials for use by catechists in delivering the sessions.
 - Handouts or resources for catechumens, candidates, and sponsors (e.g., CCC, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Association for Catechumenal Ministry participant handouts).
 - Provide a list of topics and subtopics to catechists so they know what they are expected to cover in each session (see [Appendix IV](#) for sample [Curriculum Outline](#)).
- Develop a schedule for catechumenate sessions each year:
 - Identify a time and reserve a location/meeting space for the sessions.
 - Assign catechists for each topic; act as a resource for catechists, providing topic content and resources for developing lesson plans.
 - Have all necessary materials on hand for each session.
 - Coordinate with hospitality chairperson regarding refreshments or other hospitality needs.
 - Track attendance and arrange for make-up sessions if needed.
- Coordinate Sunday reflection on the Word (Sunday dismissal) sessions:
 - Select Mass time for dismissal.
 - Identify a location for the catechumens and candidates to meet for the dismissal session and provide any necessary materials.
 - Identify team members to lead each session and provide any necessary materials for them to prepare for the sessions.
 - Coordinate details of dismissal with presiding priests, musicians, and others involved in liturgy.
- Lead or identify a leader for each catechumenate session to welcome, greet, open, and close the session.
- Schedule and plan any minor rites, blessings, or exorcisms during this period.
- Plan other catechetical and faith-sharing opportunities throughout this period (e.g., retreats).
- Build relationships with catechumens and candidates and identify any issues, needs or concerns regarding their faith journey; use this in discernment of their readiness for rite of election.
- Communicate with team members and sponsors regarding any issues or concerns that have come to their attention regarding the catechumens and candidates.

Reflection and Discussion Leader – Leads group prayers, spiritual reflections, and discussions which are not catechetical in nature. Examples may include, but would not be limited to:

- Precatechumenate reflection/discernment sessions.
- Sunday reflection on the Word (dismissal) sessions.
- Group reflections or discussions during retreats.
- Reflections to prepare for the scrutiny rites.
- Reflections after major or minor rites.
- Other non-catechetical discussions, reflections, or sessions as needed.

In order to act in this role, a team member should be on the team for at least one year, attending the above sessions regularly and observing more experienced members of the team in preparation for this role. Catechist certification is not required, but team members in this role should be encouraged to attend other RCIA workshops or formation opportunities as available and/or suggested by the RCIA Coordinator.

Sunday reflection on the Word (dismissal) leader – Lead catechumens when they are dismissed after the homily at Sunday Mass for reflection on the Word. Facilitate the discussion: be prepared with a knowledge and understanding of the day's scripture, opening and closing prayers for the session, and thought-provoking questions appropriate to the theme of the readings to stimulate discussion.

Catechist – Delivers instruction during catechetical sessions. In the Diocese of Owensboro all catechists are required to complete basic level catechist certification within their first year of delivering instruction and must continue working toward advanced certification in order to continue as RCIA catechists.

Hospitality Chairperson – Offer hospitality to the catechumens, candidates, and sponsors when they gather. Ideas include, but would not be limited to:

- Be a welcoming presence at catechetical sessions, retreats, etc. by:
 - Arriving early and welcoming the catechumens, candidates, and sponsors as they arrive.
 - Assisting participants in finding whatever they need (e.g., restrooms, food/drink, handouts, pen/pencil, extra Bible or Catechism, etc.).
- Provide or coordinate the provision of food, drink, and associated supplies.
- Assist everyone in the group (catechumens, candidates, sponsors, and team) in becoming acquainted (e.g., planning icebreaker activities, using nametags, etc.).
- Attend to details of comfort such as the room temperature or seating arrangements.
- Bring any hospitality concerns, issues, or ideas to the RCIA Coordinator.
- Other duties as needed based on parish needs.

Sponsor Coordinator – Coordinates all activities related to sponsors:

- Discern possible sponsors from the parish:
 - Ask for input from pastor.
 - Interview potential sponsors when identified or recommended.
- Develop and deliver sponsor training.
- Maintain contact with sponsors throughout the RCIA process:
 - Identify any questions or concerns they have.
 - Obtain input regarding the person they are sponsoring for discernment of their readiness

to continue to next period.

Mystagogy Chairperson – Primary team member responsible for the mystagogy period.

- Assist RCIA Coordinator in planning and scheduling activities during the mystagogy stage of the RCIA.
- Maintain contact with neophytes during the neophyte year.
 - Contact the neophytes during the mystagogy stage (Easter through Pentecost).
 - Maintain regular (at least once a month) contact with the neophytes from Pentecost through the following Easter.
 - Assure them of our continued prayer and support (remind team and sponsors to continue praying for them).
 - Ask them how things are going; find out if they are getting involved in parish life/ministries.
 - Remind them of Sunday Mass attendance, opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and other parish liturgies and devotions (e.g., Eucharistic Adoration, parish missions, special Masses, Holy Days of obligation).
 - Invite them to ask any questions they may have now that they are practicing the faith they learned and received in their RCIA journey.
 - Much of this contact (reminders, etc.) can be done with email or mailings, but there should be some personal contact (either by phone or in person as you see them in the community or at Mass).

Prayer coordinator – Works with members of the team and/or other members of the parish to create a network of faithful who will regularly pray for the catechumens and candidates throughout the RCIA process. They would establish this group and send reminders or specific prayer requests as needed.

Other positions or chairpersons as needed – Each parish, based on size and resources, will have its own needs. The above ideas are practical suggestions that could be used in most parish settings. Smaller parishes may not need all of these positions. Larger parishes with more resources and a larger number of catechumens and candidates may require additional organizational structure.

TIMING OF THE RCIA PROCESS

The RCIA is not simply a program of preparation and study, but a process of conversion of heart and mind; therefore, there is no set time frame for an individual to make this spiritual journey. According to the Church, “The rite of initiation is suited to a spiritual journey of adults that varies according to the many forms of God’s grace, the free cooperation of the individuals, the action of the Church, and the circumstances of time and place” (RCIA Introduction, no. 5).

Precatechumenate

“The whole period of the precatechumenate is set aside for this evangelization, so that the genuine will to follow Christ and seek baptism may mature. During this period, priests and deacons, catechists and other laypersons are to give the candidates a suitable explanation of the Gospel. The candidates are to receive help and attention so that with a purified and clearer intention they may cooperate with God’s grace. Opportunities should be provided for them to meet families and other groups of Christians” (RCIA, no. 37-38).

The precatechumenate should be an ongoing, year-round process such that whatever time of the year a person inquires about the Church, the period of inquiry may begin for that individual. Inquirers should not be “put on the back burner” until the program begins at another time of year. As a Church, we want to welcome any individual who makes an inquiry and immediately begin introducing them to Christ.

Precatechumenate activities do not need to be limited to formal teaching sessions and do not need to be weekly. These could be as simple as a personal invitation to participate in a parish devotion, liturgical celebration, or even a parish social event (opportunities to meet families and other groups of Christians). They could be one-on-one sessions to answer simple questions about Christ, about the Church or about other aspects of the faith (e.g., a suitable explanation of the Gospel as mentioned above). See the section of this manual labeled “[Precatechumenate \(Period of Inquiry\)](#)” which addresses the period of precatechumenate in more detail.

The rite of acceptance should be celebrated at various times of the year as inquirers, through a process of co-discernment with the pastor and RCIA Coordinator, are ready to continue to the catechumenate period. “It should not be too early, but should be delayed until the candidates, according to their own dispositions and situation, have had sufficient time to conceive an initial faith and to show the first signs of conversion” (RCIA, no. 18.1, see also nos. 18.2-18.3).

See the section of this manual labeled “[Rite of Acceptance/Rite of Welcome](#)” for more detailed information on the discernment process for the rite of acceptance.

Catechumenate

“The duration of the catechumenate will depend on the grace of God and on various circumstances, such as the program of instruction for the catechumenate, the number of catechists, deacons, and priests, the cooperation of the individual catechumens, the means necessary for them to come to the site of the catechumenate and spend time there, the help of the local community. Nothing, therefore, can be settled a priori. The

time spent in the catechumenate should be long enough—several years if necessary—for the conversion and faith of the catechumens to become strong” (RCIA, no. 76).

The catechumenate should be an ongoing, year-round process, such that at whatever time an inquirer is ready to celebrate the rite of acceptance and enter the catechumenate period, they may begin participating in the catechumenate immediately.

Although there may need to be a prepared schedule for formal catechetical sessions, which most parishes hold during the traditional school year months, Sunday dismissals for reflecting on the Word and other less formal sessions can be scheduled throughout the year. Although it would be optimal to offer these opportunities weekly all year long, they should at a minimum be offered once a month.

The sessions outside the formal catechesis schedule will be useful for catechumens who are not yet prepared for the upcoming Easter Vigil, either because they joined the process more recently and need additional time for their conversion, or for those who are as yet unable to approach the sacraments due to an impediment.

See the section of this manual labeled “[Catechumenate](#)” which addresses this period in more detail.

Purification and Enlightenment

“The period of purification and enlightenment, which the rite of election begins, customarily coincides with Lent... This is a period of more intense spiritual preparation, consisting more in interior reflection than in catechetical instruction” (RCIA, nos. 138-139).

A process of co-discernment should take place involving the RCIA Coordinator, the pastor, the sponsor, and the catechumen to determine readiness for the sacraments of initiation. A catechumen should not be sent to the bishop for election, and therefore would not enter the period of purification and enlightenment, if he or she is not ready to receive the sacraments at the upcoming Easter Vigil.

See the section of this manual labeled “[Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion](#)” for more detailed information on the discernment process for the rite of election.

See the section of this manual labeled “[Purification and Enlightenment](#)” which addresses this period in more detail.

Mystagogy

The primary timeframe for the mystagogy, or postbaptismal catechesis, is the Easter season, “its main setting is the so-called Masses for neophytes, that is, the Sunday Masses of the Easter season” (RCIA, no. 247). Formal, scheduled sessions or activities should take place throughout the Easter season to assist the neophytes in embracing their new faith and the sacramental life of the Church.

“To close the period of postbaptismal catechesis, some sort of celebration should be held at the end of the Easter season near Pentecost Sunday” (RCIA, no. 249). Following Pentecost, additional activities and/or catechesis could be offered.

If possible someone (pastor, RCIA Coordinator, or team member) should follow up with the neophytes throughout the neophyte year to ensure their continued participation in the Sacraments. “On the

anniversary of their baptism the neophytes should be brought together in order to give thanks to God, to share with one another their spiritual experiences, and to renew their commitment” (RCIA, no. 250).

See the section of this manual titled “[Mystagogy](#)” which addresses this period in more detail.

EVANGELIZATION

The Church exists to evangelize. Christ charged his Apostles with the command to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt. 28:19-20). Therefore, it is our duty to evangelize and bring people to Christ by our own ongoing conversion and by testimony of life (CCC, no. 905; LG, no. 35). This is the first step in the RCIA process – to evangelize those around us so that they will be moved to inquire about the Catholic Church and the RCIA process. The following sections provide guidance and suggestions for a parish’s evangelization efforts.

Evangelizing the parish to evangelize

The whole parish, every member of the believing community, should heed the words of Christ in the closing of Matthew’s Gospel, and all should be involved in evangelizing and bringing others to Christ in His Church. The following are suggestions for pastors and RCIA Coordinators to use in order to get parish members more aware of and involved in the RCIA process, thereby raising their awareness of their own need to evangelize.

- Increase adult faith formation efforts in the parish so that parishioners have a strong foundation of faith. An increased knowledge of our faith would better equip parents, giving them confidence in passing on the faith to their children. This should result in increased retention of educated young adults who are knowledgeable and excited about the faith. You cannot pass on what you do not have.
- Ask an RCIA team member, sponsor, or new member to give a short witness talk following parish faith-based activities or retreats (e.g., a parish Bible Study). The talk should encourage those on fire with the faith from their recent experience or retreat to go out and invite others to consider the Catholic faith.
- Send periodic emails or publish eye-catching notices in the parish bulletin to encourage the laity to fulfill their baptismal responsibility of evangelization. Teach parishioners to take an active role in evangelization and particularly the RCIA process.
- Utilize personal witness comments from past RCIA participants to encourage parishioners to invite someone they know to join the RCIA journey of faith. These may be published in parish bulletins, distributed via email, posted on bulletin boards or parish websites, or delivered by witness talks at Masses or other parish gatherings.
- Invite those who may be considering joining the church to attend parish-sponsored devotionals (e.g., rosary, Stations of the Cross, and divine mercy chaplet), speakers, and social events. Then remind the members of the parish to recognize and welcome them.
- Include a monthly petition in the general intercessions at Masses asking God to send more people to join the RCIA journey and for the success of the RCIA process throughout the year.
- Call for a parish day of prayer and fasting for more people to enter the RCIA process and for the success of the RCIA throughout the year.
- Assign parishioners as prayer sponsors to pray for the ongoing conversion of each person in the RCIA process.
- Display pictures of the catechumens and candidates in church to familiarize the parish with them and with the RCIA process.
- Ask parishioners to give personal testimonies of faith at RCIA sessions. (e.g., someone who experienced Christ’s grace during the anointing of the sick could be a personal witness to the reality and power of this sacrament)

Invitation

Pastors, RCIA leaders, and others in the parish should look for specific opportunities to invite those who are not Catholic to inquire about the Church through the RCIA:

- Research all parish records to identify non-Catholic family members. Personally invite people on this list to inquire about becoming Catholic. This can be accomplished by a letter or phone call from the pastor or RCIA Coordinator. Although all parishioners should be encouraged to invite, the priest's personal invitation can be extremely effective.
- Use funerals as opportunities for conversion or invitation to non-Catholic friends or family members of the deceased.
- Use weddings as opportunities for conversion or invitation to non-Catholic friends or family members of the bride and groom.
- Use sacramental preparation programs or meetings as opportunities to invite non-Catholic family members to consider joining the Church. Information or brochures regarding RCIA should be available at parent meetings for baptism, first communion, and confirmation preparation, and at marriage preparation sessions. A brief talk about RCIA could also be given by the pastor or RCIA Coordinator at these events.
- Invite RCIA neophytes or those who have been through RCIA in the recent past (new members or sponsors) to give brief witness talks at Masses periodically or at least on one Sunday each year. The speaker would share something about his or her spiritual journey in the RCIA and invite others to make the journey. An opportunity should be given to meet the speaker or another person involved in RCIA after Mass and printed information about the RCIA process should also be available. The focus should be on inviting non-Catholics to inquire about the Church and Catholics to invite someone to inquire. The priest may even find a way to build a message about evangelization into the homily that day.
- Build a social event or activity into the early stage of the RCIA process. The social element is important in fostering early cohesiveness within the RCIA group and provides an opportunity for additional invitations to those still considering inquiring.
- Invite those who are considering RCIA to attend Eucharistic adoration, which is open to people of all faiths. This could result in a conversion experience where God can speak and be heard. During the RCIA process, Eucharistic adoration can help the participants discern whether to enter the next stage of the process.

Publicity

The Church, the parish, and the RCIA process should be publicized to the whole community, so that we are constantly extending an open invitation for people to inquire about Christ, the Catholic faith and the Catholic Church.

- Have an RCIA brochure available to provide essential information describing the process and contact information (see [RCIA Brochure](#) in [Appendix II](#)).
- Use the church marquee to display a message of invitation to inquire about the Catholic Church or to come in and join us for Mass. Change announcements often and get creative.
- Include a statement on church bulletins and websites which provides information about RCIA and the contact information for the RCIA leader and/or pastor. Be sure people do not have to wait until next September to begin RCIA. Develop a strategy for year-round inquiry.
- Create an RCIA information table in the church or vestibule which contains information on

what RCIA is whom to call, and how to begin the process.

- Have RCIA business cards available which can be given to anyone interested in becoming Catholic. Cards should give contact information for the pastor or RCIA Coordinator.
- Utilize social media. Create a Facebook page for RCIA that could include: upcoming events, photos of the participants, links to well-respected Catholic pages such as EWTN, Word on Fire, and The Vatican. Create a Twitter account in order to communicate rapidly and provide timely articles to the RCIA group and parish. Facebook and Twitter may be effective in reaching teens and young adults.
- Priests and all the faithful should speak publicly about RCIA outside of the parish. Everywhere they go they need to inform people about RCIA.
- Run ads in the local papers on a year-round basis.
- New members of the parish should receive a new parishioner package containing an RCIA pamphlet explaining the RCIA process. Include the use of Holy Scripture in material targeted to inviting non-Catholics. This demonstrates the reverence the Catholic Church has for scripture.

INITIAL INQUIRER INTERVIEW

Welcoming

Welcome the inquirer on behalf of the Church. It is essential that those who desire information regarding entry into the Catholic faith are greeted in a warm and welcoming fashion. Even though the inquirer may only be seeking general information, the welcoming process is best achieved within the context of a formal meeting with the pastor or RCIA Coordinator. At the inquiry stage, the person may not be ready to commit to the RCIA, but rather is taking a “snap-shot” of the process. The purpose of the welcoming interview is primarily to help the inquirer feel at ease, reflecting your desire to offer assistance, providing the necessary information, and answering questions in order to help the inquirer come to a decision regarding entry into the process.

- The Sunday parish bulletin might be a good way to introduce your parish to the inquirer. Explain what they might find in the bulletin, especially Mass times and the schedule for the RCIA sessions.
- Introduce the inquirer to the parish web site. It would be beneficial to review what they will find on the web site by providing a quick preview.
- If time permits, it would be beneficial to escort the inquirer on a guided tour of the parish campus and the Church while explaining the uniqueness of the parish community.

Explain the RCIA Process/Set Expectations

A brief summary of the RCIA process in the Catholic Church should be given. This might be best achieved with a printed pamphlet or prepared document outlining the RCIA process and its stages which can be read at their convenience. It is always a good idea to review this information with the inquirer in person (see [RCIA Brochure](#) in [Appendix II](#)).

- Provide the dates and times of the meetings. If specific dates are not available, the usual day and time of meetings should be given. A past or current schedule would be helpful here so that the inquirer will have a visual means to follow your explanation.
- Information regarding where the sessions will be held and their length will help the inquirer have a better grasp of time commitment, travel accommodations, and baby-sitting needs.

Gather personal information

At some point during the interview, provide the inquirer with a registration form (see [Adult Inquirer Form](#) in [Appendix I](#)). In doing this you show your hope that they will participate in the RCIA process while assuring them that you will help them along the way. The information gathered should include:

- Inquirer’s faith background and reasons for seeking the Church.
- Baptismal status (see [Baptismal Status](#) and [Determination of Baptismal Validity](#) in [Appendix I](#)).
- Marital status and marriage history

Either at this meeting or at a future meeting, the information gathered on the form should be discussed in more detail in order to get to know the inquirer and his or her pastoral and catechetical needs.

If necessary based on the information obtained from the Inquirer Information Form, any necessary steps for dealing with marriage or sacramental issues should be explained at this time or at the next meeting.

Thank the inquirer for the opportunity to meet with them, offer to follow up with a letter, phone call, or email, and state your willingness to make yourself available if they have a further need of assistance. A future meeting date could be scheduled in order to show your interest in getting to know the inquirer better. A business card would be helpful here.

What is a Sponsor or Godparent?

One encounters the use of both terms *sponsor* and *godparent* when referring to those who support a person seeking full initiation into the Catholic Church. The term *sponsor* is used more often because this encompasses all those who support the catechumens or candidates, while a *godparent* is a term used to describe a more specific subset of the sponsors, who fulfill a very specific role. In other words, every godparent is a sponsor, but not all sponsors will be godparents. A more detailed explanation follows. This manual will use the term *sponsor* throughout to refer to both sponsors and godparents, except where it is necessary to make a distinction.

Sponsor

A sponsor accompanies any person seeking full initiation into the Catholic Church. Both unbaptized catechumens and baptized candidates must have a sponsor. The sponsor should accompany the catechumen or candidate at catechetical sessions, all rites, and other RCIA events (e.g., retreats). The sponsor does not need to attend the sessions when the catechumens and candidates are dismissed from Mass to reflect on the Word.

Godparents

The official witness of the Church when a person is baptized is called a godparent. “It is a very ancient custom of the Church that adults are not admitted to baptism without godparents, members of the Christian Community who will assist [them] at least in the final preparation for baptism and after baptism will help them persevere in the faith and in their lives as Christians” (RCIA General Introduction, 8).

The godparent may be the same person who served as the sponsor throughout the RCIA process, or a different person may be chosen (e.g., a close friend or family member) as a godparent. There may be one or two godparents. If there are two, they must be one male and one female. “There is to be only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each” (CIC, c. 873). The godparent(s), if possible, should be present at all rites beginning with the rite of election/call to continuing conversion through the celebration of the sacraments of initiation. If the godparent is not able to be present at any of these rites (e.g., due to illness or living in a distant location) a proxy may be used to stand in for the actual godparent.

Discerning and Inviting Members of the Parish to be Sponsors

Some inquirers will have a friend or family member in mind to be their sponsor. The friend or family member should be interviewed to discern if they meet the minimum canonical requirements and other standards for sponsors and godparents as outlined in the section below labeled “[Canonical and General Requirements](#).”

It is generally not a good idea to have a significant other (spouse, fiancé, boyfriend/girlfriend) be the primary sponsor. If this person wishes to accompany the catechumen or candidate on the journey, his or her participation should be encouraged, but another person from the parish should be assigned as sponsor or co-sponsor.

It is generally not a good idea to have a future in-law be the primary sponsor. This can put strain on the sponsor-candidate relationship or on the future familial relationship.

A parent cannot be the godparent (CIC, c. 874.5). A parent may, however, accompany the catechumen or candidate as a sponsor throughout the RCIA process and then choose another person to be the godparent (official witness of the Church) at baptism. All parties should be aware of this at the beginning of the process.

In many cases, the pastor and/or RCIA Coordinator will need to find sponsors for the catechumens and candidates. These should be carefully discerned and selected from the parish faithful. An information form and interview are helpful in this discernment and selection (see [Appendix V](#) for [Interview Questions for a Potential Godparent or Sponsor](#) and [Godparent/Sponsor Information Form](#)).

Canonical and General Requirements

All sponsors (including godparents) should be screened to be sure they meet the canonical requirements for sponsors, as well as some general standards.

Canonical requirements per c. 874: To be permitted to take on the function of a sponsor a person must:

- Be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the person who takes their place, or in their absence by the pastor or minister and have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function.
- Be sixteen years of age, unless the diocesan bishop has established another age, or the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause.
- Be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on.
- Not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared.
- Not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized.

General standards (helpful in following c. 874.3 above):

- Fully initiated and active practicing Catholic.
- Active registered parishioner of the parish, in good standing (parish sponsors); sponsors chosen by the catechumen or candidate may belong to another parish, with their membership and active status verified by their pastor.
- Love for Christ and his Church.
- Basic understanding of the Church's teaching.
- Steadfast commitment to the teachings of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.
- Evidence of a lived faith in one's personal life.
- Strong life of personal and communal prayer.
- Mature Christian understanding of the meaning of servant and service.
- Punctual, flexible, and prepared to make the required commitments.
- Good communication and listening skills.
- Openness to new relationships.
- Ability and willingness not only to share the faith, but to challenge the catechumen or candidate to live the faith.

- Prudent and able to keep confidentiality.

Sponsors who are not members of the parish should provide a letter of recommendation from their pastor, certifying that the canonical requirements are met.

When interviewing potential sponsors, a job description should be provided, which lists these criteria as well as the specific commitments and responsibilities of being an RCIA sponsor (see [Appendix V](#) for [Sponsor Job Description](#)).

Training Sponsors

Once sponsors are chosen and approved by the catechumen/candidate and the pastor and/or RCIA Coordinator, they should be given instruction regarding their role and responsibilities. It would be wise to train additional sponsors in the event that a sponsor becomes unable to fulfill his or her duties. Training should be provided at the parish level. Resources for sponsor training, including a “[Sample Outline for Sponsor Training](#)”, are available in the appendix.

Parish-based training should be conducted by the pastor, RCIA Coordinator, or a qualified RCIA team member. Handouts should be provided to the sponsors for their reference throughout the RCIA process. Some examples are:

- [Sponsor Job Description](#) (see in [Appendix V](#))
- [Practical Suggestions for Godparents and Sponsors](#) (see in [Appendix V](#))
- *RCIA Godparent and Sponsor Handbook*, by Association for Catechumenal Ministry (available through Liturgy Training Publications)
- *Guide for Sponsors, Fourth Edition*, by Ronald Lewinski (available through Liturgy Training Publications)

Opportunities should be made available for ongoing spiritual formation of sponsors.

The Sponsors’ Role in Discernment of the Catechumens’ and Candidates’ Conversion

In addition to being a companion on the journey and a witness to the faith for the catechumens and candidates, the sponsors play a role in the discernment of their conversion and readiness at each step of the RCIA process. During the rites, the sponsors are asked for their testimony regarding the person they are sponsoring.

Precatechumenate – The sponsor should get to know the inquirer or candidate and provide “some experience of the company and spirit of Christians through contact with... members of the community” (RCIA, no. 43). The RCIA leader should consult with the sponsor when discerning if there is evidence of “the first stirrings of repentance, a start to the practice of calling on God in prayer, a sense of the Church” (RCIA, no.43). These will indicate the readiness of the person to make the first step of the RCIA process at the rite of acceptance or rite of welcome. The sponsor should be prepared to introduce the catechumen or candidate to the Church during this rite.

Rite of Acceptance/Rite of Welcome – Sponsors will be asked to make a commitment to the formation of the catechumens and candidates: “Sponsors, you now present these candidates to us; are you, and all who are gathered here with us, ready to help these candidates find and follow Christ?” (RCIA, nos. 53 and 513)

Catechumenate – The sponsor should be very involved in the RCIA process, attending weekly catechetical sessions and other events, such as retreats or prayer opportunities. These will be opportunities for the sponsors to get to know the catechumens and candidates so they can assist the pastor and RCIA Coordinator in discerning their readiness to continue to the next stage of the process.

Rite of Sending – This is an optional rite celebrated at the parish to send the catechumens and candidates to the bishop for the rite of election. The sponsors will be asked to give testimony to the readiness of the catechumens and candidates to be sent to the bishop for election and to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation. For catechumens: “I turn to you, godparents, for your testimony about these candidates. Have these catechumens taken their formation in the Gospel and in the Catholic way of life seriously? Have they given evidence of their conversion by the example of their lives? Do you judge them ready to be presented to this bishop for the rite of election?” (RCIA, no. 112) For candidates: “As God is your witness, do you consider these candidates ready to receive the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist?” (RCIA, no. 440)

Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion – Sponsors will be called upon by the bishop to further testify to the lives and conversion of the catechumens and candidates. For catechumens: “Have they faithfully listened to God’s Word proclaimed by the Church? Have they responded to that word and begun to walk in God’s presence? Have they shared the company of their Christian brothers and sisters and joined with them in prayer?” (RCIA, no. 131 B) For candidates: “Have they faithfully listened to the apostles’ instruction proclaimed by the Church? Have they come to a deeper appreciation of their Baptism, in which they were joined to Christ and his Church? Have they reflected sufficiently on the tradition of the Church, which is their heritage, and joined their brothers and sisters in prayer? Have they advanced in a life of love and service of others?” (RCIA, no. 453 B)

Purification and Enlightenment – The sponsors are called upon in the rite of election and call to continuing conversion to continue to assist them in their preparation for the sacraments of initiation. For the elect: “Godparents, you have spoken in favor of these catechumens: accept them now as chosen in the Lord and continue to sustain them through your loving care and example, until they come to share in the sacraments of God’s life” (RCIA, no. 133). For the candidates: “Sponsors, continue to support these candidates with your guidance and concern. May they see in you a love for the Church and a sincere desire for doing good. Lead them this Lent to the joys of the Easter mysteries” (RCIA, no. 454).

Sacraments of Initiation – The sponsors stand with the elect and candidates as the official witnesses of the Church to their celebration of the Sacraments. Their presence signifies the love and support of the entire Church, not just on this occasion, but throughout their lives as Christians.

Mystagogy/Neophyte Year (and beyond) – The sponsors continue to have a role in the lives of the newly initiated. They should maintain contact with the neophytes and continue to be a guide and a witness to the faith. “Godparents assist the candidates and after baptism will help them persevere in the faith and in their lives as Christians” (RCIA General Introduction, no. 8). “[Godparents] continue to be important during the time after reception of the sacraments when the neophytes need to be assisted so that they remain true to their baptismal promises” (RCIA General Introduction, no. 11).

PRECATECHUMENATE (PERIOD OF INQUIRY)

This period of evangelization, of unhurried reflection and discovery, focuses on introducing the inquirer to Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church through the four Gospels. It is a time of getting acquainted, of building relationships. It has “no fixed duration or structure” (RCIA, Outline for Christian Initiation of Adults, page 14). During this period, individuals are referred to as inquirers (see the section of this manual labeled “[Timing of the RCIA Process](#)” for more information).

Pastoral Aspect

Inquirers are searching for life’s true meaning, for answers to the longings of their own hearts. They are seeking the face of Christ within a community of believers. This period guides the inquirers in finding these answers through developing a relationship with God through His Son in the Holy Spirit and with His Mystical Body, the Church.

- Team members and sponsors should provide an environment of welcome and hospitality in the RCIA meetings.
- Team members and sponsors are called to share faith stories.
- The team members, sponsors, and parish faith community lead the inquirers to experience the Holy Spirit active in the Christian community through its outreach programs such as food kitchen, Eucharistic adoration, St. Vincent de Paul Society, and its parish family gatherings such as donut Sunday, parish dinners, and men’s/women’s society meetings.
- During this period, the inquirers should receive help and attention so that they may purify their intentions and clarify their desires to cooperate with God’s grace (RCIA, nos. 37, 38, 42).

Before the rite of acceptance or rite of welcome is celebrated, there should be a time set aside to meet and evaluate and discern with the inquirers regarding their motives and dispositions. This time may be referred to as the discernment interview (see [Discernment for Rite of Acceptance](#) in [Appendix VI](#)). Prerequisites for the rite of acceptance/rite of welcome are:

- Evidence of first faith that has taken place.
- An initial conversion and intention to change their lives.
- Desire to enter into a relationship with God in Christ.
- Calling upon God in prayer.
- A sense of the Church and some experience of community.
- Instructions and practice about this rite.

Catechetical Aspect

The inquirer, who has already experienced faith and initial conversion, needs to hear the mystery of Christ proclaimed so that he or she may consciously and freely enter more deeply into a relationship with Christ and His Church. This period offers the opportunity to ask the burning questions that need to be answered in order for the inquirers to cooperate with God’s grace drawing them more deeply into the mystery of His love.

- Catechesis should focus on the Person of Christ as revealed in the four Gospels.
- Catechesis should include sessions on knowledge of God, creation, divine revelation, prayer, and the people of God.
- Catechesis should direct inquirers to discover the similarities between their life story and the

story of Jesus and His Church.

Liturgical Aspect

“During the precatechumenate period, parish priests (pastors) should help those taking part in it with prayers suited to them, for example, by celebrating for their spiritual well-being the prayers of exorcism and the blessings given in the ritual (nos. 94, 97)” (RCIA, no. 40).

A parish may have a preliminary manner of receiving inquirers into the precatechumenate. Without any ritual celebration, the rite suggests a reception recognizing an expression of a “right intention” toward learning about the Christian faith (RCIA, no. 39).

Team members and sponsors may begin and end meetings with Catholic prayers that reveal evidence of the spirit of Catholicism that the inquirers are striving to understand and experience. Prayer should always begin and end with the Sign of the Cross.

Prayer and reflection in this period provides the inquirers with opportunities for the “beginnings of the spiritual life and the fundamentals of Christian teaching” (RCIA, no. 42) to take root in them in preparation for the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens.

The period of inquiry culminates in the celebration of the rite of acceptance (rite of welcome for baptized candidates).

RITE OF ACCEPTANCE/RITE OF WELCOME

After the period of inquiry, when the inquirers are ready, the Church celebrates the rite of acceptance for the unbaptized or the rite of welcome for those validly baptized non-Catholic.

Pastoral Aspect

The celebration of the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens should be delayed until the inquirers have had sufficient time to conceive an initial faith and to show the first signs of conversion (RCIA, no. 18). See the section of this manual labeled “[Precatechumenate- Pastoral Aspect](#)” for more on discernment of readiness.

The rite of acceptance is a very significant step, so much so that for the catechumens (the unbaptized), “One who dies during the catechumenate receives a Christian burial” (RCIA, no. 47).

After the rite of acceptance until their baptism, catechumens are dismissed after the Liturgy of the Word to break open the Word with a team member or another designated person. Candidates may also be dismissed along with the catechumens. Since they are unable to participate fully in the Eucharist, this gives the catechumens and candidates an opportunity to be nourished by the Word of God and reflect on its meaning in their lives.

This rite can be celebrated as often as needed throughout the year as inquirers are discerned ready to take this step in the RCIA process.

Catechetical Aspect

Those who are to celebrate the rites should receive instruction about the rite, the details of its celebration, and its significance in their lives and in the RCIA process.

Liturgical Aspect

There is a rite of acceptance to be celebrated only for inquirers (unbaptized) (RCIA, nos. 48–74), a rite of welcome to be celebrated only for candidates (validly baptized non-Catholics) (RCIA, nos. 416 – 433), and a combined rite of acceptance and welcome is celebrated when some are inquirers (unbaptized) and some are candidates (validly baptized non-Catholic) (RCIA, nos. 507 – 529). When using the combined rite, it is important to make a distinction between the baptized and unbaptized (RCIA, no. 506).

These rites are celebrated within the Sunday Mass when the community is assembled. The inquirers declare their desire to become members of the Catholic Church in the presence of the parish priest and the parish community. The church then welcomes them into the next phase of the RCIA process—the catechumenate. Those who are unbaptized are now catechumens and those validly baptized non-Catholic are now candidates for reception into the full communion of the Church. The parish community agrees to support the catechumens and candidates (RCIA, nos. 41-47, 411-415, 505-506).

The RCIA ritual book suggests three possible locations for the beginning of the rite.

- Outside the church building (for rite of acceptance only or combined rite of acceptance and welcome).
- Inside the entrance of the church (for rite of acceptance only or combined rite of acceptance

and welcome).

- “With candidates seated in a prominent place among the faithful” (RCIA, no. 416) for rite of welcome only.
- Some other suitable site.

A priest or deacon, following the ritual rubric, speaks of welcome and joy to the inquirers and/or baptized candidates (RCIA, no. 48). It is desirable that these rites take part with the entire Christian community or some part, consisting of friends and relatives of the inquirers and/or candidates. The presiding celebrant is a priest or a deacon. The sponsors attend and present the inquirers and/or candidates. These rites consist of the reception of the inquirers and/or candidates, the celebration of the Word of God and the dismissal. Celebration of the Eucharist may follow.

CATECHUMENATE

After the celebration of the rite of acceptance, the inquirers, who are now called catechumens, enter the period of the catechumenate, which is to be ongoing. If, due to limited resources, the baptized candidates seeking full communion are included in the catechumenate, their baptismal status is to be noted and diligently respected. The catechumenate period provides “suitable pastoral formation and guidance aimed at training the catechumens in the Christian life. This is achieved in four ways” (RCIA, no. 75):

- A suitable catechesis.
- Formation in the Christian life by word and example and the practice thereof by themselves.
- Celebration of suitable liturgical rites, most especially celebrations of the Word of God, and the dismissals (also sometimes known as the breaking open of the Word) unless impossible.
- By the witness of their lives and the profession of the faith they are to become involved in the apostolic and evangelical work of the Church.

Pastoral Aspect

The goal of the catechumenate is the conversion of the catechumens to the Christian life. “The duration of the catechumenate will depend on the grace of God” (RCIA, no. 76) and the catechumen’s cooperation with that grace. The time spent in the catechumenate should be long enough for the conversion and faith of the catechumens to become strong. Therefore its length cannot be set *a priori* and is as long as necessary, several years if need be (RCIA, no. 76). Care needs to be exercised in this matter lest they lose heart in the arduous journey. Catechumens and candidates should be clearly embraced and assured that they are already connected to the Church.

Catechumens are linked to the Church in a special way and are joined to the Church, which already cherishes them as her own (CIC, c. 206, §1). As members of the order of catechumens, they have the right to a Christian burial (CIC, c. 1183) and may participate in activities proper to Christians, but not those exclusive to the baptized (CIC, c. 206, §2). Candidates, by virtue of their valid Christian baptism, are already one with the Church and seek full communion with her.

The catechumens and candidates should already have sponsors who accompanied them at the rite of acceptance/rite of welcome. Catechumens should be encouraged to choose godparents during this period who will give testimony at the rite of sending/rite of election (RCIA, no. 80). The godparent may be the same person as their sponsor or may be a different person (see the section of this manual labeled “[RCIA Sponsors and Godparents](#)” for more detailed information).

The parish RCIA team and sponsors are the primary examples and support in teaching the catechumens the Catholic Christian way of life by:

- Providing, at each session, experiences of various forms of prayer used in the Catholic tradition such as scriptural prayers, memorized prayers, the Liturgy of the Hours, spontaneous prayers, meditation, charismatic prayer, and others.
- Witnessing to the faith by living good Catholic lives, sharing stories of God’s work in their lives, and praying in hope with and for the catechumens.
- Helping the catechumens recognize ways that God is at work in their lives and encouraging them to follow the inspirations of the Holy Spirit in their daily actions.
- Modeling Christ’s call to love one another by involving the catechumens in the life of the

parish and inviting them to participate in charitable acts of service within the community.

The parish RCIA team and sponsors, along with the pastor, will work with the catechumens/candidates to discern their depth of conversion and readiness for their election to receive the sacraments of initiation (see the section of this manual titled "[Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion](#)" for more detailed information).

Catechetical Aspect

The accompanying catechesis of the period of the catechumenate is to support the making of committed disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. Catechesis achieves this because it "is that particular form of the ministry of the Word which matures initial conversion to make it into a living, explicit and fruitful confession of the faith" (GDC, no. 82). Since disciples devote "themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers" (Acts 2:42) all catechesis offered during the catechumenate is to be "gradual and complete in coverage, accommodated to the liturgical year, and solidly supported by celebrations of the Word. This catechesis leads the catechumens not only to an appropriate acquaintance with dogmas and precepts but also to a profound sense of the mystery of salvation in which they desire to participate" (RCIA, no. 75.1).

"Catechesis includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life" (*Catechesi tradendae*, no. 18). The catechesis during the catechumenate should present Catholic teaching so as to "enlighten faith, direct hearts toward God, and foster participation in the liturgy, inspire apostolic activity, and nurture a life completely in accord with the spirit of Christ" (RCIA, no. 78). In developing a calendar of catechesis which aims to present the whole of the faith, catechists should strive as best as possible to have sessions arranged systematically and accommodated to the liturgical year. Catechists should present each topic in a systematic way. Catechists are to present the truth as revealed by God to the Church. Catechists must use official Church teachings that come from the Magisterium of the Church. Solid Catholic sources and publishers are to be used (look for the *imprimatur* or *nihil obstat*).

All catechesis should be:

Centered on Christ

- The heart of all genuine catechesis is the person of Jesus (CT, no. 5).
- "The primary and essential object of catechesis is... 'the mystery of Christ'" (CT, no. 5).
- "The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity" (CT, no. 5).
- "The whole concern of doctrine and its teaching must be directed to the love that never ends. Whether something is proposed for belief, for hope or for action, the love of our Lord must always be made accessible, so that anyone can see that all the works of perfect Christian virtue spring from love and have no other objective than to arrive at love" (CCC, no. 25).
- All that we teach comes from Christ through the Church. "It is written in the prophets: They shall all be taught by God" (Jn. 6:45).
- Catechists are to be like John the Baptist:
 - "The voice of one crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord" (Jn.

- 1:23).
 - “Behold, the Lamb of God” (Jn. 1:36).
 - “He must increase; I must decrease” (Jn. 3:30).
- “This catechesis leads not only to an appropriate acquaintance with dogmas and precepts but also to a profound sense of the mystery of salvation in which they desire to participate” (RCIA, no. 75.1).

Driven by Scripture

- Scripture itself instructs us: “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity of the Church (CT, no. 23 & NDC, no. 33)

- “The history of salvation, from the creation of the world to its redemption and eschatological fulfillment in Jesus Christ, is celebrated in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist” (NDC, no. 33). This is why the liturgy is “the privileged place for catechizing the People of God” (CCC, no. 1074).
- Those participating in the catechumenate are to be drawn into the mystery that the liturgy and Sacraments celebrate and impart. The goal is for the participants in the catechumenate to appreciate, encounter, and embrace the presence of Christ in the sacraments thereby developing a strong desire to participate in the sacraments. The grace received through the reception of the sacraments will drive and sustain their ongoing journey of discipleship.
- The Church instructs catechists to accommodate the catechumenate to the liturgical year (RCIA, no. 75.1) therefore, participants must experience many liturgical celebrations, most importantly the Sunday Mass, “for faith gathers the community for worship, and worship renews the faith of the community” (NDC, no. 32).
- Catechists should emphasize the need and encourage the regular celebration of the sacrament of penance so that lifelong conversion will be assisted by the graces given in this sacrament.
 - The catechumens will have their first experience of this sacrament after their baptism.
 - **Candidates who have been validly baptized must celebrate this sacrament before they are received into full communion with the Church.**
 - All sponsors and team members should be living witnesses to the sacramental life of the Church by their commitment to Sunday Mass attendance and frequent reception of the sacraments.

Clearly directed toward living morally

- There should be catechetical sessions addressing the topic of Catholic morality, including current cultural issues, and a complete, firm, and direct explanation of Church teaching regarding these issues (e.g., contraception, pre-marital sex and co-habitation, pornography, abortion, end-of-life issues, etc.). Catholic morality should be integrated into the context of other catechetical topics.
- Sponsors and team members should be carefully screened to ensure that they are living a moral life in accord with the teachings of the Catholic Church and thus will be living witnesses to the Christian moral life. Catechesis should direct participants to the importance of the moral life. This may be a major point of conversion for some in their lives as they approach Christ and

seek to follow Him fully.

- Pastoral care should be used to communicate to participants that, in our humanity, we may falter at times in the moral life; however, the mercy of God and the grace of the Sacrament of Penance are our recourse at these times.

Directed to a life of prayer, helping the participants turn more readily to God (RCIA, no. 75.2)

Associated with life experiences

- Catechesis should connect to the life experiences of the participants to anchor the faith in their very lives, thus making it concrete for each individual. Participants should have the opportunity to integrate the faith into their lives through their own questions. Catechists should allow time for questions at all sessions. Catechists should make themselves available for follow-up questions outside of the regular sessions.
- Catechesis ought to include personal witness from the lives of team members and sponsors in order to demonstrate the connection between faith and life. In sharing their own life stories, catechists must remember that there is a distinct line between teaching the truths and practices of the faith and giving personal witness. Both have a place in the RCIA process, but one needs to be sure to make the distinction. A catechist “will not try to inculcate his personal opinions and options as if they expressed Christ's teaching and the lessons of His life” (CT, no. 6).

Accommodating

- Catechists should accommodate their sessions to the learning styles of the participants (e.g., visual, audio, kinetic or hands-on learning styles).

There are two primary opportunities for catechesis during the catechumenate period:

- Weekly catechetical sessions in which certified catechists appropriately acquaint the participants in the catechumenate with dogmas and precepts.
- Dismissal catechesis—also referred to as Sunday reflection on the Word or breaking open the Word—in which an RCIA team member connects the Scriptures proclaimed at the Sunday liturgy to the faith of the Church, and the participants are afforded time to share the call of the Lord which they hear in the readings of the particular Sunday.

Participants in the catechumenate should, over time, begin to make the connection between the content of the dogmas and precepts of the Church, the Sacred Scriptures as presented in the lectionary cycles, and the liturgical prayer, celebrations, and seasons of the Church. This connection will, at times, be made directly by a catechist or team member as planned in advance. At other times, the connection may simply happen more spontaneously as the participants recognize the connection or as the discussion leads in a particular direction.

- Other opportunities for catechesis can and should be used (e.g., adult faith formation opportunities provided by the Diocese or other neighboring parishes).
- [General resources](#) and [Children’s resources](#) can be found in [Appendix I](#). Sample catechetical resources, including a sample [curriculum outline](#) can be found in [Appendix IV](#).

Liturgical Aspect

From the very beginning of the catechumenate the participants are expected to participate in weekly Sunday Mass. Liturgical rites specific to this period sanctify the participants, leading them “into the life of faith, worship, and charity belonging to the People of God” (RCIA, no. 76). In these liturgical rites, the participants encounter Christ and are transformed by His grace. The rites, sacramentals, Catholic prayers and devotions, and retreat experiences are necessary for their conversion.

Rites Belonging to the Period of the Catechumenate – Within the period of the catechumenate, there are rites that should be celebrated, culminating in the rite of sending which closes this period.

The most frequently celebrated rite during the catechumenate is the celebrations of the Word of God: “First: celebrations held specifically for the participants; second, participation in the liturgy of the Word at the Sunday Mass; third, celebrations held in connection with catechetical instruction” (RCIA, no. 81). A model for such celebrations can be found in the RCIA ritual book paragraph nos. 85-89. These celebrations as stated in RCIA, no. 82 have as their purpose:

- To implant in their hearts the teachings they are receiving.
- To give them instruction and experience in the different aspects and ways of prayer.
- To explain to them the signs, celebrations, and seasons of the liturgy.
- To prepare them gradually to enter the worship of the assembly of the entire community.

Other rites during the catechumenate include minor exorcisms (RCIA, nos. 90-94), blessings (RCIA, nos. 95-97), anointing of the catechumens (RCIA, nos. 98-103), and the rite of sending of the catechumens for election (RCIA, nos. 106-117)/rite of sending of the candidates for recognition by the bishop and for the call to continuing conversion (RCIA, nos. 438-445). **Minor exorcisms, blessings (except “C” and “I”), and anointings are intended for catechumens only. They are not to be celebrated with candidates for it is not appropriate to their status as members of the Christian faithful, which they have by virtue of their valid Christian baptism.**

Minor exorcisms may be celebrated any time during the catechumenate period to “draw the attention of the catechumens to the real nature of Christian life, the struggle between flesh and spirit, the importance of self-denial for reaching the blessedness of God’s kingdom, and the unending need for God’s help” (RCIA, no. 90).

Blessings of the catechumens are given any time during the catechumenate as a “sign of God’s love and the Church’s tender care” (RCIA, no. 95). The blessings offer the catechumens the gifts of courage, joy, and peace as they continue their journey into the Church, even though they are not yet able to receive the graces of the sacraments. Blessings “C” or “I” could be given to candidates.

“During the Period of the Catechumenate, a rite of anointing of the catechumens, through the use of the oil of catechumens, may be celebrated wherever this seems beneficial or desirable” (RCIA, no. 99). The minister of this anointing is a priest or deacon. It is necessary that the catechumens understand the significance of this anointing which “symbolizes their need for God’s help and strength” (RCIA, no. 99) to continue undeterred in taking the next step of professing their faith and holding fast to it throughout their lives.

There are two different rites of sending: the rite of sending of catechumens for election (RCIA, nos. 106-117) and the rite of sending the candidates for recognition by the bishop and for the call to

continuing conversion (RCIA, nos. 438- 445). The different rites highlight the distinction between the unbaptized and the baptized. In a parish where there are both catechumens and candidates, these rites may be celebrated as a combined rite (RCIA, nos. 530-546). “In the catechesis of the community and in the celebration of these rites, care must be taken to maintain the distinction between the catechumens and the baptized candidates” (RCIA, no. 506). In the Diocese of Owensboro the rites of sending are traditionally celebrated in the parish on the first Sunday before Lent or the first Sunday of Lent (depending on your location), followed later in the day by the celebration of the rite of election and call to continuing conversion at the Cathedral (or another parish depending on your location) with the bishop (see the section of this manual titled “[Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion](#)” for more information). If the rite of election takes place in the parish due to the diocesan rite of election being cancelled, the rite of sending is not used.

Rite of Sending of Catechumens for Election:

- The rite is celebrated at a Liturgy of the Word or at a Sunday Mass. It may be celebrated on the first Sunday of Lent or at a suitable time prior to the rite of election.
- The readings for the first Sunday of Lent are most appropriate. The homily should help catechumens and the faithful to make the connection between the proclamation of the Word, the spiritual journey on which the catechumens and candidates have been traveling, and the rite of sending them for election.
- After the homily the catechumens are presented by a catechist or a pastoral minister closely related to their formation. The priest then invites the godparents, sponsors, assembly to give affirmation of the catechumens.
- The presider, the deacon or a catechist, following the ritual book (RCIA, nos. 106-117), presents the catechumens to the assembly. The presider then recommends them to the bishop who will call them to the Easter Sacraments.
- Intercessory prayers over the catechumens follow and they must be dismissed.

Rite of Sending the Candidates for Recognition by the Bishop and for the Call to Continuing Conversion:

- The candidates are presented to the presider who addresses the assembly asking for their affirmation as well as that of the sponsors. He then addresses the candidates, reminding them that the community and their sponsors have spoken in their favor.
- Intercessions for the candidates invite the community to keep them in prayer, followed by a blessing over the candidates.
- If the Eucharist is to be celebrated, the candidates may be dismissed.

Sacramentals, Catholic prayers, and devotions should be introduced to the catechumens during this period to prepare them for living a life of prayer within the Catholic Church. Sacramentals such as the Sign of the Cross before praying, blessing with holy water, Advent wreath prayers, ashes on Ash Wednesday statues, relics, etc., should be accompanied by proper catechesis and connection to the sacraments and the Church’s liturgical calendar/year.

Teaching Catholic prayers and devotions such as the Liturgy of the Hours, Stations of the Cross, Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, Eucharistic Adoration, the rosary, prayers before and after meals, and other basic Catholic prayers will deepen the catechumens’ identification with living a life of Catholic prayer in union with the universal Church, the Body of Christ.

Retreats for the catechumens can provide a more relaxed atmosphere for a mix of catechetical instruction, instruction on prayer, and experiences of different forms of prayer. Retreats offer a time for more private reflection and discernment of God's call in their journey of faith.

RITE OF ELECTION AND CALL TO CONTINUING CONVERSION

Pastoral Aspect

The unbaptized catechumens are sent to the bishop for election to the sacraments of initiation. The Church “makes its ‘election,’ that is, the choice and admission of those catechumens who have the dispositions that make them fit to take part, at the next major celebration, in the sacraments of initiation. 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” (RCIA, no. 119).

Those baptized candidates who will complete their initiation or be received into full communion at the Easter Vigil, are sent for recognition and the call to continuing conversion by the bishop. Since they have already been joined to Christ and the church through Baptism, they are called to deepen their conversion to Christ as they learn to live out their baptismal call to the community of the Catholic Church.

Catechetical Aspect

The RCIA places a strong emphasis on discernment before the rite of election or the call to continuing conversion. At this time the church determines the readiness of catechumens and candidates to be called to the Easter Sacraments, who will normally have had about a year of formation in the catechumenate period (RCIA, nos. 121,122).

Liturgical Aspect

“The rite should take place in the cathedral church, in a parish church or if necessary, some other suitable or fitting place” (RCIA, no. 127). In the Diocese of Owensboro, the rite of election and call to continuing conversion is celebrated by the bishop as a Liturgy of the Word. “When celebrated outside Mass, the rite takes place after the readings and is concluded with the dismissal of both the elect and the faithful” (RCIA, no. 128).

The role of the bishop is especially prominent in the rite of election. Because he is the center of unity for the local church and is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the entire initiation process, the announcement of the church’s decision to call catechumens and candidates to the sacraments falls to him (RCIA, nos. 12, 121). In the case where it may be impossible for him to do so, he must delegate this responsibility to a priest or deacon.

In the Diocese of Owensboro the liturgy for the rite of election is planned by the Diocesan Office of Worship and is celebrated at a parish near Paducah on the Sunday before Lent, and at the Cathedral on the first Sunday of Lent, with the bishop presiding. RCIA Coordinators of each parish in the diocese receive notification from the Office of Worship inviting them to electronically submit the names and addresses of those catechumens and candidates who will be presented to the bishop for election or call to continuing conversion.

If catechumens are presented for election, they will sign the Book of the Elect during the ceremony. The candidates for full communion will not sign the Book of the Elect.

PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

After the rite of election, the elect now move into this period of more “intense spiritual preparation for the sacraments of initiation” (RCIA, no. 138) to be celebrated at the upcoming Easter Vigil. This time, usually coinciding with Lent, is focused more on “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” (RCIA, no. 139). The candidates, who have been called to continuous conversion, may join with the elect in this period as a way to enter into Lenten purification and prepare for coming into full communion with the Catholic Church. Through this period and especially in the celebration of certain rites, including the scrutinies and penitential rite, the presentations of the Creed and Lord’s Prayer, and the preparation rites on Holy Saturday, the elect are enlightened with a “deeper knowledge of Christ the Savior” (RCIA, no. 139) and a burning desire to commit their lives to Him. This period ends with the preparation rites on Holy Saturday.

Pastoral Aspect

The main focus of this period rests on the elect and candidates deciding to leave behind their old way of living to embrace life in Christ within the Catholic Church. During this period, the elect and candidates may experience doubt and discouragement, requiring close support and care from the community.

The sponsors of the elect and candidates should be present at all the rites and sessions of this period to support them in their final preparation. The pastor, RCIA Coordinator, and sponsors, along with the whole Catholic community should be attentive to the needs of the elect and candidates and be prepared to talk with them and spend time with them as needed.

Opportunities for entering into the season of Lent with the whole community should be offered and encouraged. Some examples are:

- Lenten fasting
- Opportunities for almsgiving or other acts of charity or service (e.g., soup kitchens, outreach centers, inner city schools, etc.)
- Prayer opportunities (e.g., Stations of the Cross, Lenten penance service)

Catechetical Aspect

The focus of catechesis shifts in this period to one of spiritual preparation for the sacraments of initiation and reception into the Church. Themes of repentance and holiness encourage the elect to reflect on God’s love for us, his faithful care for us, and our need to turn to him. Catechesis in this period should deepen within the elect and candidates the resolve to “hold fast to Christ and to carry out their decision to love God above all” (RCIA, no. 141).

Catechetical session themes in this period should include:

- The mystery of sin and the power of darkness
- Purification of heart and mind (conscience, self-denial and penance, conversion)
- The healing effects of God’s mercy
- Recognition of Christ’s presence in daily life
- Obedience to God, being conformed to Christ’s suffering

- Hopeful and joyful expectation (for baptism and/or full initiation, and for the second coming of Christ)
- Prayer

Catechesis should focus on Christ the Savior and the events of the Paschal Mystery— Jesus’ Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension (RCIA, nos. 138, 139).

Care should be taken to catechize the elect and candidates regarding the meaning of the various rites that will be celebrated during this period.

All RCIA participants should be instructed regarding the meaning of the scrutiny rites and why a separate penitential rite is celebrated for the baptized candidates. “Because the prayer of exorcism in the three Scrutinies... properly belongs to the elect and uses numerous images referring to their approaching baptism, those scrutinies of the elect and [the] penitential rite for those preparing for confirmation and eucharist have been kept separate and distinct” (RCIA, no. 463).

The elect should be prepared in advance for the scrutinies. In these rites the Church prays that the elect will receive divine assistance that will inspire in them a desire for purification by allowing the light of the Holy Spirit to lead them to scrutinize themselves and come to repentance through the scrutiny rites, the elect should “progress in genuine self-knowledge through serious examination of their lives and true repentance” (RCIA, no. 142). They should be aware that the scrutiny rites are an opportunity to “progress in their perception of sin and their desire for salvation” (RCIA, no. 143). The scrutinies are “reinforced by an exorcism” (RCIA, no. 141), by which the elect are “freed from the effects of sin and from the influence of the devil” (RCIA, no. 144).

Liturgical Aspect

The rites belonging to this period include the penitential rite (for baptized candidates), the scrutiny rites, the presentation of the Lord’s Prayer, and the presentation of the Creed, and the preparation rites on Holy Saturday.

Penitential Rite

The penitential rite “can serve to mark the Lenten purification of baptized but previously uncatechized adults who are preparing to receive the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist or to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church” (RCIA, no. 459). **The penitential rite is celebrated *only for the baptized candidates*. It is not to be celebrated for those who are not yet one with the Church in baptism.**

The penitential rite “may be celebrated on the Second Sunday of Lent or on a Lenten weekday” (RCIA, no. 462). If the candidates are to be received into full communion and receive the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist at a time other than the Easter Vigil, then the rite may be celebrated “at the most suitable time” (RCIA, no. 462). The penitential rite “may also help to prepare the candidates to celebrate the sacrament of penance” (RCIA, no. 461).

Scrutinies

“The Scrutinies are meant to uncover then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect; to bring out, then strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good” (RCIA, no. 141). Instructions

regarding the celebration of the scrutinies can be found in the RCIA ritual numbers 141–146 (general), 150–156 (First Scrutiny), 164–170 (Second Scrutiny) and 171–177 (Third Scrutiny).

The scrutinies are celebrated *only for the unbaptized elect*. They are not to be celebrated for those who are already one with the Church in baptism. There are three scrutiny rites. All three should be celebrated for all of the elect. These are not optional rites and are proper to the period of purification and enlightenment.

The scrutiny rites are “solemnly celebrated on Sundays” (RCIA, no. 141) and “should take place within the ritual Masses ‘Christian Initiation: The Scrutinies’, which are celebrated on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent” (RCIA, no. 146). The Ritual Mass for the scrutinies can be found in the Roman Missal Ritual Mass #2 A, B, and C on page 1121 (RCIA, no. 146, for circumstances where the period of purification and enlightenment takes place outside of Lent).

At the Masses when the scrutiny rites are celebrated, “the readings with their chants are those given for these Sundays in the Lectionary for Mass, Year A” (RCIA, no. 146). This means that regardless of the current lectionary cycle, the Year A readings are always used at the scrutiny Masses.

Special “intercessions for the elect” (RCIA, no. 145) are prayed at the scrutiny Mass. Two options are given in the ritual (RCIA, no. 153). The ritual also allows for them to be “adapted to fit various circumstances” (RCIA, no. 153) which allows for intercessions which are adapted to the specific needs of the elect.

Presentations of the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer

In the presentations of the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer the Church entrusts to the elect “the ancient texts that have always been regarded as expressing the heart of the Church’s faith and prayer” (RCIA, no. 147). Instructions regarding the presentation of the Creed can be found in the RCIA ritual book, nos. 157–163. Instructions regarding the presentation of the Lord’s Prayer can be found in the RCIA ritual book, nos. 178–184.

The presentations normally take place during this period of purification and enlightenment, but “for pastoral advantage and because the period of purification and enlightenment is rather short, the presentations may be held during the period of the catechumenate” (RCIA, no. 104). If this is the case, take care to substitute the word catechumens for elect in all formularies (RCIA, nos. 104-105).

Preparation Rites on Holy Saturday

The preparation rites on Holy Saturday are intended as proximate preparation for the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation. A suggested time for these rites would be the morning of Holy Saturday, which will set the tone for the day. There is some pastoral flexibility regarding which of these rites are celebrated based on the particular circumstances (RCIA, no. 186). Instructions regarding these rites can be found in the RCIA ritual book, nos. 185–205.

The recitation of the Creed, *ephphatha* rite, and choosing of a baptismal name are all to be celebrated *only by the unbaptized elect*. Baptized candidates may be present at the celebration of the preparation rites to pray with and for the elect.

At the conclusion of the preparation rites the entire group (elect, candidates, and sponsors) may remain together as a group to prepare for the Easter Vigil. Some possible activities during this time may include:

- A brief catechesis on the Liturgy of Light and the Paschal candle.
- A reflection on Christ as the Light of the world (how spreading the light from the Paschal candle to the individual candles symbolizes spreading the light of Christ in the world).
- A walk-through of the Easter Vigil and celebration of the sacraments of initiation.
- A reminder that “they should refrain from their usual activities, spend their time in prayer and reflection, and as far as they can, observe a fast” (RCIA, no. 185.1).

CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION AND RECEPTION INTO FULL COMMUNION WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The elect and the candidates for reception into full communion, having been assessed by those concerned with their religious formation as being ready and themselves desiring to enter and live the life of a Catholic Christian, stand well-disposed for the grace given in the sacraments. The elect will receive all three of the sacraments of initiation. The candidates for full communion, having already made a good confession in the sacrament of penance, will make a profession of faith and be received into the Catholic Church and then receive the sacraments of confirmation and first Eucharist. In this manner the elect and candidates for full communion “are led by the Holy Spirit into the promised fullness of time begun in Christ and, as they share in the Eucharistic sacrifice and meal, even to a foretaste of the Kingdom of God” (RCIA, no. 206).

Pastoral Aspect

The candidates for full communion must celebrate the sacrament of penance before this celebration.

The authority to celebrate the sacrament of confirmation must be obtained (see [Who’s Who in the Initiation Process](#) in [Appendix I](#) for guidelines on when faculties must be obtained by the Bishop’s office).

If the valid baptismal status of any of those who are to be received into full communion is uncertain, they should be baptized conditionally during the celebration of initiation. It should be clearly explained to the one to be conditionally baptized and even to the assembly during the celebration that this is being done to ensure the person has been baptized validly, which is necessary for the valid reception of the other sacraments. The formula to be used during the celebration for a conditional baptism is: “If you have not been validly baptized before, I baptize you...” (RCIA, no. 480).

The sponsors above all should understand what is going to happen during this celebration. They are to help guide and lead the one whom they sponsor through the ceremony. Only secondarily should the elect and candidates for full communion be required to know what is going to happen.

The celebration might be made more personal in a number of ways. The names of the patron saints of the elect and candidates for full communion can be incorporated into the Litany of the Saints. The prayers of the faithful could include them by name if practical. Some of the neophytes should take part in the presentation of the gifts. A reception after the Easter Vigil celebration provides a time for members of the community to welcome and congratulate their new brothers and sisters in the faith. It also provides a time for words of appreciation, joy, and gratitude to be exchanged.

Catechetical Aspect

As the elect and candidates are led through a rehearsal for the celebration, special references to their previous catechesis or reminders ought to be given.

Those conducting the rehearsal might include these catechetical reminders:

- Jesus is the Light of the world.
- Jesus is the Light that conquers the darkness, most especially the darkness of sin and death.
- God calls us into a communion, into a people.
- Salvation has a long and wondrous history.
- Baptism is immersion into the saving death of the Lord Jesus.
- Baptism washes away original sin and all others committed before baptism.
- Baptism makes us children of God and members of the mystical body of Christ.
- Confirmation seals and strengthens us with a greater measure of the gift of the Holy Spirit first received at baptism.
- The Sacred Chrism is consecrated by the bishop and in name shares the same root word as Christ– the anointed one.
- In the sacraments we not only meet Christ and are given grace but also vow ourselves to live as his disciples, as Catholic Christians.
- The Eucharist is truly, really, and substantially the very presence of Christ.
- The Eucharist is the sacrifice of Calvary present to us in an unbloody way.
- Christ is present in the assembly, the minister, the Word, and the Eucharistic species.
- Eucharist brings about communion with God the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit as well as with the members of the Church.
- We are sent forth from the celebration of the Mass to live and share our faith.

Practically speaking, the manner in which Holy Communion is received needs to be reviewed and rehearsed by those who will receive Communion for the first time.

During the Mass, before saying: “Behold the Lamb of God,” the celebrant may briefly remind the neophytes and newly received of the preeminence of the Eucharist, which is the climax of their initiation and reception and the center of the whole of Christian life (RCIA, no. 243).

Liturgical Aspect

The usual time for this celebration is the Easter Vigil for the elect (RCIA, no. 208 if the pastoral situation demands another time). The RCIA ritual book provides rubrics and texts for the initiation of the elect alone at nos. 206-243. The RCIA ritual book provides rubrics and texts for the reception into full communion alone at nos. 473-499. The RCIA ritual book also provides rubrics and texts for a combined rite for the celebration at the Easter Vigil of the sacraments of initiation and of the rite of reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church at 562-594. **Please note that some texts have been revised in the Third Edition of the Roman Missal.** These will be noted below.

Baptism

The celebration of baptism begins after the homily. The rubrics and texts as found in the Third Edition of the Roman Missal at nos. 37-53 are to be followed. **Please note that the texts before the Litany of the Saints, before the Blessing of the font and water, as well as the blessing of the font and water have been revised, making the ones found in the RCIA ritual book obsolete.** After the blessing of the font and water, the celebrant continues with the administration of the elect's renunciation of sin, the profession of faith and the celebration of the sacrament of baptism. These texts can be found at nos. 226-230 or in the combined rite text at nos. 572-574 of the RCIA ritual book. After the renunciation of sin and the profession of faith, the elect are baptized either by immersion, "which is more suitable as a symbol of participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, (Christian Initiation General Introduction, no. 22)," referenced as option A; or by pouring of water, referenced as option B. If the newly baptized are to receive a baptismal garment, this is to be accomplished as described at no. 229 or no. 578 of the RCIA ritual book. The newly baptized then receive their baptismal candles as given in no. 230 or no.579 of the RCIA ritual book.

Celebration of Reception

If there are candidates for reception into full communion, their profession of faith and reception follows the baptisms and precedes the celebration of confirmation. This celebration is for only those who have received a valid non-Catholic baptism. The rubrics and texts of the RCIA ritual book for this celebration are to be followed. They can be found at nos. 490-492 and in the combined ritual at nos. 584-586. *When receiving a candidate initiated in the Eastern Orthodox Church, contact the Office of Worship for specific instructions.*

Confirmation

The texts given in the RCIA ritual book are to be followed. These can be found beginning at no. 231 when no receptions take place; beginning at no. 493, when only receptions take place; or in the combined rite beginning at no. 587.

The major issue involved in the celebration of Confirmation is the authority to confirm. Priests who have the authority to confirm have this either by the law itself or by delegation from the bishop. The law itself gives priests the authority to confirm all those of the age of reason whom they have baptized. **This means that only the priest who has baptized has the "authority" or "faculty" to confirm that same person.** Baptisms cannot be celebrated by one priest, and then the confirmations of these by another priest. These confirmations would be invalid. Nor can baptisms be celebrated by a deacon and then the confirmations by a priest. These confirmations would also be invalid.

The pastors of the Diocese of Owensboro have been delegated the authority to confirm all those they receive into full communion with the Catholic Church. All other priests must receive permission from the pastor of the parish to baptize and confirm those being brought to full communion with the Catholic Church. In the Diocese of Owensboro priests are not delegated to confirm those who were baptized Catholic but uncatechized. If a person has been

baptized Catholic, pastors must seek the faculty to confirm from the Office of the Bishop. If one is in doubt about these matters please contact the Office of Worship or see [Who's Who in the Initiation Process](#) in [Appendix I](#).

The renewal of baptismal promises and the sprinkling of the assembly with the Easter water take place after the celebration of confirmation as stated at no. 55 of the Third Edition of the Roman Missal. **This is different than that given in the combined ritual found in the RCIA ritual book.**

Eucharist

The neophytes take part in the celebration of the Eucharist and will receive for the first time Holy Communion. At the Easter Vigil only Eucharistic Prayers I, II or III may be used. Outside the Easter Vigil Eucharistic Prayer IV may be used (RCIA, no. 242). The special interpolations given in the Third Edition of the Roman Missal for the ritual “Mass for Christian Initiation: Baptism” are to be used, found on pages 1127-1128. In the case when baptism is not celebrated, the interpolations found in the ritual Mass for confirmation are to be used, found on page 1131. It is most desirable that the neophytes and those received into full communion, together with their sponsors and family, as well as those involved in their religious formation, receive communion under both species (RCIA, no. 243).

MYSTAGOGY

This fourth step of the RCIA process, defined in paragraph nos. 244-251 of the RCIA ritual book, is that period following the sacraments of initiation where “the neophytes are, as the term ‘mystagogy’ suggests, introduced into a fuller and more effective understanding of mysteries through the Gospel message they have learned and above all through their experience of the Sacraments they have received. For they have truly been renewed in mind, tasted more deeply the sweetness of God’s Word, received the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and grown to know the goodness of the Lord. Out of this experience, which belongs to Christians and increases as it is lived, they derive a new perception of the faith, of the Church, and of the world” (RCIA, no. 245).

Pastoral Aspect

“The mature fruit of mystagogy is awareness that one's life is being progressively transformed by the holy mysteries being celebrated. The aim of all Christian education, moreover, is to train the believer in an adult faith that can make him a ‘new creation’; capable of bearing witness in his surroundings to the Christian hope that inspires him” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*). The primary mystagogues to the entire Church are her bishops and priests.

The RCIA ritual book says: “After mystagogy, the process for the neophytes should extend until the anniversary of Christian initiation, with at least monthly assemblies of the neophytes for their deeper Christian formation and incorporation into the full life of the Christian community” (RCIA, no. 24 of Appendix III: *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*). The monthly follow-up meetings would not have to be the responsibility of the RCIA team. Perhaps the neophytes’ sponsors or others in the parish could take responsibility at this point. If one of the neophytes has been coming to the parish for a while, they may be able to coordinate these monthly meetings with some assistance and guidance from the RCIA Coordinator.

The RCIA mystagogy period begins at Christian initiation and ends at Pentecost. It lasts for the entire Easter Season. RCIA postbaptismal catechesis continues for the rest of the neophyte year and ends at the anniversary of their initiation. Mystagogy never truly ends because all fully initiated Catholics are called to continue on a lifelong journey into the mystery by which they are being saved.

It is important to form sponsors to understand the importance of their role to help the neophytes practice their faith by fully and authentically practicing their own. Remind sponsors to keep in contact with the neophytes during the Easter Season. Ask sponsors to let the pastor or RCIA Coordinator know if weekly participation in the celebration of the Eucharist is not taking place or if other family matters are preoccupying the neophytes.

Here are some suggestions for the period of mystagogy:

- Help neophytes identify their gifts and discern how the Spirit is calling them to live out their conversion to discipleship and gradually take on the life of being a Catholic Christian. Encourage the sponsors and them to pray faithfully together for discernment.

- Provide opportunities for newly baptized to make their first and second reconciliations.
- Create an administrative process, assigned to someone who may or may not be on the RCIA team, which will make sure all former RCIA participants are aware of opportunities to become involved in parish life.
- Plan a group service project. Ask a sponsor or the neophytes themselves to organize it and to complete it with guidance from the RCIA team.
- Social activities could include:
 - Invite previous year neophytes to host a celebration after Easter Vigil.
 - Host an appreciation dinner with the families, sponsors, team, etc.
 - Host a breakfast on Pentecost. Have the parish provide the main dish and ask the neophytes to bring food to honor the sponsors and RCIA team members.
 - Host a closing dinner at the end of mystagogy, including praying the Liturgy of the Hours and/or talking about the Eucharist as a banquet.
 - Make contact with the neophytes during specific parish/diocesan events, inviting them to attend or to work together as a group at those events. Ask sponsors to coordinate.

Catechetical Aspect

The RCIA team should connect mystagogy to the rest of the process. The way the whole process is presented sets up a dynamic that affects whether the neophytes continue to participate in the RCIA process during mystagogy. If the desire to become Catholic has not deepened into an unfolding relationship with God, involving conversion within the community, there is not much reason to participate after Easter. Following are some suggestions for helping the RCIA participants see continuity in and between all periods of RCIA.

- Communicate the intention and importance of mystagogy from the beginning of the process.
- Give a church tour. Explain the traditional meaning and liturgical use of every part of the church (tabernacle, sanctuary, confessional, nave, vestibule, sacristy, baptismal font, Easter candle, statues, paintings, etc.). Although you may have done this at the beginning of RCIA, take the neophytes through again during the mystagogy period. They can understand more now. Relate to them what they just experienced at Easter Vigil, for example, at the baptismal font. Offer to take them through as the anniversary of their initiation draws near, too, because they can understand even better then.
- Reacquaint them to the saints and to specific traditional prayers to the saints.
- Provide opportunities for leaders of parish ministries to introduce themselves and their ministries. Ask the neophytes to identify any ministries they would like to learn more about or join.
- Help them to experience God's presence in the sacraments, so that they hunger to live sacramentally.
- Help them to understand that it is through the sacraments that they establish and grow in their relationship with God.

Liturgical Aspect

Mystagogy is liturgical. Help the neophytes connect their new status in full communion with the Church to becoming fully engaged participants in liturgy.

During the Easter Season, break open the Word with the neophytes after Sunday Mass. Teach them to break open the Word, giving them specific suggestions of how to respond to the readings by prayer, study, and acts of charity.

During the mystagogy period, have the neophytes sit together and, if possible, have their presence acknowledged by the lector or the priest (RCIA, no. 248).

Give opportunities for spiritual reflection within the three earlier periods of RCIA, so when they become neophytes they will be better prepared to continue their own faith journeys after their RCIA process ends. Attend a spiritual retreat together. Include sponsors and, if practical, spouses.

Reacquaint them with the parts of the Mass to deepen their understanding and appreciation.

Suggestions for public worship:

- Celebrate Pentecost vespers with special blessings for the neophytes.
- Celebrate a renewal of their baptismal promises by having them relight their candles at Pentecost.
- Have the neophytes publicly renew their baptismal commitment during the following Lent.
- Encourage neophytes to celebrate the next Triduum together.
- Celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours together.

Suggestions for private devotion, including a time for explanation, review, or reflection:

- Celebrate Divine Mercy devotions together.
- Attend Eucharistic Adoration with the neophytes.
- Pray the [scriptural rosary](#) (see [Appendix IV](#)) with the neophytes, reflecting on the life of Christ and Mary with Biblical references.
- Pray the Stations of the Cross with the neophytes.
- Pray traditional prayers such as novenas (consider sharing www.praymorenovenas.com as resource) and litanies with the neophytes.
- Pray with the saints. Help them get to know their patron saints.
- Pray lectio divina.
- Pray Ignatian prayer.

CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE

Because children of catechetical age are considered, for purposes of Christian initiation, to be adults (canon no. 852.1), they are included in the norms set forth by the RCIA. Children of catechetical age are old enough to hear and understand the call of Christ, and to respond with faith at their own age level. Consequently, their initiation is not based, as is the Baptism of infants, entirely on the commitment of the parents and the faith of the Church, but requires a genuine faith response on the part of the child. At the same time, the child is still dependent on his or her parents, and will need continued nurturing in faith. Children of catechetical age are those who have reached the age of reason, which is generally considered to be age seven. The category of “children of catechetical age” extends up to the fourteenth year.

The initiation of young people fourteen years and older should follow the rite for adults in every respect, rather than following the adaptations for children that are found in part II, chapter 1 of the RCIA ritual book.

Unbaptized Children of Catechetical Age

This is the primary group of children involved in the catechumenate. Part II, chapter 1 of the rite addresses their special concerns. They should without exception participate fully in the children's catechumenate, and celebrate all three of the sacraments of initiation together (see RCIA no. 305, NCCB Statutes nos. 18–19, and canons 852.1 and 866).

Baptized Non-Catholic Children Seeking Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church

This group is included in the norms set forth by the RCIA. Their situation is addressed in part by the description of the catechumenate for children found in part II, chapter 1 of the rite. Their situation is also addressed in part II, chapter 5 of the rite, which concerns the reception of baptized Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church. The priest who presides at the reception of these young candidates receives from the law the faculty to confirm them (canon 883.2), and must use it (canon 885.2; see also NCCB statutes no. 13). Therefore, children who are received into the Church and who have not been validly confirmed must be confirmed at the time of their reception. The process of formation for these baptized children may be carried on in the catechumenate, with the clear understanding that they are candidates, not catechumens. Just as the participation of baptized adults is allowed in the adult catechumenate for pastoral reasons, so the participation of baptized children is allowed in the children's catechumenate. If the parents of these children are also being baptized or received into the Church, their children should be received at the same time, depending on their readiness.

Baptized but Uncatechized Catholic Children of Catechetical Age

These children should be included in the catechumenate, if this is thought to be pastorally prudent and desirable, because their situation parallels the circumstances of baptized but uncatechized adults (RCIA part II, chapter 4). Alternatively, they may be catechized with their

Catholic peers and celebrate the sacraments with them. The fact that they may be out of the grade level at which the sacraments are usually celebrated should not be seen as a barrier to receiving confirmation and first Eucharist with children of other ages, since the celebration of these sacraments should always be based on readiness as described in the rite, and not on chronological age or grade level.

Those children who have received their formation in a catechumenate are to be confirmed in the same liturgy in which they celebrate their first Eucharist (RCIA, no. 409). Permission for a priest to confirm baptized but uncatechized Catholic children of catechetical age who have taken part in a catechumenate follows the same regulations concerning baptized but uncatechized adults (see the section of this manual titled "[Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation and Reception into Full Communion with the Catholic Church](#)").

Children Younger Than Catechetical Age

Unbaptized children younger than catechetical age are to be baptized according to the Rite of Baptism for Children which is the rite used for infant baptism. Their confirmation and first Eucharist are then deferred until a later age, according to diocesan policy.

Baptized children younger than catechetical age whose parents are being received into the full communion of the Catholic Church do not participate in a catechumenate. They are received on the same date as their parents. Although no rite is required of them, these children should be warmly welcomed and may be recognized in various ways at the celebration of their parents' reception. Notation of their reception and record of the date and place of their Baptism should be made in the parish baptismal register at the time of their parents' reception. They then receive the remaining sacraments of initiation with their Catholic peers.

Baptized children younger than catechetical age who were baptized in a non-Catholic Church, and whose parents are Catholics, are considered to be received into the Church at the time of their reception of first communion, with no additional rites required of them. The date of their first reception of Eucharist should be noted in the parish baptismal register as their date of reception, and record of the date and place of their baptism should also be entered. They should participate with their Catholic peers in catechesis and the sacraments, and should not take part in a catechumenate.

The Relationship of the Rite for Adults to the Rite for Children

The catechumenate as it is described for an adult is the model for the catechumenate for children. What is contained in the section devoted to children (RCIA part II, chapter 1) is a set of adaptations to render the adult catechumenate better suited to the pastoral needs of children. It does not constitute a different model. Whenever the introductory material in the chapter on children does not provide enough information or guidance concerning the periods or the rites, the reader should refer to the corresponding section of the rite for adults for more information.

From apostolic times, families have come to the grace of baptism together. Families that are undergoing initiation should, as far as possible, celebrate the rites of the catechumenate and the sacraments of initiation together as a family, provided that each member is ready for the next

stage of the process. When there is a mixed group of children and adults, the adult rite is followed, with appropriate adaptations made for the children who are participating.

The catechumenate for adults and children is a single reality. Adults and children may always participate in the rites together. When the children's parents are not part of the catechumenate for adults, however, the parish may celebrate the rites for them in gatherings separate from the adult catechumenate, where the fullest use of the adaptations for children may be exercised. This is a pastoral decision.

Special Needs of Children

The Christian initiation of children of catechetical age must therefore take special care to evaluate the following elements of the child's conversion, so that the child's special needs may be met:

- What is the attitude of the child's family? Is there a commitment on their part to help the child grow in faith and in the community of the Church? Can this commitment be developed?
- What is the child's relationship to the parish community and to Sunday worship? Is there an on-going relationship? Can such a relationship be developed?
- Has the child expressed faith in Christ? Does the child want to belong to the Church? Can a personal relationship to Christ and to the Church be developed?

Adapting the Rites for Children

When celebrating the rites for children, the ritual for children should be used and adapted to the needs of the particular children who will participate. Those who are involved in preparing the rites, especially catechists whose background in liturgy is not extensive, should take great care in adapting the rites. The following principles should be kept in mind:

- The adaptations for children offered by the rite should be read and understood in light of Part I of the RCIA.
- It is the goal of any adaptation to preserve and highlight the central symbols of the rites.
- It is necessary to avoid adding additional layers of symbolism to the symbols that are already in the rite.
- It is necessary to understand the structures of the rites, and keep those structures intact.
- The rite as it appears in the ritual book is always our guide and reference point.

When children celebrate the rites together with adult catechumens, the adult rite is followed, with some adaptations for the children. In order to accomplish this successfully, the celebrant should prepare carefully, perhaps using a text prepared specially that combines the adult rite with the adaptations for children.

When combining adaptations for children with the adult rite, in celebrations where both adults and children will participate, the following guidance is offered:

- In the rite of acceptance, the opening dialogue with the children should ask the questions that appear in the rite for children, whereas the dialogue with the adults would ask the questions that appear in the adult rite.
- The rite of acceptance for children incorporates a special affirmation by the parents. This affirmation by the parents should be retained when the children celebrate with the adults.
- The scrutinies for children, unlike those for adults, may be combined with an anointing with the oil of catechumens. If the scrutinies for children are celebrated with the adults however, the anointing should be celebrated at another time.

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Note: You can download appendix items as individual documents via Google Drive by clicking [here](#).

APPENDIX I

INFORMATION AND SAMPLES FOR THE RCIA COORDINATOR

GENERAL RCIA RESOURCES

- A. RCIA ritual book
- B. Sacred Scripture
 - Be sure all catechumens and candidates are given a Catholic Bible at the Rite of Acceptance (Rite of Welcome) to be used at all catechetical sessions, and that all team members and sponsors have access to the same translation given to the catechumens and candidates.
 - The New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE) is suggested since this is the translation used in the Sunday lectionary in the United States.
- C. The Roman Missal, Third Edition
- D. Catechism of the Catholic Church and The Compendium
- E. United States Catholic Catechism for Adults and its Study Guide
- F. General Directory for Catechesis
- G. National Directory for Catechesis
- H. Code of Canon Law
- I. The Catechumenate and the Law: A Pastoral and Canonical Commentary for the Church in the United States by John M. Huels (Liturgy Training Publications)—A guide to applying Church law to issues and situations that commonly occur throughout the RCIA.
- J. *Catechesi tradendae*—Apostolic Exhortation by Pope John Paul II “On Catechesis in our Time,” October 16, 1979
- K. Guide for Catechists—Vatican document from the Congregation of the Evangelization of Peoples, December 3, 1993
- L. Diocese of Owensboro Office of Worship and Office of Faith Formation
- M. Association for Catechumenal Ministry (ACM) RCIA Leader’s Manual (Liturgy Training Publications)
- N. Association for Catechumenal Ministry (ACM) Catechist Guide (Liturgy Training Publications)—provides outlines to assist catechists in preparing catechetical sessions
- O. Association for Catechumenal Ministry (ACM) Participant’s Manual (Liturgy Training Publications)—comprehensive handouts for catechumens and candidates on doctrine as well as prayers, devotions, and other topics
 - These are doctrinally sound handouts that can be used as a primary resource or supplemental handout for catechetical sessions.
 - They are available in an electronic format with the ability to print and copy

unlimited copies for a single licensing fee.

- P. Catholic Update (Liguori Publications)—supplemental handouts on many topics
- Q. Journey of Faith (Liguori Publications)
- R. Symbolon (The Augustine Institute)
- S. Foundations in Faith (publication of RCL—Resources for Christian Living)
- Lectionary-based resource for planning dismissal catechesis
 - Resources for all stages of the RCIA process
- T. Catechumenate: A Journal of Christian Initiation (Liturgy Training Publications)
- U. Worship page of Diocesan website: www.owensborodiocese.org/worship (includes scripts for rites in the RCIA and more)
- V. Websites
- The Vatican Website: www.vatican.va
 - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: www.usccb.com
 - Diocese of Owensboro: www.owensborodiocese.org
 - Thomas More College: www.thomasmore.edu
 - Catholic Online: www.catholiconline.com
 - Association for Catechumenal Ministry: www.acmrcia.org
 - Team RCIA: www.teamRCIA.com
 - Center for Liturgy, St. Louis University: www.liturgy.slu.edu
 - RCIA blog from Association for Catechumenal Ministry: www.rciablog.com
 - Dynamic Catholic: www.dynamiccatholic.com
 - EWTN: www.ewtn.com
 - Our Lady of the Holy Spirit Center, Norwood, OH: www.olhsc.org/
 - Liturgy Training Publication's *Catechumeneon*: www.catechumeneon.org
- W. Membership organizations, associations
- Association for Catechumenal Ministry www.acmrcia.org
 - Team RCIA www.teamRCIA.com

CHILDREN'S RCIA RESOURCES

Six Proven Ways to Improve Your Children's RCIA. Team RCIA. *A free 14-page guide available for free download at www.teamrcia.com/handouts/free-guide/*

Friends on the Way: Children's Catechumenate Resource (Dismissal and Catechetical Sessions). Janet Miller. Team RCIA. *PDF files for each liturgical year available for download. <https://teamrcia.com/catalog/friends-on-the-way-childrens-catechumenate-resource/>*

God is Calling: Together Time for Families – Boxed Set. Judith Dunlap and Mary Cummins Wlodarski. Franciscan Media. *This series offers three sets of illustrated storybooks written on two different age levels, one for young children, ages 7 to 10, and other for older children, ages 11 to 14.*

Living the Good News. Morehouse Education Resources. *A lectionary-based catechesis resource, published three seasons of the church year.*

Journey of Faith. Francine M. O'Connor. Liguori MO: Liguori. *These handouts explore Catholic belief and practice from a child's perspective, involving participants in Scripture and the parish community. The entire program consists of four packets of handouts (one packet for each stage, a total of 44 handouts).*

The Church Speaks about Sacraments with Children: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1990. *This volume brings together the major Vatican and U.S. documents that govern the Christian initiation of children.*

Lectionary-Based Catechesis for Children. De Villers, Sylvia. New York: Paulist Press, 1994.

Christian Initiation of Older Children. Figgess, Sandra. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990. *Don't be misled by the title. This book provides catechetical material best used with children between the ages of seven and twelve, at the oldest.*

Handbook for Today's Catholic Children. O'Connor, Francine M. Liguori MO: Liguori, 2002. *Although this little book was compiled with Catholic children and their parents in mind, you might find it helpful during the initiation process. It's best suited to middle grades.*

A Child's Journey: The Christian Initiation of Children. Senseman, Rita Burns. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1998. *Good, practical approach to initiation of children, including information on celebrating the rites and on discernment interviews. (Available for purchase through Team RCIA.)*

It was not easy being a Christian in the Roman Empire during the first 300 years of the Church. While periods of active persecution were sporadic, Christians were usually under suspicion. Christians were set apart from many of the values of the surrounding society. They did not participate in the drunken festivities celebrating the local gods. Many men would not serve in the military as so as not to take an oath to the Roman Emperor as a god. They were conspicuously absent from gladiatorial games. They prayed in their own communities and outsiders were not welcome to participate.

Yet many people were attracted to Christian life. They could not help to notice that Christian families were different. Christian men lived faithfully with their wives. Christians were honest in business, and readily helped others in time of famine and need. Adult inquirers who knew Christians wondered what the source of peace was in Christian families and communities.

When adult inquirers wanted to explore more of what it meant to be Christian, they would approach a Christian friend for information. If the inquirers were honest, the Christians would take them to a meeting of Christians for further information. If the inquirers were serious, they became catechumens and entered a long process of initiation, one that could be up to three years.

In the three year period, the catechumens would meet regularly for instruction and prayer with the community. Their way of life would be examined. They would attend Mass, but leave after the readings and the homily as they were not yet introduced into the full celebration of the Eucharist. They would not yet learn the Lord's Prayer. In the Roman world the emperor was seen as a god, and it was considered a subversive to pray that God is our Father as Jesus taught us.

Eventually the catechumens were examined to determine if they were ready for Baptism. Their sponsors would be witnesses to their fidelity to Christian teaching and vouch that they were charitable towards the poor. Those who were ready celebrated the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation (the bishop's anointing) and the Eucharist during the Easter Vigil.

DECLINE OF THE CATECHUMENATE

After Christianity became legal in the Roman Empire, the catechumenate as a period of preparation for Christian life went into decline. The practice of baptism of infants became common, especially in the light of St Augustine's teaching on original sin. With the high mortality rate of infants, the practice of early baptism became more of the norm for the sake of the infant's salvation. During the early Middle Ages barbarian tribes would be baptized all together with no period of pre-baptismal instruction or initiation. Christian formation in the faith would follow Baptism. In the West there was also the separation of Baptism and Confirmation, with Confirmation delayed to later years.

Before the Second Vatican Council the process of becoming a convert to the Catholic faith was a

very individual affair. The inquirer might receive individual instruction from a priest or attend an inquiry class that taught the fundamentals of the faith. Baptism took place when the priest thought the inquirer was ready.

SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

During the Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965) the bishops called for the restoration of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) as modeled in the process of initiation in the early Church. This call found in The Constitution on the Liturgy was followed up by the work of the Vatican Congregation of Worship that published a provisional Latin text for the RCIA. In 1974 English translation of the Rite was approved for use in the United States. In 1986 the bishops of the United States formally approved the Rite of Christian of Adults for the entire American Church.

Participation in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults is usually about a year long process for unbaptized adults who want to become Catholics. Inquirers who have been baptized in another Christian community are also invited to join in the process of exploring what it means to be a Catholic and formed in the faith. The baptized Christian completes the reception into the Catholic Church by receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation, making a Profession of Faith and celebrating Confirmation and the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.

THE PROCESS

The process for unbaptized adults who are seeking a close relationship with Jesus Christ and attracted to the Catholic Church in a time called a Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate. The length of this period may vary. When their search leads them to discuss the possibility of becoming Catholic, they have a conversation with a parish priest, or RCIA director. Under the guidance of the priest or director they may become an “Inquirer,” and look to be accepted into the Order of Catechumens. This is done through the Rite of Acceptance. This Rite takes place in the midst of the parish community where the “inquirers” states their desire to become a baptized member of the Catholic Church. The parish assembly welcomes them and the inquirers become “catechumens.”

The period of the catechumenate may vary depending on how God is leading the catechumen on the journey. During this period the catechumen learns the meaning of the sacraments, and reflects on what God is asking of them in the Scriptures. They will also learn the fundamentals of the Catholic faith and the responsibilities they will take on as believers. When the priest and the RCIA team working together agree that the catechumen is ready to make a commitment to the Catholic Church, the catechumen will make their request for Baptism at the celebration of the Rite of Election.

The Rite of Election is usually celebrated at the cathedral with the diocesan bishop presiding. The catechumens gather with their sponsors and families and publicly state their desire to enter the Catholic Church. Their names are recorded in The Book of the Elect, and they are now “the elect.”

The two final stages of the RCIA, purification and enlightenment, take place during Lent in preparation for Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation during the Ester Vigil. For the elect

this is a period of prayer, further study, and spiritual direction.

Finally, at the Easter Vigil the Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist are received and the elect becomes a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church.

MYSTAGOGY

The newly initiated Catholics next enter a period of “mystagogy,” a period of prayer and further reflection which continues at least until Pentecost. During mystagogy new Catholics have time to reflect on their experiences of the Easter Vigil, learn more about the Scriptures, the Sacraments and the teachings of the Catholic Church. This is also a period in which they can learn what it means to be an active member of the parish community. As a member, they will also have the opportunity to participate in the Church’s mission and serving others.

CONCLUSION

It is undoubtedly no accident that the Church introduced Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults modeled after the initiation rites practiced by the early Church. In the early Church’s experience, the process of initiation gave both the inquirer and the community the opportunity to assess the seriousness of the inquirer’s commitment and the responsibilities they would be accepting in a dangerous world.

Today the Church is more and more aware what it means to be a minority religion in a world pluralistic world. Becoming Catholic is not simply an individual decision. Rather the inquirer is entering a community of faith and learning both the joys and responsibilities as members of the Church. As they move forward they realize that they are not alone on this journey.

JAMES P. CAMPBELL

Jim Campbell has over 40 years of experience as a catechist and national speaker in Catholic religious education and publishing. He received a BA and MA degree in European History, and continued in doctoral work in history. His life changed when Jim and his wife Barbara left their teaching positions to study at the Aquinas Institute in Theology, then in Dubuque, IA. Barbara received a Master of Divinity degree from Aquinas, and would later receive a Doctor of Ministry degree from the University of St Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, IL. Jim received an MA in theology and a Doctor of Ministry in Christian Education from Aquinas Institute.

For a free copy of Jim Campbell’s book, *Every Man’s Journey*, visit DynamicCatholic.com

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REFLECTIONS ON THE YEAR-ROUND CATECHUMENATE

A Message to the RCIA Teams of the Diocese of Lansing
from the
Christian Initiation Advisory Committee



Introduction

This paper is the fruit of several discussions held among veteran RCIA directors in the Diocese of Lansing from May through November of 2005. They were called together by the Christian Initiation Advisory Committee for the Diocese of Lansing, which wanted to study the effectiveness of establishing a year-round catechumenate in parishes. Three major realities gave impetus to these conversations.

First, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults calls for such a year-round process. “The initiation of catechumens is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful...suited to the spiritual journey of adults that varies according to the many forms of God’s grace” (RCIA, 4-5). It is a journey made up of four distinct periods and marked by the celebration of several rites. The pre-catechumenate period, or period of inquiry, is of great importance and should not be omitted (RCIA 36). Essentially, the initiation process balances two ideals: the Church’s evangelical desire to hand on the tradition it has received and each inquirer’s desire to be formed in that faith tradition.

Second, inquirers approach Catholic faith communities throughout the year, whenever the Spirit prompts them. This is not limited to the academic year nor to a nine-month model of catechesis.

Finally, as initiating communities, we are called to accompany each inquirer on a journey of faith which works in God’s time and with God’s grace.

The conversations of the subcommittee surfaced a number of major concerns regarding a year-round catechumenate:

- 1) What is the current model of Christian initiation in most parishes of the diocese?
- 2) What does a year-round catechumenate look like?
- 3) How long should catechumens be in formation?
- 4) How will the year-round catechumenate model better serve those to be initiated?
- 5) When should catechumens be initiated?
- 6) How will an RCIA director coordinate an on-going process?
- 7) How can a parish begin to transition to this model?

A Common Parish Scenario

Perhaps the following scenario is typical in your parish.

The RCIA “class” began in September, since the staff follows approximately the same schedule as the religious education program. Three unbaptized inquirers were present for the first session along with two baptized persons from the Protestant tradition. The sessions met each week for four weeks.

Then, another unbaptized inquirer presented herself. The RCIA director worked with this new inquirer in one-on-one sessions to help her “catch up” with the other group. The parish celebrated the combined Rite of Acceptance/Rite of Welcome with this initial group in late October in an attempt to make the catechumenate period as long as possible in order to “fit in” all the topics which had been planned.

Two weeks after the combined Rite of Acceptance/Welcome, two more people called the parish. Again the RCIA director did one-on-one sessions in order to catch them up to the catechumens and candidates. They were also placed into the Thursday night catechumenate sessions. A couple of weeks later, yet another inquirer was added to the

catechumenate in the same catch-up manner. A second combined Rite of Acceptance/Rite of Welcome was scheduled for a Sunday in Advent. During the middle of November another person called the parish with interest in becoming Catholic. Others called after Christmas to “register for classes.”

Some Pastoral Issues

Because many parishes attempt to adhere to the school year model generally established for religious education within parishes, the whole RCIA process is often crowded into a September-June schedule. Within nine months, some RCIA directors attempt to accomplish all four phases of the RCIA process (inquiry, catechumenate, purification and enlightenment, and mystagogy). The process then becomes only another program. By doing this, the director will always be faced with a type of “catch-up” formation which forces a late-enrolling inquirer into doubling up on sessions in order to be “in sync” with the rest of the “class.” Worse yet, the inquirer will not be allowed the careful discernment which the Rite allows and demands.

There are competing issues. On the one hand, there is a practical mind set that the Christian initiation process should be planned for the academic calendar year like the religious education program. It generally follows that all candidates must be initiated at the Easter Vigil. On the other hand, each new inquirer needs to be interviewed and welcomed into the RCIA process without having to wait for a new group to form or for the next scheduled process to begin.

The constant flow of new inquirers into a parish RCIA process is a blessing to our Church. How we respond to each individual and the pastoral needs of each person is actually the starting point for developing a year-round catechumenate.

The Initial Interview

The starting point of formation is based upon the very important initial interview. At this time, the spiritual, practical, and formational needs of each inquirer are assessed. 1) What is the baptismal status of the inquirer? 2) What are the reasons he/she is inquiring about the Catholic faith? 3) Are there any marriage or annulment issues which might need to be addressed? 4) What is the inquirer’s present understanding of God? 5) Is there support or objection in the rest of the family?

The Period of Inquiry or the Pre-catechumenate Period

Since inquirers present themselves at many different times during the year, one of the initial goals of beginning a year-round catechumenate might be to establish more than one on-going inquiry groups. What is paramount is that no one is ever asked to “wait” for a more convenient time to begin this period.

The inquirers will undoubtedly have many questions about our Church and its practices. Inquiry sessions are based on those questions, not on a preconceived topical format which is more suitable to an educational model. These sessions are informal – a well-catechized couple might be utilized for one-on-one discussions in a home setting or sessions could be led by a welcoming, trained catechist. The sessions could be held every week to address the needs of the inquirers as they arise.

The goal of the pre-catechumenate is to establish initial faith (cf. RCIA 36, 37). Concerned, pastoral care for individual inquirers is necessary. It is imperative that each inquirer enters the next phase of RCIA, the catechumenate, only when he is ready. Readiness is determined by conducting a second interview with each inquirer. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults explains how to identify this readiness:

The prerequisite for making this first step [into the Order of Catechumens] is that the beginnings of the

spiritual life and the fundamentals of Christian teaching have taken root in the candidates. Thus there must be evidence of the first faith that was conceived during the period of evangelization and the pre-catechumenate and of an initial conversion and intention to change their lives and to enter into a relationship with God in Christ. Consequently, there must also be evidence of the first stirring of repentance, a start to the practice of calling upon God in prayer, a sense of the Church, and some experience of the company and spirit of Christians through contact with a priest or with members of the community. The candidates should also be instructed about the celebration of the liturgical rite of acceptance” (RCIA 42).

The Catechumenate Period

By providing on-going inquiry groups, each inquirer has the opportunity to celebrate the Rite of Acceptance when he is ready to blend into a year-round catechumenal group, and to experience, in an entire liturgical year, the annual exploration of the many facets of the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ.

This model allows for weekly “catechesis in harmony with the liturgical year”(RCIA 75.1). This is contrary to the idea of conducting topical sessions which fit neatly into an academic model. Paragraph 6 of the *National Statutes for the Catechumenate* states the ideal:

The period of catechumenate, beginning at acceptance into the order of catechumens and including both the catechumenate proper and the period of purification and enlightenment after election or enrollment of names, should extend for at least one year of formation, instruction, and probation. Ordinarily this period should go from at least the Easter season of one year until the next; preferably it should begin before Lent in one year and extend until Easter of the following year (NSC 6).

An inquirer can enter a year-round catechumenate conducted with lectionary-based sessions easily and logically at any time of the year. In contrast, if topical sessions are the norm it is often difficult for an entering inquirer to catch up to the rest of the class, since it is often the case that one class builds upon another.

The RCIA Director

With the exception of two or three parishes in the Diocese of Lansing, RCIA is not a full-time ministry. The director’s time is generally limited — either because the person is part-time, or because the full-time person has other major responsibilities. In addition, some RCIA directors in the diocese are volunteers. RCIA Directors can never run a year-round catechumenate alone, nor should they.

The RCIA Team

Directors need to develop an RCIA team that is formed in the vision of the RCIA. Several members should be credentialed for catechetical ministry. Only with a dedicated team of ministers and volunteers can multiple or simultaneous sessions be established to begin a year-round catechumenate.

Some of these dedicated folks may be trained to address the special needs of inquirers. Others can be trained in mystagogical techniques and in the special, more sophisticated needs of the neophytes.

A common practice is to run all or most of a parish’s Christian initiation activity at the same time. But often, the process of formation does not so easily fit into this mold. While it is true that inquiry sessions and the catechumenate could run on the same evening, it must be noted that the needs of inquirers and catechumens/candidates are entirely different. Therefore sessions need to be separate from one another.

Parallel sessions might be a way for all participants to benefit from the interaction of those who are learning about our faith. All the people might interact at a common snack time to get to know one another. The two parallel sessions may occasionally meet for a presentation of the Sunday scriptures, and then break into their separate groups for

discussion. However, the inquiry sessions should always be fashioned from the initial faith questions of the inquirers. Again, inquirers move into the catechumenate sessions only when they are ready.

The Initiating Community

RCIA does not involve just the director and the team. We make disciples one at a time, and the entire initiating community is involved in the process. Making disciples simply means bearing faithful witness to the Christian way of life and helping inquirers understand the paschal mystery. If, as a community of believers, we are doing that, the RCIA process can't help but be successful.

The goal of the initiation process is simply to follow Jesus' command to "go and make disciples." Often, our parish communities succumb to secular convictions that "bigger is better." We get caught up in the numbers game where "how many new inquirers do you have" seems more important than "How are we as a faith community spreading the Good News of Christ?"

If our inquirers see in each of us a faith-filled Catholic Christian — in our RCIA sessions, in our participation in the sacramental life of the Church, by our invitation to parish functions, by speaking with conviction in the workplace — these inquirers will, no doubt, desire membership in our faith community.

Some may not be ready to make that commitment. Have we failed? Of course not! The time spent telling the Good News to inquirers is God's time, and is never in vain. We have presented our 2,000 year old faith to them and have invited them to know the living God and to discern if the Catholic faith is where they might find him.

Inviting the Inquirer

There is an emerging feeling that parishes do not do the right kind of "marketing" for the RCIA. When the parish truly becomes the initiating community, one does not require an advertising campaign. Inquirers best respond to a personal invitation. Campaigns to attract new parishioners become unnecessary; indeed, the idea that everyone is "finished at Easter" and "new sessions begin only in the Fall" does damage to our efforts to evangelize at all times.

Forming on-going inquiry sessions changes the spirit of evangelizing that must permeate our lives and the type of "advertising" we do. With sessions which are designed for each inquirer, called in God's time, we allow inquirers to understand that when they are ready, we as an initiating community are ready.

Whom should you invite? Check your parish records — which spouses of currently practicing parishioners might be invited to learn what the Catholic faith might offer them? Would a simple ad in the local newspaper or parish bulletin every two or three months inviting people to "come and see" be beneficial?

What inspires people to ask about our faith? Ask any recent neophyte and the answer will probably include a personal invitation from a spouse or friend, an experience of gracious hospitality, a well-prepared Sunday liturgy, a moving funeral Mass, or a joyful wedding celebration. Sometimes without knowing it, we are evangelizing at funerals, weddings, picnics, discussion groups, or to non-Catholic families enrolled in our schools. At all times, our very lives bear witness to the faith we proclaim.

Beginning a Year-Round Catechumenate: Assessment and Planning

Perhaps building a year-round catechumenate needs to evolve over a three-to-five-year period. The first step would be to obtain leadership support from your pastor or pastoral coordinator. If there is currently no RCIA team, one would need to be trained. Some of these team members would be trained in specific areas, for example those issues relevant to the period of inquiry. A willing hand is not enough. Anything can come up in an inquiry session, and some training in canonical issues is essential.

Gather the parish staff and RCIA team to discuss the following questions.

1) Become acquainted with the Rite. What does it say about the initiation of adults?

Is it a “a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful”(RCIA 4)?

Is it “suited to a spiritual journey of adults that varies according to the many forms of God’s grace” (5)?

2) Assess what is contrary to the Rite in your current process and celebration of the rites.

Does your schedule tend to restrain the necessary discernment?

When are the rites celebrated?

What rites are celebrated?

How often do you celebrate the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens?

How often do you celebrate the Rite of Welcoming the Candidates?

How long is your catechumenal period?

3) Distinguish carefully among those who are inquiring.

Are they unbaptized catechumens?

Are they baptized into another Christian denomination? Are they candidates for reception into full communion with the Catholic Church?

Are they baptized, but uncatechized Catholics?

What rites are celebrated with each?

What rites are never celebrated with those already baptized?

4) Examine how your parish nurtures the inquirer.

How are inquirers invited to “come and see?”

Are initial interviews of each inquirer being conducted?

How are inquirers placed into the first phase of the RCIA? Must they wait?

Are inquirers being interviewed again before the Rite of Acceptance/Rite of Welcome?

5) How would you change your parish process? What would you do differently this year? Next year?

How can the parish begin to transition to a year-round catechumenate?

Train a functional RCIA team?

Add additional inquiry sessions; train more leaders for inquiry sessions?

Can you celebrate more than one Rite of Acceptance/Rite of Welcome during the year?

Can you begin to develop a year-round catechumenate utilizing lectionary-based catechesis as opposed to topical-based catechesis; will it run from Easter to Easter?

6) How do you provide for the initial and ongoing formation of clergy, directors, catechists, and team members?

Do you attend diocesan workshops?

Have you participated in a “Beginnings and Beyond” experience?

7) When do you initiate catechumens?

Will the Church “lose” prospective members if they cannot be initiated at the next Easter Vigil?

At what other times might they be initiated?

8) How often is the parish receiving candidates into full communion?

How do you discern their readiness?

How do you provide “suitable catechesis?”

Are the candidates interviewed again before being initiated?

9) Does our parish respect the period of mystagogy?

How do we continue to form and mentor our neophytes?

Do we have a mystagogy team?

How do we develop a period of mystagogy which celebrates the new sacramental life of the neophytes, provides for continued study, and incorporates them more fully into the community of faith (RCIA 244-251)?

10) Do we interview often and well?

Who conducts these interviews?

When are they done? Before the Rite of Acceptance/Welcome? Before the Rite of Election? At any other times?

11) Is the initiating community itself well formed in celebrating the rites?

How do we provide catechesis to our assemblies?

Do we create worship aids?

Are our rites celebrated fully?

12) If we only have a small group of inquirers in our parish, how do we collaborate with other parishes?

Can we conduct common inquiry sessions?

Can we conduct common catechumenate sessions?

Should we consider common retreats before the rites?

Do we participate in a common Easter retreat with the vicariate or with several other parishes?

13) How do we select and train our sponsors and godparents?

How are each invited?

What resources are available?

Have they attended diocesan workshops?

Have they attended nearby institutes

14) How do we keep in touch?

Does the telephone number and e-mail address of the parish RCIA director appear on the parish web site and in the parish bulletin? (This will provide inquirers with a way to approach the parish when they are ready to do so.)

Do we use weekly or bi-weekly e-mails to maintain better contact with inquirers, catechumens/candidates and neophytes?

Does the team meet regularly with the pastor?

In the Final Analysis. . .

It takes a lifetime to become a disciple of Christ and to appreciate the Catholic Tradition. The catechumenate was not designed to cram a lifetime of catechesis into one year and certainly not in seven months. The process of Christian initiation is intended to be strong experience of faith formation — not a class of information.

If one attempts to treat this faith journey as only a learning experience, the neophyte will be armed with knowledge, but little else. If, however, the inquirer has been invited to experience the love of Christ, if the catechumen has been formed by a community of faith and by its liturgies, and if the neophyte has richly experienced the sacraments of the Church, then, with the grace of God, faith will bloom for a lifetime.

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Paulist Press	800-218-1903
Resource Publications	888-273-7782
Resources for Christian Living	800-822-6701
The Liturgical Press	800-858-5450
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops	800-235-8722 ext. 0

WHO'S WHO IN THE INITIATION PROCESS?

Each year, we think we know a little more about the Rite of Initiation than we did the year before. Then someone comes to Inquiry with a background different from anyone else we've met, and we realize there's so much more to learn!

Knowing what to do in all the various circumstances of initiation is actually not so difficult if we gather some basic information right from the start:

- Is the person validly baptized? If so, remember: take care to honor that baptism no matter where it was.
- Has the person been catechized? Someone who has received First Communion and Confirmation is considered at least minimally catechized.
- Is the person validly married?
- Has the person (or their present spouse) been married before?
- If the person is Orthodox, remember that the Orthodox are fully initiated at baptism.

The goal of all our initiation work is not just baptism, but conversion, a transformation of mind and heart which places Jesus Christ at the center of one's life. The stories that follow present nine different people who seek membership in the Church. These scenarios are offered to help you recognize who's who in the initiation process and support the catechumen and candidate on their journey to conversion.

Not every conceivable situation can be thought of beforehand, and so these inquirers are but a few of the people who may knock at your door. Their stories are to give you a method with which to think about initiation.

Further help with thinking about "who's who" is available from the Office of Worship and in these books:

- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, National Conference of Catholic Bishops
- The RCIA Transforming the Church, Thomas H. Morris (Paulist, 1997, revised)
- When Other Christians Become Catholic, Paul Turner (Liturgical Press, 2007)
- The Way of Faith: A Field Guide for the RCIA Process, Nick Wagner (23rd Publications, 2008)

An Unbaptized Adult or Older Adolescent

Unbaptized	Baptized Non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child	Adolescent or Adult
X				X		X

Stanley, an unbaptized adult, inquires about becoming a Catholic. He has had no catechetical formation, but believes God may be calling him to the Church. After an appropriate period of inquiry, Stanley is admitted to the catechumenate.

Rite Used	Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens (RCIA #41-68). His name is entered in the Register of Catechumens (if one is used in the parish).
Title	Catechumen
Definition	Unbaptized person, seeking full initiation into the Catholic Church.
Age	Older Adolescent, Adult
Process	After an appropriate pastoral formation in the parish catechumenate, including dismissals, prayers, anointings, and catechesis (RCIA #75), and lasting at least one full liturgical year (NS 6), Stanley would be admitted to the sacraments of initiation, i.e. Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.
Time of Celebration	Normally celebrated at the Easter Vigil
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	No delegation required from Bishop's Office
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catechumens (at the time of acceptance)* • Baptism • Confirmation • First Communion (optional) • Notation of Marriage (if appropriate)
References	RCIA Part 1; National Statutes 1-24

**Not all parishes use the optional Book of Catechumens, but it is recommended.*

Unbaptized Children, Ages Eight and Eleven, Seeking Baptism

Unbaptized	Baptized Non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child*	Adolescent or Adult
X				X	X	

**In this case, children of catechetical age.*

Kim and Thomas, ages 8 and 11 are unbaptized children who come for baptism. They are brought to the church by their parents, who realize now their responsibility in bringing their children for the sacraments. After an appropriate period of inquiry, which often included the parents, Kim and Thomas, Kim and Thomas are admitted to the catechumenate adapted for children.

Rite Used	Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens (RCIA 41-74). This rite may be celebrated with the adult catechumens or separately with just a group of children (260-276). They celebrate the Rites Belonging to the Catechumenate (RCIA 81-105) and, at the proper time, they participate in the Rite of Election.
Title	Catechumen
Definition	Unbaptized, uncatechized children of catechetical age
Age	Catechetical age (over seven years of age). When children of catechetical age are baptized, Confirmation and Eucharist must also be celebrate at the same time (RCIA 215, Canon 866).
Process	The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, adapted for children. Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist will be celebrated together at the Easter Vigil after an appropriate length of time. These children experience a period of formation in word, worship and mission at a level appropriately adapted to the age and faith development of the child for a period of at least one full liturgical year. They may be dismissed from the Eucharist for their own Breaking Open of the Word. (RCIA 256).
Time of Celebration	Normally celebrated at the Easter Vigil
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	No delegation required from Bishop's Office
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catechumens (at the time of Acceptance) • Baptism • Confirmation • First Communion (optional)
References	RCIA Part II: 1, 4; National Statutes 18, 19; Code of Canon Law: 852.1, 866

*Adult or Older Adolescent Validly Baptized Non-Catholic,
But Who is Uncatechized*

Unbaptized	Baptized Non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child	Adolescent or Adult
	X			X		X

Lucy is 31 and a validly baptized Presbyterian. As a child, her attendance at Sunday school classes was very irregular, and she does not attend church except on rare occasions. She now expresses a desire to become a Roman Catholic. After an appropriate time of inquiry, Lucy becomes a candidate for reception into full communion.

Rite Used	Rite of Welcoming the Candidates (RCIA 411-433). If this rite takes place together with the acceptance of unbaptized people into the Order of Catechumens, the combined rite is used (RCIA 505-529).
Title	Candidate for Full Communion
Definition	A validly baptized non-Catholic who wishes to be fully initiated into the Roman Catholic Church
Age	Adult
Process	After an appropriate pastoral formation adapted to her needs, modeled on the catechumenate (and perhaps even as part of the parish catechumenate), Confirmation and Eucharist are celebrated together whenever Lucy is ready. At this time, Lucy is received into the full communion of the Roman Catholic Church, and thus completes her initiation.
Time of Celebration	While it may be done at the Easter Vigil, it is preferable that the celebration of Reception into Full Communion take place on an appropriate Sunday, when she is ready.
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	No delegation required from Bishop's Office
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baptism (with a notation of reception, date, and place of non-Catholic baptism) • Confirmation • First Communion (optional) • Notation of Marriage (if appropriate)
References	RCIA Part II: 4,5; National Statutes 30-37

An Adult or Older Adolescent, Baptized Catholic but Uncatechized

Unbaptized	Baptized Non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child	Adolescent or Adult
		X		X		X

José, aged 18, is a baptized Catholic, but has never received Confirmation or First Communion. He vaguely remembers attending a few religious education classes, but has no catechetical formation. José feels the lack of spiritual focus in his life, and wants to reclaim his roots as a practicing Roman Catholic. After an appropriate time of inquiry, José becomes a candidate.

Rite Used	Rite of Welcoming the Candidates (RCIA 411-433). If this rite takes place together with the acceptance of unbaptized people into the Order of Catechumens, the combined rite is used (RCIA 505-529).
Title	Candidate for completion of initiation sacraments
Definition	A person baptized Catholic, usually as an infant, with little or no catechetical formation. This person has not celebrated either First Communion or Confirmation.
Age	Older Adolescent, Adult
Process	After an appropriate pastoral formation adapted to his needs and modeled on the catechumenate (perhaps as part of the parish catechumenate), José completes his Christian initiation through the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. They can be celebrated together at Pentecost. If José's preparation takes place as part of the parish catechumenate, he may receive these sacraments at the Easter Vigil. Depending on circumstances, a third and best option is to celebrate Confirmation and First Communion whenever José is prepared to receive the sacraments.
Time of Celebration	While it may be done at the Easter Vigil, it is preferable that the completion of initiation take place on an appropriate Sunday, when he is ready (perhaps even on Pentecost Sunday).
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	Pastors must seek the faculty to confirm baptized Catholics.
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation • First Communion (optional) • Notification to the church of baptism
References	RCIA Part II: 4; National Statutes 25-29, 31

An Adult or Older Adolescent, Baptized Non-Catholic, Catechized in Their Faith

Unbaptized	Baptized Non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child	Adolescent or Adult
	X		X			X

Francine is a baptized and catechized Episcopalian. She attends the Episcopal church with some regularity, and knows her faith. Moved by the example of her Catholic neighbors, she desires to become a Catholic. After an appropriate time of inquiry, Francine becomes a candidate for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

Rite Used	Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church (RCIA 473-498). This includes Confirmation and First Communion.
Title	Candidate for Full Communion
Definition	A validly baptized non-Catholic seeking reception and full communion with the Roman Catholic Church
Age	Adult
Process	Pastoral formation includes both doctrinal and spiritual preparation adapted to the individual's needs for reception into full communion and a deeper adherence to the Catholic Church. The length of preparation is determined by the amount of formation needed and is not necessarily a part of the catechumenate process. "No greater burden than necessary is required" (RCIA 473).
Time of Celebration	While it may be done at the Easter Vigil, it is preferable that the reception into full communion take place on an appropriate Sunday, when she is ready.
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	No delegation required from Bishop's Office
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baptism (with notation of date and place of non-Catholic baptism) • Confirmation • First Communion (optional) • Notation of Marriage (if appropriate)
References	RCIA Part II: 5; National Statutes 30-33; 35-37

A Baptized, Catechized Catholic, Older Adolescent or Adult, Seeking Confirmation

Unbaptized	Baptized Non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child	Adolescent or Adult
		X	X			X

Michael, 19 years old, is a baptized, catechized Catholic, who has made his First Communion. He has not been confirmed. He is seeking Confirmation now. After an interview with a parish priest, or with the parish coordinator, he becomes a candidate for Confirmation.

Rite Used	Rite of Confirmation
Title	Candidate for Confirmation
Definition	Any Catholic who has celebrated Baptism and First Communion is considered to be at least minimally catechized. They come forward seeking Confirmation.
Age	Older Adolescent, Adult
Process	This is not a part of the catechumenate process (RCIA). Usually a short, focused preparation, preceded by some foundational catechesis is all that is necessary.
Time of Celebration	It is recommended that this Confirmation be celebrated at a time other than at the Easter Vigil, preferably Pentecost Sunday or a Sunday of the Easter season.
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	Pastors must seek the faculty to confirm baptized Catholics.
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacrament is entered in these parish registers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation • The church of baptism is to be notified
References	Rite of Confirmation

A Validly Baptized Non-Catholic, but Uncatechized Child of Ten Years Old

Unbaptized	Baptized Non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child*	Adolescent or Adult
	X			X	X	

**In this case, a child of catechetical age.*

Megan was validly baptized in the Methodist church but is uncatechized. She is now 10 years old and she, together with her mother, wishes to become Catholic. After an appropriate period of inquiry on the part of Megan, her parents, and the parish team, Megan begins the process of reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

Rite Used	Rite of Welcoming Baptized but Previously Uncatechized Adults Who Are Preparing for Confirmation and/or Eucharist (RCIA 411-433) may be used if appropriate.
Title	Candidate for Full Communion
Definition	Validly baptized, uncatechized non-Catholic child of catechetical age who wishes to become Roman Catholic
Age	Catechetical age (over seven years of age). When children of catechetical age are baptized, Confirmation and Eucharist must also be celebrate at the same time (RCIA 215, Canon 866).
Process	This child should experience a period of formation in word, worship, and mission as described in the RCIA (Part II) at a level adapted to the age and faith development of the child. She may be dismissed from the Eucharist for Breaking Open of the Word (possibly with other young people in the same situation). Catechetical formation follows this, or is done at some time during the week. This formation is usually at least one full liturgical year, or longer, depending on the development of the child, and the situation of his or her peers. It is most appropriate for her catechetical formation to take place with a peer group.
Time of Celebration	Megan celebrates the Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church (which includes sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist, cf. National Statutes 35) at an appropriate time during the liturgical year, preferably not at the Easter Vigil.
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	No delegation required from Bishop's Office
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baptism (with a notation of Reception into Full Communion, date and place of non-Catholic baptism) • Confirmation • First Communion (optional)
References	RCIA, Part II: 1,4,5, (c.f. RCIA 400 and 478); National Statutes 30-37

A Validly Baptized and Catechized Non-Catholic Child of Fourteen Years of Age

Unbaptized	Baptized Non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child	Adolescent or Adult
	X		X			X

Charles, aged 14, was baptized in the Lutheran tradition. He is catechized and attends the local Lutheran church. Together with his parents, Charles has asked to be received into the Roman Catholic Church. After an appropriate time of inquiry, on the part of Charles himself, his parents, and the church, catechesis for his reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church begins.

Rite Used	Rite of Welcoming, then the Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church
Title	Candidate for Full Communion
Definition	A child of catechetical age, validly baptized in another tradition, and catechized in that tradition.
Age	Adolescent
Process	Adapted to the individual needs and the prior formation experience of the child. Since Charles and his family are catechized already, he can simply be received into the Church and placed in the religious formation program of the parish.
Time of Celebration	Any Sunday Eucharist. Confirmation and First Eucharist are celebrated at the same Mass after the simple profession of faith. Later on, at the time his peers are confirmed, he can take part in all the preparatory work, and at the ceremony, be presented to the bishop for a blessing.
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	No delegation required from Bishop's Office
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baptism (with a notation of Reception into Full Communion, date and place of non-Catholic baptism) • Confirmation • First Communion (optional)
References	RCIA Part II: 1,5; National Statutes 18, 19, 30, 32-37

A Validly Baptized and Catechized Orthodox Adult

Unbaptized	Baptized Non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child	Adolescent or Adult
		X	X			X

Sophia, aged 25, was fully initiated as a member of the Greek Orthodox Church. She is catechized and attends the local Orthodox Church. She now wishes to become a member of the Catholic Church. After an appropriate time of inquiry on the part of Sophia and the church, catechesis for her reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church begins.

Rite Used	Rite of Reception into Full Communion of the Catholic Church (RCIA Part II: 491, 492)
Title	Candidate for Full Communion
Definition	A person of catechetical age, validly baptized in the Orthodox Church, and catechized in that tradition.
Age	Adult
Process	Since Sophia is Eastern Orthodox, she will be received into the corresponding Eastern Catholic Church. After a suitable liturgical and doctrinal preparation, Sophia is only obligated to make a simple profession of faith in order to be received into the Catholic Church (RCIA 491, 492) as she was fully initiated at the time of baptism (Baptism, Chrismation/Confirmation, and Eucharist).
Time of Celebration	Any Sunday Eucharist
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	Sophia is not to be confirmed again since she was fully initiated at Baptism.
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baptism (with a notation of Reception into Full Communion, date and place of non-Catholic baptism) • It should also be noted that she is received into whichever Eastern Catholic Church corresponds to the one of her Orthodox Baptism
References	Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (CCEO) Canon 897; RCIA 474

Notes:

1. When a member of an Orthodox church becomes a Catholic, that person is received into the corresponding Eastern Catholic Church. For example, if a Romanian Orthodox person wants to become Catholic, he/she enters the Romanian Catholic Church; a Ukrainian Orthodox person enters the Ukrainian Catholic Church.
2. An individual might request a change in Rite, that is, to be received into the Roman Catholic Church rather than the corresponding Eastern Church. This request also goes to the Chancery.
3. The Orthodox view of divorce and annulment differs substantially from that of the Roman Catholic Church. It is important to keep this in mind when doing the preliminary interview.

ADULT INQUIRER INFORMATION FORM

Information on this form is held in confidence and is not shared without your permission.

Name (First, Middle, Last):

Maiden Name (if applicable):

Date of Birth:

Age:

Place of Birth:

(include locality [town, city, county, etc.], region [state, province, territory, etc.], and country)

Name of Father (First, Middle, Last):

Name of Mother (First, Middle, Last):

CONTACT INFORMATION

Full Mailing Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Occupation:

RELIGIOUS HISTORY

What, if any, is your present religious affiliation?

Have you ever been
baptized?

Yes

No

Not sure

If you answered “yes” above, please provide the following:

(a) In what denomination were you baptized?

(b) Date or approximate age when you were baptized:

(c) Baptismal name (if different from current name):

(d) Was water used?

(e) Were the words “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” used?

(f) Place of baptism (name of church):

Address (if known):

If you were baptized as a Catholic, check the sacraments you have already received:

Penance
(Confession)

Eucharist (First Communion)

Confirmation

CURRENT MARITAL STATUS

Check the appropriate statement(s) below and provide any information requested beneath each statement.

I have never been married.

I am engaged to be married.

Your Fiancé(e)'s Name:

Your Fiancé(e)'s Current Religious Affiliation (if any):

For you: This is my first marriage. I have been married before.

ADULT INQUIRER INFORMATION FORM

For your Fiancé(e): <input type="checkbox"/> This is his/her first marriage. <input type="checkbox"/> He/she has been married before.		
<input type="checkbox"/> I am married.		
Your Spouse's Name:		
Your Spouse's Current Religious Affiliation (if any):		
For you: <input type="checkbox"/> This is my first marriage. <input type="checkbox"/> I have been married before.		
For your Spouse: <input type="checkbox"/> This is his/her first marriage. <input type="checkbox"/> He/she has been married before.		
Date of Marriage:		
Place of Marriage: <i>(include locality [town, city, county, etc.], region [state, province, territory, etc.], and country)</i>		
Officiating Authority of Marriage: <i>(civil government, non-Christian minister, Christian minister, Catholic cleric)</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> I am married, but separated from my spouse.		
<input type="checkbox"/> I am divorced and I have not remarried.		
<input type="checkbox"/> I am a widow/widower and have not remarried since my spouse's death.		
FAMILY INFORMATION		
<i>List the name(s) of any children or other dependents (e.g., Daughter—Jane; Stepson—John).</i>		
Relationship:	Name:	Age:
Is this child baptized?	If no, do you desire baptism for the child?	
Relationship:	Name:	Age:
Is this child baptized?	If no, do you desire baptism for the child?	
Relationship:	Name:	Age:
Is this child baptized?	If no, do you desire baptism for the child?	
Relationship:	Name:	Age:
Is this child baptized?	If no, do you desire baptism for the child?	
Relationship:	Name:	Age:
Is this child baptized?	If no, do you desire baptism for the child?	
GENERAL QUESTIONS		
What or who has led you to want to know more about the Catholic Faith?		
Please describe the types of religious education you have received, as a child and as an adult:		

ADULT INQUIRER INFORMATION FORM

What contact have you had with the Catholic Church to date?

What are some questions or concerns you have about the Catholic Church?

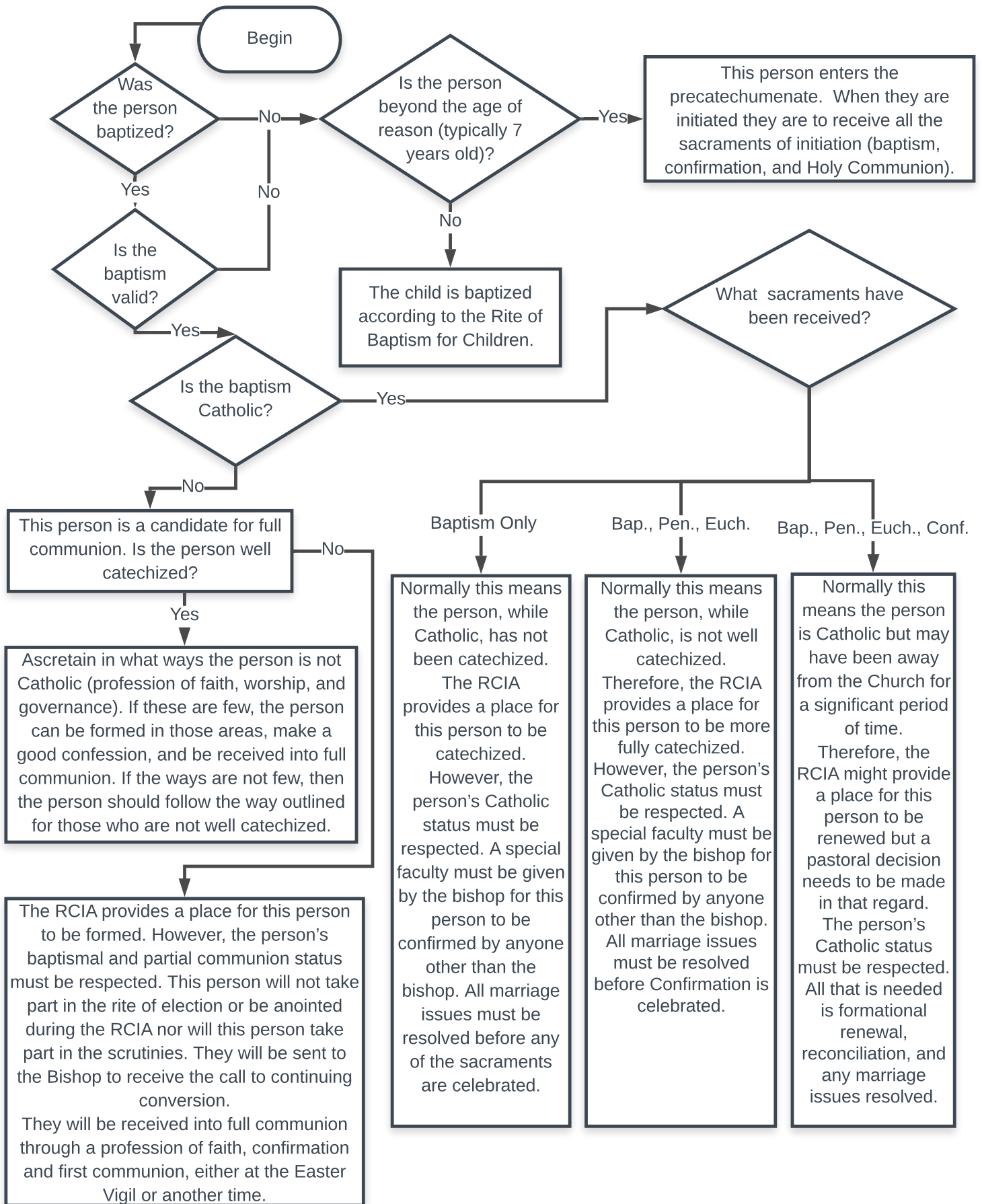
At this point in time, which of the following statements best describes your present feelings and thoughts about the possibility of joining the Catholic Church (please circle one)?

- (a) I need much more information about the Catholic Church before I would consider joining.
- (b) I am considering joining, but I am still unsure about it.
- (c) I am fairly sure that I would like to join, but I still need some time to study about pray about it.
- (d) I am fairly sure that I want to join the Catholic Church.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

- Request Baptismal Records
- Form of Baptism (Water, Trinitarian)
- Follow-up on Marriage Issues
- Follow-up on Children (if applicable)

How Baptismal Status Determines if One is an Inquirer, Candidate, or Returning Catholic



DETERMINATION OF BAPTISMAL VALIDITY

NOTE: A baptism is considered valid if the appropriate matter (water) and form (in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit) is used. Below is a list of Christian denominations whose baptisms are commonly considered valid or invalid by the Catholic Church, based on the above criteria. While this can be a helpful starting point, it is always important to ask the potential candidate about the matter and form of their baptism.

Valid Baptisms

Adventists
African Methodist Episcopal
African Methodist Episcopal Zion
Amish
Anglican Communion
Assembly of God
Baptists
Christian and Missionary Alliance
Christian Church
Christian Church, Disciples of Christ
Church of the Brethren
Church of Christ
Church of God:
 of Prophecy
 of Anderson, Indiana
 of Cleveland, Tennessee
 and various others
Church of the Nazarene
Classical Pentecostals
Cumberland Presbyterians
Evangelical United Brethren
Evangelical Churches
International Council of Community Churches
Liberal Catholic Church
Lutherans:
 Missouri Synod
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
 Wisconsin Lutheran
Mennonites Methodists
Old Roman Catholics
Old Catholics
Orthodox Churches
Polish National Church
Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.
Reformed Churches
Seven Hills
United Church of Christ

Invalid Baptisms

Apostolic Church
Bohemian Free Thinkers
Christadelphians
Christian Scientists
Church of Divine Science
Jehovah's Witnesses
Masons (no baptisms)
Mormons
Pentecostal Churches
Peoples Church of Chicago
Quakers
Rudolph Steiner's Christian Community:
 Die Christengemeinschaft
Salvation Army (no baptism)
Unitarian

BAPTISM TESTIMONIAL

I, the undersigned, _____, hereby testify that I
witnessed the baptism of _____,
child of _____ (father's name),
and _____ (mother's name).

The person baptized was born on _____ / _____ / _____
in the state of _____ and the county of _____.

The baptismal ceremony was performed on _____ / _____ / _____ .
at (name of church) _____.
in the city of _____ in the state of _____,
and the county of _____, by (name of the
minister of baptism) _____.

The sponsors (godparents) were:

Godfather: _____

Godmother: _____

In testimony whereof on this day _____ / _____ / _____, I affix my signature:

(Signature)

(Print)

GUIDE TO DETERMINING CASE TYPE (MARRIAGE TRIBUNAL)

*This chart is meant to assist in determining what process needs to be followed when a person has been previously married.					
Parties Contracting Marriage				Place of Marriage	Process Needed
1	Catholic	+	Catholic	Catholic Church-No Concern About Form	Formal
2	Catholic	+	Catholic	Elsewhere with Dispensation from Form	Formal
3	Catholic	+	Baptized	Catholic Church-No Concern about Form	Formal
4	Catholic	+	Baptized	Elsewhere with Dispensation from Form	Formal
5	Catholic	+	Unbaptized	Catholic Church-No Concern about Form + Dispensation for Disparity of Worship	Privilege, Formal
6	Catholic	+	Unbaptized	Catholic Church-No Concern about Form without Dispensation for Disparity of Worship	Diriment Impediment, Formal
7	Catholic	+	Unbaptized	Elsewhere with Dispensation from Form + Dispensation for Disparity of Worship	Privilege, Formal
8	Catholic	+	Unbaptized	Elsewhere with Dispensation from Form without Dispensation for Disparity of Worship	Diriment Impediment, Formal
9	Baptized	+	Baptized	Anywhere	Formal
10	Baptized	+	Unbaptized	Anywhere	Privilege, Formal
11	Unbaptized	+	Unbaptized	Anywhere	Pauline, Privilege, Formal
12	Baptized	+	Baptized	Anywhere + Respondent previously married without Declaration of Invalidity	Prior Bond (<i>Ligamen</i>), Formal
13	Baptized	+	Unbaptized	Anywhere + Respondent previously married without Declaration of Invalidity	Prior Bond (<i>Ligamen</i>), Formal
14	Unbaptized	+	Unbaptized	Anywhere + Respondent previously married without Declaration of Invalidity	Prior Bond (<i>Ligamen</i>), Pauline, Privilege, Formal
15	Catholic	+	Catholic	Elsewhere without Dispensation from Form	Lack of Form
16	Catholic	+	Baptized	Elsewhere without Dispensation from Form	Lack of Form
17	Catholic	+	Unbaptized	Elsewhere without Dispensation from Form + Dispensation for Disparity of Worship	Lack of Form

Breakdown of chart:

1. If two Catholics marry in the Catholic Church and there is no question as to the form of the marriage, the FORMAL process is required.
2. If two Catholics marry elsewhere with a dispensation from form, the FORMAL process is required.
3. If a Catholic and a non-Catholic baptized person marry in the Catholic Church and there is no question as to the form of the marriage, the FORMAL process is required.
4. If a Catholic and non-Catholic baptized person marry elsewhere with a dispensation from form, the FORMAL process is used.
5. If a Catholic and an unbaptized person marry in the Catholic Church with a dispensation for disparity of worship and there is no question as to the form of the marriage, the PRIVILEGE OF THE FAITH or FORMAL process may be used depending on circumstances.
6. If a Catholic and an unbaptized person marry in the Catholic Church without a dispensation of disparity for worship and there is no question as to the form of the marriage, the DIRIMENT IMPEDIMENT or FORMAL process may be used depending on circumstances.
7. If a Catholic and an unbaptized person marry elsewhere with a dispensation from form and a dispensation of disparity of worship, the PRIVILEGE OF THE FAITH or FORMAL process may be used depending on circumstances.
8. If a Catholic and an unbaptized person marry elsewhere with a dispensation from form but not a dispensation for disparity of worship, the DIRIMENT IMPEDIMENT or FORMAL process is used depending on circumstances.
9. If two non-Catholic baptized persons marry anywhere, the FORMAL process is used.
10. If a non-Catholic baptized person and an unbaptized person marry anywhere, the PRIVILEGE OF THE FAITH or FORMAL process is used depending on circumstances.
11. If two unbaptized persons marry anywhere, the PAULINE or PRIVILEGE OF THE FAITH or FORMAL process may be used depending on the circumstances.
12. If two non-Catholic baptized persons marry anywhere, and the Respondent was previously married without having obtained a declaration of invalidity for the previous marriage, the process for LIGAMEN is used. If the Tribunal Staff determines the process of LIGAMEN cannot be used, the FORMAL process is used instead.
13. If a non-Catholic baptized person and an unbaptized person marry anywhere, and the Respondent was previously married without having obtained a declaration of invalidity for the previous marriage, the process for LIGAMEN is used. If the Tribunal Staff determines the process of LIGAMEN cannot be used, the FORMAL process is used instead.
14. If two unbaptized persons marry anywhere, and the Respondent was previously married without having obtained a declaration of invalidity for the previous marriage, the process for LIGAMEN is used. If the Tribunal Staff determines the process of LIGAMEN cannot be used, then the PAULINE PRIVILEGE process, PRIVILEGE OF THE FAITH or FORMAL process may be used depending on circumstances.
15. If two Catholics marry elsewhere without a dispensation from form granted, it is a Lack of Canonical Form and granted by the parish priest.
16. If a Catholic and non-Catholic baptized person marry without a dispensation from form granted, it is a Lack of Canonical Form and granted by the parish priest.
17. If a Catholic and non-baptized person marry without a dispensation from form granted, it is a Lack of Canonical Form and granted by the parish priest.

NOTE: Contact the Diocesan Tribunal at (270) 683-1545 with any questions.

APPENDIX II

PROMOTION AND AWARENESS

BECOMING CATHOLIC

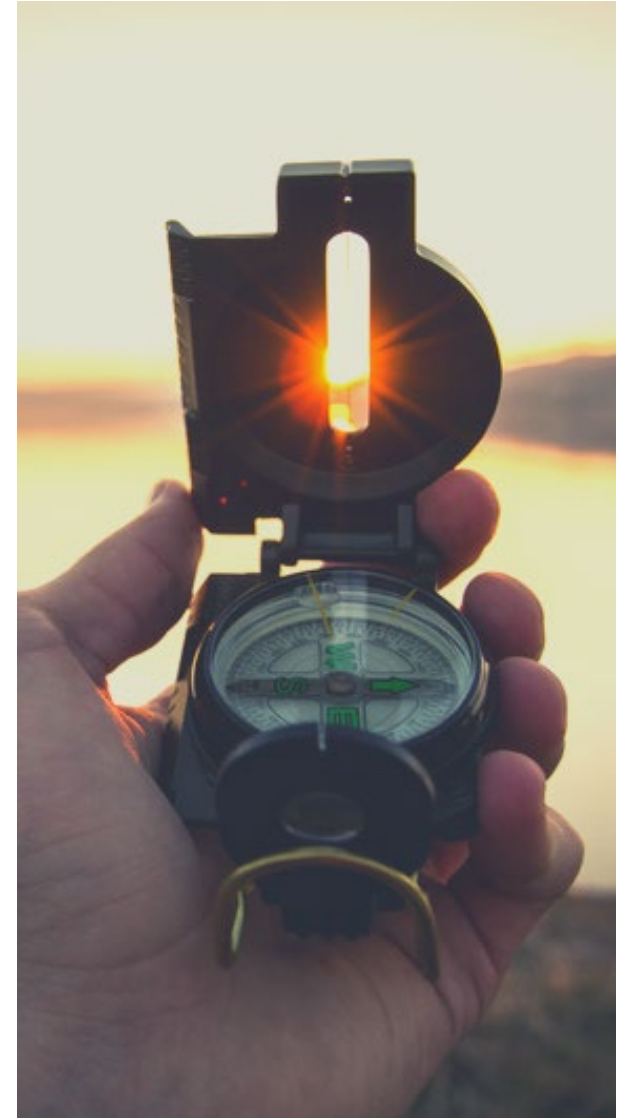
I HAVE CALLED
YOU BY NAME.
YOU ARE MINE.

Isaiah 43:1

(your parish)
Catholic Church

(your parish) Catholic Church
is a Eucharistic community
that places God first in all
things and comes together as
a family to love as Christ
loves and serve as Christ
serves.

Address
Phone
Email
Website
Contact Name



WHAT IS RCIA?

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) is a process of exploring the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church, including the opportunity to become Catholic through the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation.

RCIA IS FOR YOU IF YOU ARE:

- ~ someone (7+) who has never been a part of a formal religion
- ~ someone who was raised and/or baptized in another faith tradition and now wishes to become Catholic
- ~ an adult who received some but not all of the sacraments

RCIA PROCESS

Inquiry

The first step of the RCIA journey is scheduling a time to meet to explain the process and answer your questions.

Where ever you are in your journey, you can inquire at any time.

Learning More

Sessions meet weekly on Sunday and Wednesday nights.

Ongoing Support

An RCIA team and catechists, along with sponsors and godparents, will guide you through the process. Our parish community will also support you through prayer during your time of preparation

GETTING STARTED

For more information, contact:

Contact name

Phone number

Email

(your parish) Catholic Church
waits with open arms to
embrace you in the love of
Christ!

Sample advertisements for a parish bulletin:

Sample #1:

If you've been coming to Mass for a while, but are not Catholic, we invite you to look deeper into the Catholic faith. Come meet some faithful Catholics who love the Lord and would consider it a privilege to get to know you. Our parish will soon begin a set of sessions to share with others the truths of the Catholic faith and the fellowship of our church family. We invite you to learn what Catholics believe in an open and welcoming environment. These sessions also are opportunities for you to ask those perplexing and difficult questions you may have about the Church.

Sessions are always held on [day] at [time].

This first session is [date] in [location]. Feel free to come any [day].

Please give us a call if you have questions or would like further information at [number], or email us at [email address]. Or check out our website: [web address].

Sample #2:

Are You Interested in the Catholic Faith?

[Parish] will soon begin a new journey in faith to share the richness of the Catholic Church and our parish family. We invite you to learn what the Church teaches, and be introduced to some of our parish members. These sessions also are opportunities for you, and others that you may wish to invite, to ask those perplexing and difficult questions you may have about the Church. These gatherings are for inquirers and are open to people who are unbaptized, as well as those who are baptized Christians from Protestant or Evangelical backgrounds. This first session is [date] in [location] at [parish name and address]. Feel free to come any [day].

Please give us a call if you have questions, would like further information at [number] or email at [email address].

Or check out our website: [web address].

Sample #3 (soon after sessions have begun):

God created all things from nothing. He continually sustains them in existence. He makes possible their actions and leads them to their ultimate perfection. At this week's session for those inquiring into the Catholic faith, we reviewed Scripture from the first book of the Bible called Genesis.

Why did God create anything at all? The world was made for the glory of God and to communicate his everlasting love to his beloved creation. He does not need to create us because he is lonely or in need of our love. Rather, God creates out of his goodness and superabundant love.

Are you interested in learning more about the Catholic tradition?

Are you looking for a pressure-free, non-judgmental environment where you can learn about Catholicism?

Have you had a previous bad experience while looking into the faith?

Want a fresh start?

Perhaps you are searching quietly and need some answers.

Get all of your questions answered!

It is not too late to join us [day] at [time] in [location].

You do not have to journey alone! Call [RCIA leader's name] at [number], or email at [email address] for more information. Or check out our website: [web address].

Sample #4 (soon after sessions have begun):

Our inquiry sessions have just begun, but we are still waiting for YOU!

Are you searching for...

A deeper relationship with God?

A sense of belonging in a faith community?

A greater fulfillment of your mission in life?

Have you been curious...

Ever wonder about the difference between the Catholic and Protestant Bibles?

Ever wonder why priests cannot marry?

Or women are not ordained?

Ever wonder how Catholics relate to Mary and the saints?

Ever wonder about the Catholic moral life or what Catholics believe about same-sex marriage, homosexuality, or contraception, and why?

Get answers to all of your questions about the Catholic faith.

COME JOIN US in [location] on [day] at [time]!

You do not have to journey alone! Please give [RCIA leader's name] a call if you have questions or would like further information: [number], or email at [email address]. Or check out our website: [web address].

Sample #5 (relating some of the experiences of a precatechumenate session):

This past week in our inquiry session we were introduced to God's plan for us, "The Story," beginning with Creation and continuing through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God's Son. We are made out of love and created in the image of God. God revealed himself to his creatures incrementally, until he spoke his eternal Word, Jesus, who is the fullness of revelation. The Church on earth is here to teach, in every place and age, the truth revealed by Jesus. We are to know him and love him because we are destined to share in God's glory forever; love requires that we be free to choose.

God always was and always will be. And God is Love. The Father loves the Son with everything that he is. The Son loves the Father, pouring everything out that he is—perfect, generous, donating love. The Holy Spirit, likewise, exists as an act of total self-gift in love to the Father and Son. Out of this love, God created all things from nothing. He continually sustains them in existence. He makes possible their actions and leads them to their ultimate perfection. Why did God create anything at all? He does not need to create us because he is lonely or in need of our love. Rather, God creates out of his goodness and superabundant love.

We heard about angels, described as creatures of light, pure spirit (non-corporeal), immortal beings with intelligence and will, messengers created by God. Some angels fell from God's presence, becoming what we call demons. Unlike humans, angels were created with the knowledge of all that was to be revealed. In contrast, we were created as incremental people, growing in knowledge and understanding in the fullness of time. The angels' fall consisted in the free choice to radically and irrevocably reject God and his reign. We find a reflection of that prideful rebellion in Satan's words to our first parents, "You will be like God". Through our pride, Satan still tempts us all to sin. Jesus came to destroy the power and works of Satan. In Heaven we will be like angels in our dignity before God, but we remain human; we do not "evolve" into angels.

God created us out of love, and wants us to freely love him in return. After our first parents sinned, the Father continued in his plan to draw us into full relationship with him. This plan was accomplished by sending his only Son to free us from the slavery of sin and reconcile us to himself.

Are you interested in learning more about the Catholic tradition?

The RCIA process is a journey of faith:

- ~through the initial stages of asking and seeking,
- ~through beginning involvement with faithful Catholics,
- ~through hearing the Gospel proclaimed and by faithful reflection and prayer on this Word of God,
- ~through study and discussions about Catholic teaching and way of life,
- ~through doubts and hesitations,
- ~through a growing desire to serve and love others,
- ~through discernment of God's call to each human life,
- ~through the steps of commitment,
- ~through the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist)

It is not too late to join us [day] at [time] in [location].

You do not have to journey alone! Call [RCIA leader's name] at [number], or email at [email address] for more information. Or check out our church's website: [web address].

A walk through the calendar year in the parish bulletin:

Here are ideas for bulletin announcements that raise the awareness of Christian initiation and invite parishioners or inquirers to take a step in contacting a priest, or other parish staff, about Christian initiation (RCIA) throughout the year.

January

As we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, let us recall our own Baptism. We have all received the call to go and baptize all nations. Pray for those who are considering if they too are ready to renounce Satan and all his works and empty promises. If there is someone you think would like to explore what Baptism in the Catholic faith means, ask him or her to contact...

February

Come and see. Are you searching for a Church to call your own? Do you struggle with questions about life, death, suffering, hope, forgiveness, love, God? Sessions exploring these and other issues in relation to our Catholic faith are being held. Ask about inquiry meetings by contacting...

March (Lent)

Help bring to the Light those who no longer want to walk in darkness. Invite those who have never been baptized or who have been baptized in a non-Catholic Christian tradition, as well as adult Catholics who have not been confirmed, to the inquiry sessions. For more information, contact...

April (Easter Season)

Many people have said that what drew them to the Catholic Church was the Eucharist. As we reflect on recognizing Jesus in the Breaking of the Bread, think for a moment whether there is someone you could invite to Mass and to explore what else the Catholic faith might hold for them. For information, contact...

May

As our Blessed Mother brings us to her Son Jesus, it is our task also to bring others to the Lord. Is there someone you can invite to explore the Catholic faith—someone unbaptized, or baptized in a non-Catholic Christian tradition? Perhaps you know a Catholic adult interested in being confirmed. Please contact...

June

The great Solemnity of Pentecost marks the great gift of the Holy Spirit to those God the Father calls to be his own. Perhaps you can think of someone who longs to have a closer relationship with our Heavenly Father. Can you plant the seeds of hope as you speak of our Father's loving care, and his everlasting promises fulfilled in the sending of his Son, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? Ask about the RCIA inquiry sessions for those who are not baptized, are of other faiths, or are adult Catholics who were not confirmed by contacting...

July

With the gift of Jesus' Precious Blood on the Cross and in the Eucharist, let us reflect on the freedom given to us through our Baptism into him—to be heirs of the promise and liberated from sin. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the way by which persons become "citizens of the Kingdom" through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Inquiry sessions are ongoing. For more information, please contact...

August

In celebrating this month of Our Lady's final journey to God in her glorious Assumption, let us ask her motherly intercession to draw souls to the Sacred Heart of her Son. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a journey too—of conversion to God and what he intends for us. RCIA is the process by which persons who were never baptized, or were baptized in another Christian tradition, become members of the Church, a people on pilgrimage to our Heavenly Father. Please contact...

September

Life has many storms—distressful relationships, jobs, poor health; situations where we feel our powerlessness. If you know someone unbaptized or baptized in a non-Catholic Christian tradition, who is searching for strength and understanding to weather such squalls, invite them to seek the perspective the Catholic Church offers. Please contact...

October

Our lives sometimes go through seasons of change; of closeness to God and distance from him. Yet God the Father's love is steadfast and ever-present to those who seek with a sincere heart, no matter what sins or situations have caused separation. If you have thought about becoming Catholic and beginning a new "season" in your life, contact...

November

As we celebrate All Saints Day, and recall those "living witnesses" of the joy and peace that living the Catholic life can bring, let us ask for the saints' intercession for those who are thinking about finding out more about the Church. If someone you know wants to know more about the Church, contact...

December

The preparations for Christmas include buying or making gifts for those whom we love. You can give no better gift than the gift that God has given to us: his Son, Jesus. Invite someone who is not Catholic to attend Mass with you at Christmas. For information about the RCIA, contact...

RCIA LENTEN BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

You may find the following helpful as you prepare your parish bulletins or announcements. Please adapt them as is appropriate for your parish.

(1st Sunday of Lent; 8th Sunday in Ordinary Time in Western part of Diocese)

RCIA: Rite of Sending

This Sunday, we celebrate the Rite of Sending, formally asking the Church of the Diocese of Owensboro to accept our catechumens as members of the Elect—those chosen by God for baptism—and to pray for our candidates' continued growth in the Spirit. We will then journey to *(Owensboro / Paducah)* to celebrate the Rite of Election (of the catechumens) and the Call to Continuing Conversion (of the candidates) with Bishop Medley.

(2nd Sunday of Lent)

RCIA: Penitential Rite for Candidates

This Sunday, we celebrate a special penitential rite for our Candidates for full communion. Recognizing that these candidates are already baptized, we pray for the grace of further conversion of life.

(3rd Sunday of Lent)

RCIA: First Scrutiny of the Elect

This Sunday, and for the next two Sundays, we will celebrate the Scrutinies. According to the Church's Rites, "the scrutinies are meant to uncover, then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect; to bring out, then strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good." Later this week, we will also "hand over" (*traditio*) the Creed to our catechumens, which they will then "hand back" at the Easter Vigil when they make their Baptismal Promises. Please keep all the Elect in your prayers as they make their final journey to the Easter Sacraments.

(4th Sunday of Lent)

RCIA: Second Scrutiny of the Elect

This Sunday, we continue the celebration of the Scrutinies. On the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent we pray in a particular way for those who are to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. We pray that any attachment to evil might be removed, and that they be truly converted to Christ.

th
(5th Sunday of Lent)

RCIA: Third Scrutiny of the Elect

This Sunday, we continue the celebration of the Scrutinies. On the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent we pray in a particular way for those who are to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. We pray that any attachment to evil might be removed, and that they be truly converted to Christ. Later this week, we will also hand over the Lord's Prayer to the Elect—and “wait in joyful hope” until they can pray it with us as one of the Faithful at the Easter Vigil.

th
(5th Sunday of Lent & again on Palm Sunday)

CHRISM MASS: Tuesday of Holy Week, Owensboro Sportscenter

You are invited to take part in one of the most special liturgies in the life of a diocese—the Chrism Mass. At this liturgy, the bishop gathers the faithful of the diocese—priests and deacons, religious and laity—around him for the blessing and consecration of the oils that will be used in all our parishes in the coming year. Here the Oil of the Sick, used to strengthen and console and heal those who are infirm, will be blessed. Here the Oil of Catechumens, used to strengthen and free those who are preparing for baptism, will be blessed. Here the Sacred Chrism, used to ordain bishops and priests, to confirm, and to dedicate churches and altars, will be consecrated. And here, too, we will witness the Rite of Recommitment to Ministry by our priests. May our presence at the Chrism Mass be a sign of our support and gratitude for their ministry—and a reminder that baptism calls all of us to lives of service.

Prayers of the Faithful by the Calendar:

Advent

That our catechumens and candidates will prepare their hearts for the Lord's coming by diligent prayer, study, and works of charity, we pray to the Lord.

Immaculate Conception

That our catechumens and candidates, seeing how God prepared the Blessed Virgin for the role that she was to fulfill in his redeeming plan, may implore God to prepare their hearts for the good works to which he has called them, we pray to the Lord.

Christmas

That our catechumens and candidates may respond to the angels' call to come worship the newborn King, and that they may seek to be evermore filled with the light of faith by the coming of the Word among us, we pray to the Lord.

Mother of God

That our catechumens and candidates may see in the Blessed Virgin a mother who prays for their good without fail, and who will always draw them nearer to her Divine Son, we pray to the Lord.

Epiphany

That our catechumens and candidates may come nearer to God's presence each day, bringing the gifts of their own lives, which he desires to use for his glory and their joy, we pray to the Lord.

Baptism of the Lord

That our catechumens may long for the waters of Baptism, and our candidates continue to grow in faithfulness to their baptismal covenant, we pray to the Lord.

January

That our catechumens and candidates may find what they seek in Jesus and choose to follow him, we pray to the Lord.

February

As our catechumens and candidates consider whether they are ready to celebrate the Easter sacraments, that they may hear the Lord speak to their hearts, we pray to the Lord.

Ash Wednesday

That our catechumens and candidates may desire the meekness and humility of true disciples, trusting in the good Lord's plan to redeem the failings of his people and transfigure his faithful ones into glory, we pray to the Lord.

March (after the Rites of Election/Call to Continuing Conversion)

That our elect and candidates, acknowledging their sins in this season of purification and enlightenment, may learn to trust in the Lord's healing and forgiveness, we pray to the Lord.

April (in Lent)

That the approach of Easter may inspire our elect and candidates to look forward to a new birth of living faith and absolute trust in the goodness of their Creator and Father, we pray to the Lord.

Passion/Palm Sunday

That our Loving Redeemer, through his Passion, will teach our elect and candidates self-denial, strengthen them against evil, and increase their hope, we pray to the Lord.

Easter Sunday

That those who were reborn in Baptism and made one with us at the Eucharistic Table at the Easter Vigil may share the glory of your resurrection and bring new life to the Church, we pray to the Lord.

May

That those who have been baptized and those who have been received into the full communion of the Church this Easter may grow in a deeper knowledge of the Lord as they celebrate the Eucharist, we pray to the Lord.

Ascension of the Lord

That those who have been baptized and those who have been received into the full communion of the Church may be firm in their hope of eternal life, and may be ever watchful for our Lord's return in glory, we pray to the Lord.

Pentecost

That those who have been baptized or received into the full communion of the Church may earnestly desire, in their new-gained Catholic way of life, to share with others outside the fold the goodness which they have discovered in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, we pray to the Lord.

June

That our parish community may welcome and nurture those whom the Lord is calling to join us as followers of Christ and faithful children of Holy Mother Church, we pray to the Lord.

Most Holy Trinity

That our parish community may, in our mutual and sacrificial love for one another, become evermore the image of our Triune God, and thereby welcome all those whom God calls to be his own, we pray to the Lord.

Body and Blood of Christ

That those whom the Holy Spirit is calling to enter the Catholic Church may hear and respond with generous abandon to the God who desires to give himself to satisfy their every need, we pray to the Lord.

July

That our parish community may seek to foster the desire and feed the hunger of those seeking to know Christ more deeply in his Body the Church, we pray to the Lord.

August

That those whom our parish community strives to disciple in the RCIA process may have the courage to follow the path that leads to newness of life, we pray to the Lord.

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

That those outside the Catholic faith may discover the gift and mystery of our Lady's constant intercession on their behalf, and perceive her loving call to trust in the ways of her Son, we pray to the Lord.

September

That those considering entering the Church founded on Christ's apostles may endeavor to entrust themselves to that hope of eternal life founded on Christ's promises, we pray to the Lord.

October

That our catechumens and candidates may grow in their love for Jesus by gathering with us for prayer, service of others, and diligent study of the Catholic faith, we pray to the Lord.

All Saints Day

That our catechumens and candidates may be inspired by the heroic virtue of the saints, and see in them the power and authentic holiness that God's grace offers to each human life, we pray to the Lord.

November

That our catechumens and candidates may be guided by their sponsors and teachers as they study and practice the justice and charity of Christian living, we pray to the Lord.

Christ the King

That our catechumens and candidates may increasingly seek to follow the example of our servant King in earnest and prayerful efforts to serve those whom God has given them to love, we pray to the Lord.

APPENDIX III

RCIA TEAM RESOURCES



Interview Questions for a Potential Team Member

Interviewer: *This form would be used with a person seeking a specific area of responsibility on the initiation team, such as coordinating sponsors or facilitating a small group. The use of this form also implies that the person being interviewed understands the basic requirements for any team member, regardless of specific duties.*

These basic requirements include: in good standing sacramentally in the parish, evidence of a converted heart and a love for Jesus and his Church, desire to participate in the Church's mission of evangelization, basic knowledge of the Church's teachings, living in accord with the Church's teachings, desire to continue his/her formation, punctual and flexible, open to new relationships, open to questions, open to being a witness of faith to others, prudent and able to keep confidentiality. If these things are not known about the potential team member, then questions about the above requirements should be included in the interview. Notes on the conversation should be taken as needed.

Today's Date: _____

Name of person being interviewed: _____

Possible position on the team: _____

Name of interviewer: _____

Questions:

1. Describe your prayer life.
2. What is your previous experience in parish ministries?
3. What experience (formal or informal) have you had in developing fellowship skills?
4. What experience (formal or informal) have you had specifically in developing communication skills?
5. What is your previous experience in working on a team?
6. What gifts do you believe you can offer the team based on the "job description"?
7. In what areas would you need assistance?
8. What are your employment and family commitments at this time?
9. Are you involved in any other volunteer work at this time?
10. Would you have the time necessary to fulfill this position's demands?

Summary remarks by the interviewer (based on notes):

Recommendation:

Sample agenda for an initial team meeting:

General introductions of team members.
Why RCIA? Why an RCIA team?
The RCIA schedule.

Qualifications of a team member:

- ✘ Be converted to Christ and his Church
- ✘ Docile to the Church's mission
- ✘ Punctual and flexible
- ✘ Desiring to continue your own formation
- ✘ Openness to new relationships
- ✘ Openness to questions
- ✘ Openness of your life as a witness of faith
- ✘ Prudent and able to keep confidentiality

Nature of the RCIA sessions:

- ⦿ No commitment, no cost for the participants
- ⦿ No participation required—each person must never feel manipulated, must be free to decide to come
- ⦿ Spouse is welcome to come with the participant; we can provide babysitting
- ⦿ Catechesis gradually introduces things Christian and things distinctively Catholic, including Catholic practices, navigating the Bible, Catholic teachings, living an adult Christian life
- ⦿ If desired, we will try to find a Catholic from a participant's own faith background to talk with
- ⦿ Any participant can always make an appointment to see our pastor, another priest, or the RCIA leader
- ⦿ There will be a discernment process and interviews prior to each of the major Rites
- ⦿ Questions from participants are never unwelcome, offensive, or too frequent
- ⦿ Verbal questions should come only from participants, not team or sponsors (written ones are welcome from all)
- ⦿ All participants will receive Bibles (and Catechisms if they request)
- ⦿ Role of food and refreshments
- ⦿ Role of handouts given at each session
- ⦿ Role of the RCIA library of printed, video, and audio materials for participants
- ⦿ Role of testimonies to be given by each team member
- ⦿ Role and conduct of small groups
- ⦿ Role of godparents and sponsors
- ⦿ Critical importance of prayer
- ⦿ Each team member must obtain a faithful intercessor who will agree to pray regularly for your work on the team

Jobs for the team (each person may occupy more than one of these roles):

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| ✘ Catechist | ✘ Hospitality and Food | ✘ Music |
| ✘ Intercessor Coordinator | ✘ Library | ✘ Liturgy Coordinator |
| ✘ Sponsor Coordinator | ✘ Small Group Facilitator | ✘ Retreat Coordinator |
| ✘ Set-Up/Break-Down | ✘ Reflection on the Word Facilitator | |

Who are potential inquirers that might come if asked?
What the first session needs to be like.

Prayer for those we seek to serve...

Most holy Mother of God, Immaculate Virgin, we beseech you, for the sake of Christ, our Lord, your Son, offer your loving prayers before the throne of God for all those wandering children of yours who are outside the full communion of His one true Church.

Obtain for them, most tender Mother, the grace to see the love of God, the desire to understand the truth of the Catholic faith, and the strength to courageously embrace the gospel.

May the good influence of Catholic instruction, the pious example of the team, godparents, sponsors, and members of our parish, the prudent words of Catholic friends, the zeal of priests and religious, gently and sweetly invite them to come to their Father's home and to the unity of the fold of Christ.

Protect and watch over them in your kindness while they stray in exile and darkness. Obtain for them many effective graces. Be merciful and aid them, holy Mother, now in their time of desolation and need, so that you may have joy hereafter in welcoming to your family in Heaven these souls which have been redeemed by the passion and death of your most holy Son, Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.

Agenda for future team meetings:

- ⦿ The items for discussion will be different at each meeting depending on the stage of the RCIA process and current needs
- ⦿ Team members will report on the progress of participants
- ⦿ Discussion of ways to better help various participants, or ways to address pastoral issues that have arisen
- ⦿ Specific team members give updates concerning their respective roles
- ⦿ Reminder about upcoming liturgical events or other calendar matters

RCIA TEAM RETREAT

Late July or early August can be a good time to bring your team together for a retreat. Quality time is vital for growth and development in ministry—despite the difficulties in claiming this time during busy days. The team retreat is one way that the team takes seriously the call to be a community of faith which shares the journey of faith with catechumens and candidates who seek to join us.

The theme for the retreat usually flows from the experience of the team. For example, one group might choose the issue of trust and confidence building; another, conversion; another, the mission and ministry of Jesus; and so on. It is important to choose a topic and design the day to meet the needs of your team.

Choose a date with your team. Ask them to commit to attending.

Your first consideration will be to find a date and a place. Once your team has decided on a date, begin to plan and prepare for the retreat. Decide whether you want to do a one day retreat or an expanded retreat which includes an overnight stay. An overnight retreat helps to build community and affords much more time for faith sharing, meals, play and socializing. Overnight retreats can be costly and, unless you want to spend part of your budget or pass that cost on to your team, you may need to consider a day retreat. A one-day retreat can work very well.

Choose a place

You might want to try a retreat center, a state park or even the home of one of the team members. It's probably best not to hold the retreat at the Church, but in an out-of-the-way place.

Choose a leader and divide some roles among the team (i.e. meals, prayer experiences, reflection questions, goals for the coming year, etc.)

If the budget allows, you might consider hiring a retreat leader. But, for most of us, money is tight. It is definitely possible to lead the retreat yourself. The team can share in the responsibility of meals, which also helps keep the cost down and can be a great team-building activity.

Consider and evaluate the past year.

Speak with your team about their strengths and weaknesses. Evaluate how the process is going and what needs improving. By doing this together, you will come up with a list of ideas for the theme of your retreat. The team retreat, as with all team formation, is meant to build confidence and knowledge among your team as well as forming friendship and creating community. The first principle of catechumenal team formation is that team members learn by doing. A team retreat can help new and seasoned team members develop the courage to “jump in”!

The following is a sample retreat day that can be adapted to meet your specific needs.

Mission and Ministry Retreat Day

9:00 Gathering, coffee

9:15 Opening Prayer

9:45 Mandala exercise on ministry

1. Each person is given a large sheet of newsprint and a box of crayons or color pencils. Quiet background music is played.
2. Invite each person to draw a circle which fills the sheet of paper. (The circle represents wholeness – the wholeness of their life.)
3. Invite each person to divide the circle into six parts. These divisions may be made in any way one desires.
4. On the back of the sheet answer the following questions:
 - a. List the names of 10-15 people who have given to you (nurtured, challenged, encouraged you) so that through them you felt drawn closer to God.
 - b. List the names of 10-15 people to whom you have given of yourself and through whom you have been drawn closer to God.
 - c. Name an experience in your life (or a relationship) where you were brought to a deeper relationship with God or with another person.
 - d. Name a time in your life when you felt you most helped someone else to discover God's presence.
 - e. Name a time in your life when you were with a group who as a community celebrated the presence of God.
 - f. Name a time in your life when you really listened to another person; name a time you gave when it really hurt you to give; name a time when you felt you offered life to another person.
5. Turn the page over and in symbols, colors, and lines (not with words) fill in your mandala. Is there a symbol or image that represents the whole of each item listed above? Allow 45 minutes for each team member to complete this.

6. Choose a reading on ministry from scripture, perhaps a reading on the body and the many members from 1 Corinthians 12. Have team members place their picture before them as the leader slowly reads the scripture passage. As they look at their pictures have them complete the following sentence at the bottom of their mandala: To serve is . . .
- 11:30 Allow time to share reflections on the exercise. End with the same reading or another of your choosing or a closing song.
- 12:30 Lunch and free time.
- 2:00 Reflection/presentation on the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ. This could be done by the team coordinator; however, you might want to consider inviting someone who is not part of the team to do this presentation so that the coordinator may enter into the retreat day with the team.
- 3:00 Quiet reflection on scripture passages developed during this presentation and questions which focus participants' ministries in terms of the ministry of Jesus. Questions could be: Where do you feel affirmed? Where do you feel challenged? What is it going to cost you to live this ministry? In your family? At work? In the parish? In your neighborhood?
- 4:00 Sharing
- 4:45 Closing Prayer (perhaps celebration of the Eucharist)
- 6:00 Departure.

This is one sample retreat day for the team. Each team and parish needs to design the retreat to meet their particular needs.

Sample questions that could be used to evaluate the parish RCIA process:

1. List as many as possible of those who have been initiated into the Church in the parish during the past three years, except for those who have moved away from the parish (new job, military transfer, etc.)
 - Do we see these individuals at Sunday Mass?
 - Are they involved in other ways in the parish?
 - Are there reasons why they may not be practicing the Catholic faith?
2. What happens when someone calls our parish saying that they want to know more about becoming Catholic? What does our precatechumenate look like?
3. How do we prepare RCIA participants and the parish for the major liturgical rites? How do we reflect on these rites after they take place?
4. How often and how well do we make available the various minor rites (Celebrations of the Word, Blessings, Minor Exorcisms, Anointings, Presentations, etc.)?
5. If we dismiss the catechumens from Sunday Mass, how often do we do so? If not, how can we change things to offer this opportunity? What takes place at Reflection on the Word?
6. What happens during Lent? Is Lent a time for “interior reflection” or primarily catechetical instruction? Do we celebrate all of the Scrutinies, the Presentations, and the Preparation Rites on Holy Saturday?
7. What is our Easter Vigil like? How many parishioners attend? Do the elect and the candidates feel welcomed and at home by their experience of the parish at the Vigil?
8. What do we do during the period of mystagogy? During the neophyte year?
9. How do we initiate children of catechetical age and teens who need to prepare for Baptism or for reception into full communion?
10. In what ways could others assist in the catechumenal ministry at our parish? How could we invite them?
11. How supportive is the parish of the initiation process?
12. Are sponsors and godparents deeply involved before and after the Easter Vigil? What sort of formation do they receive?
13. What is our understanding of how well RCIA participants will know and live the Catholic faith? What resources do we use? What other activities (prayer experiences, service, field trips) do we provide for participants to join in? Do they understand their responsibility to participate in the Church’s mission to evangelize?
14. What do we do well regarding initiation? What really works? What does not seem to be working?

APPENDIX IV

CATECHETICAL RESOURCES

SAMPLE
Pre-Catechumenate Curriculum Outline

Note: Sessions P01 - P06 are intended for those who are "unchurched" or have little or no background in Christianity or religion. These may be conducted with individuals or in small groups before the full group begins meeting. Sessions P07 - P11 are intended for the entire group of participants and should take place prior to celebrating the Rite of Acceptance / Rite of Welcome.

	Topic Objective	Subtopics	US Catechism for Adults Suggested Reading/Reference	Other Resources for this Topic
P01	Finding God in Our Lives Discussion of the perceived presence (or absence) of God in our lives and the lives of the inquirers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is God? • How can we know God exists? • How do we know he is present in our lives? 	None	Psalm 139
P02	What God has Done for Us Brief introduction of Salvation History and our human response to what God has done for us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has God done for humanity? • What is humanity's response? • How does God maintain a relationship with humanity? • How do we/can we respond to God's call for relationship with Him? 	None	Salvation History Materials from Ann Lankford/Diocese of LaCrosse, WI
P03	Who is Jesus Christ? Brief introduction to the person of Jesus Christ and the centrality of Jesus to the Christian faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is Jesus Christ? • Why is He the center of the Christian life? • How can we develop a relationship with Him? • Where do we go from here? 	None	
P04	Journey of Faith Explore our faith journey up to this point and where it might be taking us from this point forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do our experience(s) of faith shape our lives and our ideas of God? • How do we get to know God and build a relationship with Him? • Is faith a one-time thing or a continuum (is this a destination or a journey)? 	None	
P05	Exploring Prayer Reflecting on prayer and how it may have been at work in our lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is prayer? • How do we pray? • How has prayer already been a part of our lives? 	None	
P06	A Process of Conversion Discuss the meaning of conversion and how it applies to the participants and the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is prayer? • How do we pray? • How has prayer already been a part of our 	None	

Borrowed from the Diocese of Covington.

Note: Sessions P01 - P06 are intended for those who are "unchurched" or have little or no background in Christianity or religion. These may be conducted with individuals or in small groups before the full group begins meeting. Sessions P07 - P11 are intended for the entire group of participants and should take place prior to celebrating the Rite of Acceptance / Rite of Welcome.

	Topic Objective	Subtopics	US Catechism for Adults Suggested Reading/Reference	Other Resources for this Topic
	RCIA process	lives?		
P07	Gathering/Introductions/Expectations of Process Introduce Catechumens and Candidates to the people and process of the RCIA in order to become comfortable with them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of all present (participants, sponsors, team, clergy). • Overview of the RCIA process (stages, rites) • Discuss meeting times and places (hand out schedule) • Discuss expectations/attendance of Catechumens, Candidates, and Sponsors 	None	
P08	Introduction to Mass/Tour of Church Assist in beginning/nurturing the relationship with God through an understanding of our liturgical worship and place of worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Missal and Liturgy of the Word. • Tour of church with time for questions. 	Parts of chapters 35 and 36	Missal; <i>Mass Appeal</i> , by Jimmy Akin (available from Catholic Answers)
P09	Revelation Understanding of how God is known by us and makes Himself known to us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacred Scripture • Tradition 	Chapters 2 and 3	Bible
P10	Faith/Grace Understanding of what grace is and how we receive it. Understanding of faith and how it impacts every part of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is faith? • How do we grow in faith? • What is grace (actual/sanctifying)? • How do we receive grace? 	Chapter 4	
P11	Taking Up the Cross Introduce the Cross of Christ and the idea of “crosses” we bear in our lives as Christians Note: This is a direct preparation for being marked with the cross in the Rite of Acceptance/Rite of Welcome. Could be done in conjunction with preparation and practice for the rite.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean to “take up the cross”? • What are some “crosses” people carry in their lives? • How can “carrying our crosses” bring something good to our lives? • How do our “crosses” help us grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ? 	None	

SAMPLE
Catechumenate Curriculum Outline

Note: Sessions are intended for the entire group of participants after celebrating the Rite of Acceptance/Rite of Welcome.				
	Topic Objective	Subtopics	US Catechism for Adults Suggested Reading/Reference	Other Resources for this Topic
C01	Creation and Original Sin Understanding that God created humans in His image, yet gave us the gift of free will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation • Beings (angels vs. humans) • Free will (Fall of angels/angels and demons) • Original Sin (fall of humans) • Sin/concupiscence 	Chapter 6	<i>Burning Hearts</i> Kerygma Resources
C02	Trinity/God the Father Understanding of God as imminent and transcendent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the doctrine of the Trinity • Discussion of God the Father as the first person of the Trinity as our Father • Images of God the Father from Scripture 	Chapter 5	
C03	Incarnation/God the Son Understanding of Jesus as the second person of the Trinity and true God/true man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Incarnation as part of God's saving plan after the fall (salvation history) • Jesus as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Second person of the Trinity ○ Word made flesh ○ True God/true Man (divinity and humanity of Christ) ○ Fulfillment of the Old Testament ○ Priest, Prophet, King (Christ the King) ○ Redeemer ○ The Good Shepherd ○ Teacher/Messiah 	Chapter 7	Catholic Update: "The Four Faces of Jesus" (C0513)
C04	Salvation/Redemption by the Cross Understanding of what Christ did for us on the Cross	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christ's obedience to the cross • Redemption/Salvation • Our participation in the saving work of Christ 	Chapter 8	
C05	Holy Spirit Understanding of the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity and as the one	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holy Spirit as third person of the Trinity • Holy Spirit as a gift from Christ • Scriptural images of the Holy Spirit 	Chapter 9	

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	Topic Objective	Subtopics	US Catechism for Adults Suggested Reading/Reference	Other Resources for this Topic
	who sanctifies us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost 		
C06	Morning of Reflection on Prayer Understanding of how and why we pray.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion and experiences of various forms and types of prayer 	Chapters 35 and 36	
C07	Eternal Destiny Understanding of our eternal destiny in light of our relationship with God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Judgement (individual/general judgement) • Heaven, hell, purgatory • Communion of Saints • Second coming 	Chapter 13	
C08	Church Understanding of the Church as a community established by Christ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four marks of the Church • Church as the Body of Christ and People of God • Teaching authority of the Church (Magisterium) • Explanation of Church Councils • Examples of Apostolic Succession • Hierarchy • History/Evolution (splits, schisms, Protestant Reformation) 	Chapters 10 and 11	
C09	Paschal Mystery/Liturgical Year Understanding how our liturgical celebrations reflect the Paschal Mystery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paschal Mystery • Liturgical Calendar • Lectionary and cycles 	Chapter 14	Liturgical Calendars from Liturgy Training Publications
C10	Introduction to Sacraments/Sacrament of Baptism Understanding Baptism as giving us new life in Christ and as initiation into the Church community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a sacrament? • Introduce the seven sacraments and how they are grouped (initiation, healing, in service of communion) • Sacrament of Baptism (rite, symbols) • Baptism gives us new life • Baptism makes us members of the Church 	Chapter 15	
C11	Sacrament of Confirmation Understanding Confirmation as the completion of baptismal grace and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation as the completion of baptismal grace • Sacrament of Confirmation (rite, symbols) 	Chapter 16	

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	Topic Objective	Subtopics	US Catechism for Adults Suggested Reading/Reference	Other Resources for this Topic
	necessary to complete initiation into the full communion of the Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit 		
C12	Eucharist (Part 1) Understanding the Eucharist as the sacrificial gift of Christ to the Church.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, Paschal Mystery, Last Supper, Institution of the Eucharist by Christ, Christ's gift of self • Real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and why we genuflect to the tabernacle 	Chapter 17	
C13	Eucharist (Part 2) Understanding the Eucharist as the source and summit of Christian life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk-through of Liturgy of the Eucharist (mass prayers) • Receiving the Body of Christ and becoming the Body of Christ in the Eucharist • Living out the Eucharist in our daily lives • Note: Reception of the sacrament at Mass ("mechanics" of receiving the Body and Bloody) is covered at Lenten retreat 	Chapter 17	
C14	Reconciliation Understanding of God's mercy and grace in the sacrament of Reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God's mercy • Origin of the sacrament (from scripture) • Grace offered through the sacrament • Mortal vs. venial sins • Forms of sacrament (individual, communal, general absolution) • Reception of sacrament (examination of conscience, rite, penance) 	Chapter 18	
C15	Anointing of the Sick Understanding the role of suffering in the Christian life and the healing presence of Christ in the sacrament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of sickness and suffering in Christian life • Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick (rite, symbols, meaning) • Graces received and spiritual/physical healing offered 	Chapter 19	
C16	Holy Orders Understanding the ordained priesthood and other religious vocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordained priesthood vs. priesthood of the people through baptism • Sacrament of Holy Orders (rite, symbols, 	Chapter 20	

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	Topic Objective	Subtopics	US Catechism for Adults Suggested Reading/Reference	Other Resources for this Topic
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> levels of ordination: deacon, priest, bishop) • Hierarchy of ordained ministry (pope, bishops, priests, deacons, cardinals, etc., and role of each) • Diocesan priests vs. religious order priests • Consecrated life (brothers and sisters) 		
C17	Marriage and Human Sexuality Understanding sacramental marriage within God's plan for human sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief introduction to Theology of the Body • Meaning of sacramental marriage in God's plan • Sacrament of marriage (rite, symbols, ministers of sacrament) • Marriage as covenant 	Chapter 21	Theology of the Body
C18	Morality of Human Sexuality Understanding how to live out our sexuality within God's plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chastity • Co-Habitation • Contraception and Natural Family Planning • Reproductive Technologies • Marital fidelity • Divorce and annulments • Same-sex attraction 	Chapters 21 and 30	Theology of the Body, pamphlets are available on individual topics from <i>Our Sunday Visitor</i> and other publishers
C19	Mary Understanding of Mary's role as Mother of God, model of faith, and intercessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immaculate conception • Virgin Mother • Mother of God • Mary's role in salvation history • Assumption and Mary as Queen of Heaven • Mary as intercessor 	Chapter 12	
C20	Sacramentals and Popular Devotions Understanding how signs, symbols, and devotions direct us to Christ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eucharistic adoration • Sacramentals • Stations of the Cross • Novenas • Divine Mercy Chaplet • Rosary 	Chapter 22	Scriptural rosary pamphlet available in appendix; Catholic Update on Sacramentals (C0213B)
C21	Social Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life and dignity of the human person 	Chapters 24 and 31	

Borrowed from the Diocese of Covington.

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	Topic Objective	Subtopics	US Catechism for Adults Suggested Reading/Reference	Other Resources for this Topic
	Understanding our social responsibility as Christians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call to family, community, and participation • Rights and responsibilities • Option for the poor and vulnerable • Dignity of work and rights of the workers • Solidarity • Care for the environment 		
C22	Stewardship Understanding our use of God's gifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everything is a gift from God • Sharing our gifts of time, talent, and treasure • Stewardship of Earth • Stewardship within the Church 	Chapters 24 and 31	
C23	Service Day First-hand exposure to social justice and stewardship in action in our community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a service trip to a homeless shelter, soup kitchen, nursing home, etc. • Explain how community involvement is important in the Christian's life 	None	
C24	Lenten Retreat Final spiritual preparation for reception of the Easter sacraments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection on the sacraments of initiation • Reflection on the personal journey to the sacraments • This will take place on a Saturday morning during Lent and may also include preparation for a scrutiny rite 	None	
C25	Love of God Understanding our covenant relationship with God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God's love for us and our response • Discussion of the first three commandments 	Chapters 25-27	
C26	Christian Morality (Part 1) Understanding Christian morality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is morality? • Human dignity and community • What makes an act moral? • What is virtue? • Cardinal and theological virtues • Beatitudes 	Chapters 23, 28-34	
C27	Christian Morality (Part 2) Understanding Christian morality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is sin? • Relational vs. legal model • Mortal and venial sin 	Chapters 23, 28-34	

Note: Sessions are intended for the entire group of participants after celebrating the Rite of Acceptance/Rite of Welcome.

	Topic Objective	Subtopics	US Catechism for Adults Suggested Reading/Reference	Other Resources for this Topic
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social sin• What is conscience?• Forming one's conscience		

LITURGICAL CATECHESIS

Liturgical catechesis follows the liturgical year as it presents the life of Christ in its cycle of seasons and feasts. Very often liturgical catechesis and lectionary-based catechesis are understood as synonymous terms. This is not the case. Liturgical catechesis bases itself on the liturgy, the sacraments, the feasts and seasons of the liturgical year as well as the biblical readings used in these celebrations as the origins of catechetical topics. The entire mystery of Christ is made present and manifested to us in the liturgy of the Church. Dogma is proclaimed and celebrated within the liturgy before the very eyes of and in the Christian assembly. Hence the methodology of liturgical catechesis makes for a complete exposition of the faith while situating and directing the participant in a seamless tapestry—Liturgy of the Word and its inherent themes, preaching drawn from those themes, the essential symbols of the Church and Christian life—presenting a complete doctrinal expose that is logically explored and more easily ingested, owned and committed to one’s heart, mind, and soul because of the continual connection that is made between the doctrine and the return to it every time that liturgy is celebrated throughout life. For example, every time the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is celebrated, former catechumens nurtured in a liturgical catechesis methodology will remember not only Jesus’ baptism, but everything they learned about baptism that they explored on that feast day since both were so integrally intertwined. Catechesis that flows from the liturgical year and the celebration of Sunday within that yearly cycle is a very comprehensive presentation of and a more effective formation in the truths of our faith.

Presented below are possible catechetical themes during the liturgical year utilizing the methodology of liturgical catechesis. However, the doctrinal themes suggested here are just that, suggestions, because within every liturgy there is the potential to explore a myriad of doctrinal themes. This is not an exhaustive list.

Advent

Eschatology: death, judgement, heaven, hell, purgatory, the coming of Christ, incarnation, the second coming (Parousia), prayer, the liturgical year/calendar

Immaculate Conception

Christ saves us from our sins; Mary’s unique experience of salvation; Christ saves us from our sins through the sacraments and the sacrament of penance in particular

Fourth Sunday of Advent

The Christian message unfolds; the Annunciation; the coming of the Son of God in time

Christmas

The Incarnation; salvation, forgiveness of sins; divine life dispensed through the sacraments

Holy Family

Christ's sanctifying the everyday; the fourth commandment; the family as a place for the manifestation of God

Mary, Mother of God

Mary's unique role in salvation history as the mother of Jesus Christ who is both human and divine

Epiphany

God's universal offer of salvation; ask where we can encounter God; implications of the incarnation

Baptism of the Lord

Christ the new Adam; sacrament of baptism

Ordinary Time between the Baptism of the Lord and Ash Wednesday

Faith; Kingdom of God; discipleship; call of the apostles and hierarchical structure of the church; sacrament of holy orders; prayer

Ash Wednesday

Twofold meaning of Lent: baptismal and penitential

Lent

Morality; natural law; the Decalogue; sacrament of penance; discipleship

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

Christian view of suffering; Jesus as the Messiah

Holy Thursday

The Eucharist as a sacrifice and a memorial meal; holy orders/institution of the priesthood

Good Friday

The Paschal Mystery; Way of the Cross

Holy Saturday

The mystery of salvation

Easter Sunday

The Paschal Mystery; resurrection; paradigm of the Paschal Mystery in the Christian's life

Divine Mercy Sunday

Forgiveness and reconciliation; sacramental and devotions; indulgences

Easter Season

The Eucharist; presence of Christ in the Church and the sacraments

Ascension of the Lord

The mystical Body of Christ; where the head (Christ) has gone the body (Church) must follow

Pentecost

The Holy Spirit; the birth of the Church; Confirmation

Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ

Eucharist; Eucharistic adoration; viaticum

Trinity Sunday

The mystery of the Triune God; humanity created for communion in the image of the Triune God

Ordinary Time from Trinity Sunday to the First Sunday of Advent

Miracles; marriage and theology of the body; anointing of the sick; prayer; Catholic Social Teaching; ecumenism; sacraments as encounters with Christ

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

All salvation comes through Christ; resurrection of the body; sanctity of the body; Mary's unique grace given to her by God

All Saints Day

Communion of saints; canonization; universal call to holiness; eschatology







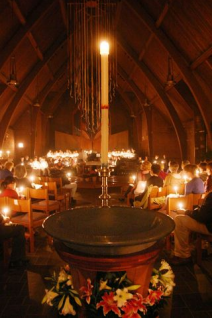





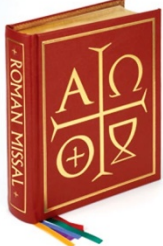
All Souls Day

Communion of saints; purgatory; prayer for the dead; eschatology

**SYNOPSIS OF THE LITURGICAL RITES AND THEMES FOR SPIRITUAL REFLECTION
DURING THE PERIOD OF THE PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT**

When	What	Who	Scripture	Themes
First Sunday of Lent	Diocesan Rite of Election and the parish celebration of the Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion	The Elect and the Candidates	The Temptations in the Desert (Lectionary Years A, B, C)	The decisive call to be God's chosen people; testing; sin; grace
Second Sunday of Lent (or weekday)	Penitential Rite	Baptized Candidates	The Transfiguration (Lectionary Years A, B, C)	Baptismal themes; purification
Any time during Lent	Sacrament of Reconciliation	Baptized Candidates	Any readings from the Rite of Penance	Repentance, forgiveness, Penance as "second Baptism"
Third Sunday of Lent	First Scrutiny	The Elect	The Samaritan Woman (Lectionary Year A)	Water; thirst; encountering Jesus Christ as the Messiah
Third Week of Lent (weekday Mass)	Presentation of the Creed	The Elect (and baptized candidates if appropriate)	readings found in RCIA 158, and in Lectionary 748	Profession of faith as integral to baptism and upheld through life
Fourth Sunday of Lent	Second Scrutiny	The Elect	The Man Born Blind (Lectionary Year A)	Sight; blindness; Jesus Christ as the Light of the World
Fifth Sunday of Lent	Third Scrutiny	The Elect	The Raising of Lazarus (Lectionary Year A)	Life; death, the tomb; Jesus Christ as the Resurrection and the Life
Fifth Week of Lent (weekday Mass)	Presentation of the Lord's Prayer	The Elect (and baptized candidates if appropriate)	Readings found in RCIA 179 and in Lectionary 749 (N.B. Matt 6:9-13 is the Presentation and must be read)	The summary of the whole gospel (CCC 2761 ff.); the prayer of Jesus (CCC 2765 ff.); the prayer of the Church (CCC 2767 ff.)

CATHOLIC CHURCH FURNISHINGS

		
<p style="text-align: center;">Baptismal Font</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ambo</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Presider's Chair</p>
		
<p style="text-align: center;">Holy Water Font</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lectionary</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Crucifix</p>
		
<p style="text-align: center;">Paschal Candle (Easter Candle)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Paten</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tabernacle</p>
		
<p style="text-align: center;">Ambry</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chalice</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sanctuary Lamp</p>
		
<p style="text-align: center;">Nave</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Roman Missal</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Reconciliation Room</p>



Alb



Bishop's Miter



Pope Francis



Priest Stole



Bishop's Crozier



Bishop Medley



Chasuble



Bishop's Zucchetto

(Insert your pastor's picture here.)

(Insert your pastor here.)



Dalmatic



Bishop's Pectoral Cross

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

HAIL, HOLY QUEEN, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope! To you we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to you we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile, show to us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary:

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

O GOD, whose only begotten Son, by his life, death, and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech you, that by meditating upon these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

IN THE NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

WEEKLY PLAN FOR RECITING THE ROSARY

Sunday—Glorious Mysteries; Monday—Joyful Mysteries;
Tuesday—Sorrowful Mysteries; Wednesday—Glorious Mysteries;
Thursday—Luminous Mysteries; Friday—Sorrowful Mysteries;
Saturday—Joyful Mysteries.



SOURCES: Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries adapted from *The Scriptural Rosary*, © 1961, 1989 by the Christianica Center. Luminous Mysteries adapted from the *Workbook and Study Guide [on the] Apostolic Letter Rosarium Virginis Mariae (on the Most Holy Rosary) of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II*. “Come, Holy Spirit” prayer from *To the Priests, Our Lady’s Beloved Sons*, © 2000 by the Marian Movement of Priests. Intentions for each decade from *The Imitation of Christ*, © 1993 by Catholic Book Publishing Co. Artwork © 1996 by The Order of St. Benedict, Inc.

The Holy Rosary of Our Lady, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary



Passages from Sacred Scripture for the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious mysteries

PREPARATORY PRAYERS

IN THE NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I BELIEVE IN GOD, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I 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. Amen.

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.

HAIL, MARY, full of grace! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen. (Three times, for the virtues of faith, hope, and charity.)

GLORY BE to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.



Fifth Glorious Mystery: THE CORONATION

For eternal happiness

OUR FATHER...

“Who is this arising like the dawn, fair as the moon, resplendent as the sun?” (Song 6:10). HAIL MARY...

Like the rainbow gleaming against brilliant clouds, like blossoms in the days of spring (Sir 50:7, 8). HAIL MARY...

“I am the rose of Sharon, I am the lily of the valleys” (Song 2:1). HAIL MARY...

“My throne is in a pillar of cloud, and for eternity I shall remain” (Sir 24:4, 9). HAIL MARY...

“Approach me, you who desire me, and take your fill of my fruits” (Sir 24:19). HAIL MARY...

“I am like a vine putting out graceful shoots, my blossoms are sweeter than honey” (Sir 24:17, 20). HAIL MARY...

“And now, my children, listen to me; listen to instruction and learn to be wise” (Prov 8:32, 33). HAIL MARY...

“Happy are those who keep my ways, who day after day watch at my gates” (Prov 8:32, 34). HAIL MARY...

“For those who find me find life, and win favor from the Lord” (Prov 8:35). HAIL MARY...

Hail, Queen of mercy, protect us from the enemy, and receive us at the hour of death (Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary, gradual). HAIL MARY...

GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...



Fourth Glorious Mystery: THE ASSUMPTION

For devotion to Mary

OUR FATHER...

“Come then, my love, my lovely one, come” (Song 2:10). **HAIL MARY...**

“For see, winter is past, the rains are over and gone” (Song 2:11). **HAIL MARY...**

“Show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet and your face is beautiful” (Song 2:14). **HAIL MARY...**

And the sanctuary of God in heaven opened. Then came flashes of lightning and peals of thunder (Rv 11:19). **HAIL MARY...**

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman, adorned with the sun (Rv 12:1). **HAIL MARY...**

She was standing on the moon, with the twelve stars on her head for a crown (Rv 12:1). **HAIL MARY...**

With jewels set in gold, and dressed in brocades, the king’s daughter is led in to the king (Ps 45:13, 14). **HAIL MARY...**

May you be blessed, my daughter, by God Most High, beyond all women on earth (Judith 13:23). **HAIL MARY...**

The trust you have shown shall not pass from the memories of men, but shall ever remind them of the power of God (Judith 13:25). **HAIL MARY...**

You are the glory of Jerusalem! You are the great pride of Israel! You are the highest honor of our people! (Judith 15:10). **HAIL MARY...**

GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...



PRAYERS BEFORE AND AFTER EACH DECADE

BEFORE EACH DECADE

COME, HOLY SPIRIT, come by means of the powerful intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, your well-beloved spouse. (Optional.)

AFTER EACH DECADE

O MY JESUS, forgive us our sins, and save us from the fires of hell. Lead all souls to heaven, especially those most in need of your mercy.

MY LADY, help me to see God’s love for me today as I have never seen it before in my entire life. (Optional.)



**BEDREW US, HEAVEN FROM
ABOVE, YE CLOUDS
RAIN DOWN THE JUST ONE**

First Joyful Mystery: THE ANNUNCIATION

For the love of humility

OUR FATHER...

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a virgin; and the virgin's name was Mary (Lk 1:26, 27). **HAIL MARY...**

“Rejoice, so highly favored! The Lord is with you” (Lk 1:28). **HAIL MARY...**

She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean (Lk 1:29). **HAIL MARY...**

But the angel said to her, “Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favor” (Lk 1:30). **HAIL MARY...**

“Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus” (Lk 1:31). **HAIL MARY...**

“He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High; and his reign will have no end” (Lk 1:32, 33). **HAIL MARY...**

Mary said to the angel, “But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?” (Lk 1:34). **HAIL MARY...**

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow” (Lk 1:35). **HAIL MARY...**

“And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God” (Lk 1:35). **HAIL MARY...**

“I am the handmaid of the Lord,” said Mary, “let what you have said be done to me” (Lk 1:38). **HAIL MARY... GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...**



Third Glorious Mystery: THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

For love of God

OUR FATHER...

When Pentecost day came around, they had all met in one room (Acts 2:1). **HAIL MARY...**

Suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house (Acts 2:2). **HAIL MARY...**

And something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them (Acts 2:3). **HAIL MARY...**

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak about the marvels of God (Acts 2:4, 11). **HAIL MARY...**

Now there were devout men living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven (Acts 2:5). **HAIL MARY...**

And Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed them in a loud voice (Acts 2:14). **HAIL MARY...**

“Repent and be baptized, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). **HAIL MARY...**

And they accepted what he said and were baptized. That very day about three thousand were added to their number (Acts 2:41). **HAIL...**

Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created; and you shall renew the face of the earth (Pentecost Alleluia). **HAIL MARY...**

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful: and kindle in them the fire of your love (Pentecost Alleluia). **HAIL MARY...**

GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...



Second Glorious Mystery: THE ASCENSION

For the virtue of hope

OUR FATHER...

Jesus took them out as far as the outskirts of Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them (Lk 24:50). **HAIL MARY...**

He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Mt 28:18).

HAIL MARY...

"Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations" (Mt 28:19). **HAIL MARY...**

"Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). **HAIL MARY...**

"And teach them to observe all the commands I gave you" (Mt 28:20). **HAIL MARY...**

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mk 16:16). **HAIL MARY...**

"He who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk 16:16). **HAIL MARY...**

"And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time" (Mt 28:20). **HAIL MARY...**

As he said this he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight (Acts 1:9). **HAIL MARY...**

And so the Lord Jesus was taken up into heaven: there at the right hand of God he took his place (Mk 16:19). **HAIL MARY...**

GLORY BE...

O MY JESUS...



Second Joyful Mystery: THE VISITATION

For charity toward my neighbor

OUR FATHER...

Mary set out at that time and went to the hill country. And she went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth (Lk 1:39, 40). **HAIL MARY...**

Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:41). **HAIL MARY...**

She gave a loud cry and said, "Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Lk 1:42). **HAIL MARY...**

"Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled" (Lk 1:45). **HAIL MARY...**

And Mary said, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my savior, because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid" (Lk 1:46-48). **HAIL MARY...**

"Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me" (Lk 1:48, 49). **HAIL MARY...**

"Holy is his name, and his mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him" (Lk 1:49, 50). **HAIL MARY...**

"He has shown the power of his arm, he has routed the proud of heart" (Lk 1:51). **HAIL MARY...**

"He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly" (Lk 1:52). **HAIL MARY...**

"The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away" (Lk 1:53). **HAIL MARY... GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...**



Third Joyful Mystery: THE NATIVITY

For the spirit of poverty

OUR FATHER...

Now while Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her child (Lk 2:6). **HAIL MARY...**

And she gave birth to a son, her firstborn, and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes (Lk 2:7). **HAIL MARY...**

And she laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them at the inn (Lk 2:7). **HAIL MARY...**

In the countryside close by there were shepherds, and the angel of the Lord appeared to them (Lk 2:8, 9). **HAIL MARY...**

“Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people” (Lk 2:10). **HAIL MARY...**

“Today in the town of David a savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord” (Lk 2:11). **HAIL MARY...**

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favor” (Lk 2:14). **HAIL MARY...**

And some wise men came from the east, and going in they saw the child with his mother Mary (Mt 2:1, 11). **HAIL MARY...**

And falling to their knees they did him homage. Then they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh (Mt 2:11). **HAIL MARY...**

And Mary kept in mind all these things and pondered them in her heart (Lk 2:19). **HAIL MARY...**



First Glorious Mystery: THE RESURRECTION

For the virtue of faith

OUR FATHER...

“I tell you most solemnly, you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy” (Jn 16:20). **HAIL MARY...**

“For I shall see you again, and your hearts will be full of joy, and that joy no one shall take from you” (Jn 16:22). **HAIL MARY...**

At the first sign of dawn, they went to the tomb with the spices they had prepared (Lk 24:1). **HAIL MARY...**

And all at once the angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled away the stone and sat on it (Mt 28:2). **HAIL MARY...**

“I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here” (Mt 28:5, 6). **HAIL MARY...**

“He has risen from the dead. Come and see the place where he lay” (Lk 24:6; Mt 28:6, 7). **HAIL MARY...**

“And now he is going before you to Galilee; it is there you will see him” (Mt 28:7). **HAIL MARY...**

And the women came out from the tomb filled with awe and great joy (Mk 16:8; Mt 28:8). **HAIL MARY...**

“I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live” (Jn 11:25). **HAIL MARY...**

“And whoever lives and believes in me will never die” (Jn 11:26). **HAIL MARY...**

GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...



Fifth Sorrowful Mystery: THE CRUCIFIXION

For final perseverance

OUR FATHER...

When they reached the place called The Skull, they crucified him (Lk 23:33). **HAIL MARY...**

Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing” (Lk 23:34). **HAIL MARY...**

One of the criminals crucified with him said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Lk 23:39, 42; Mk 15:32). **HAIL MARY...**

“Indeed, I promise you,” he replied, “today you will be with me in paradise” (Lk 23:43). **HAIL MARY...**

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and the disciple he loved (Jn 19:25, 26). **HAIL MARY...**

Jesus said to his mother, “Woman, this is your son.” Then to the disciple he said, “This is your mother” (Jn 19:26, 27). **HAIL MARY...**

And from that moment, the disciple made a place for her in his home (Jn 19:27). **HAIL MARY...**

And a darkness came over the whole land, and the earth quaked; and the veil of the Temple was torn in two (Lk 23:44; Mt 27:51). **HAIL MARY...**

And Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Lk 23:46). **HAIL MARY...**

And bowing his head, he breathed his last (Jn 19:30; Lk 23:46). **HAIL MARY...**

GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...



Fourth Joyful Mystery: THE PRESENTATION

For the virtue of obedience

OUR FATHER...

Observing the Law of Moses, they took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (Lk 2:22). **HAIL MARY...**

Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man (Lk 2:25). **HAIL MARY...**

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Anointed of the Lord (Lk 2:26). **HAIL MARY...**

And when the parents brought in the child Jesus, he took him into his arms and blessed God (Lk 2:27, 28). **HAIL MARY...**

“Now, Master, you can let your servant go in peace, just as you promised” (Lk 2:29). **HAIL MARY...**

“Because my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the nations to see” (Lk 2:30, 31). **HAIL MARY...**

“A light to enlighten the pagans and the glory of your people Israel” (Lk 2:32). **HAIL MARY...**

And he said to Mary his mother, “You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected” (Lk 2:34). **HAIL MARY...**

“And a sword will pierce your own soul too—so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare” (Lk 2:35). **HAIL MARY...**

And they went back to Nazareth, and the child grew to maturity, and he was filled with wisdom; and God’s favor was with him (Lk 2:39, 40). **HAIL MARY... GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...**



Fifth Joyful Mystery: THE FINDING OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

For the virtue of piety

OUR FATHER...

When Jesus was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover (Lk 2:41, 42). **HAIL MARY...**

When they were on their way home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents knowing it (Lk 2:43). **HAIL MARY...**

They went back to Jerusalem looking for him everywhere. Three days later, they found him in the Temple (Lk 2:45, 46). **HAIL MARY...**

He was sitting among the doctors, listening to them, and asking them questions (Lk 2:46). **HAIL MARY...**

And all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies (Lk 2:47). **HAIL MARY...**

“My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you” (Lk 2:48). **HAIL MARY...**

“Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father’s affairs?” (Lk 2:49). **HAIL MARY...**

But they did not understand what he meant (Lk 2:50). **HAIL MARY...**

He then went down with them and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority (Lk 2:51). **HAIL MARY...**

And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and men (Lk 2:52). **HAIL MARY...**

GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...



Fourth Sorrowful Mystery: THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS

For the virtue of patience

OUR FATHER...

“If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself” (Lk 9:23). **HAIL MARY...**

“And take up his cross every day and follow me” (Lk 9:23). **HAIL MARY...**

And they led him out to crucify him, carrying his own cross (Jn 19:17; Mk 15:21). **HAIL MARY...**

And they seized on a man, Simon from Cyrene, and made him shoulder the cross and carry it behind Jesus (Lk 23:26). **HAIL MARY...**

“Shoulder my yoke and learn from me” (Mt 11:29). **HAIL MARY...**

“For I am gentle and humble in heart” (Mt 11:29). **HAIL MARY...**

“And you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light” (Mt 11:29, 30). **HAIL MARY...**

Large numbers of people followed him, and of women too, who mourned and lamented for him (Lk 23:27). **HAIL MARY...**

But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children” (Lk 23:28). **HAIL MARY...**

“For if men use the green wood like this, what will happen when it is dry?” (Lk 23:31). **HAIL MARY...**

GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...



Third Sorrowful Mystery: THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

For moral courage

OUR FATHER...

The soldiers led him away to the Praetorium. Then they stripped him and dressed him up in purple (Mk 15:16, 17; Mt 27:28). **HAIL MARY...**

And having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand (Mt 27:29). **HAIL MARY...**

To make fun of him they knelt to him, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" (Mt 27:29). **HAIL MARY...**

And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head (Mt 27:30). **HAIL MARY...**

Then Pilate took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said, "I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern" (Mt 27:24). **HAIL MARY...**

Jesus then came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe (Jn 19:5).

HAIL MARY...

"Here is your king," said Pilate. "Take him away!" they said. "Crucify him!" (Jn 19:15). **HAIL MARY...**

"Why, what harm has he done?" But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" (Mk 15:14). **HAIL MARY...**

"Do you want me to crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king except Caesar" (Jn 19:15). **HAIL MARY...**

So Pilate, anxious to placate the crowd, handed him over to be crucified (Mk 15:15). **HAIL MARY...**

GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...



First Luminous Mystery: THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

For living my baptismal promises

OUR FATHER...

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (Jn 1:1). **HAIL MARY...**

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light (Jn 1:6,8). **HAIL MARY...**

For our sake God made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21). **HAIL MARY...**

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him (Mt 3:13). **HAIL MARY...**

John tried to refuse him with the protest, "I should be baptized by you, yet you come to me!" (Mt 3:14). **HAIL MARY...**

Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented (Mt 3:15). **HAIL MARY...**

When Jesus was baptized... behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him (Mt 3:16). **HAIL MARY...**

Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3:17). **HAIL MARY...**

The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. (Mk 1:12). **HAIL MARY...**

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (Jn 8:12). **HAIL MARY...**

GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...



Second Luminous Mystery: THE WEDDING FEAST AT CANA

For doing whatever Jesus says

OUR FATHER...

On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there (Jn 2:1). **HAIL MARY...**

Jesus also was invited to the marriage, with his disciples (Jn 2:2). **HAIL MARY...**

When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine" (Jn 2:3). **HAIL MARY...**

And Jesus said to her, "O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come" (Jn 2:4). **HAIL MARY...**

His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5). **HAIL MARY...**

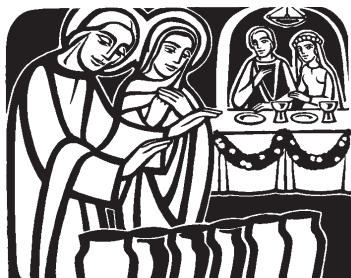
Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water" (Jn 2:6-7). **HAIL MARY...**

He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast" (Jn 2:8). **HAIL MARY...**

When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine, he called the bridegroom and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, but you have kept the good wine until now" (Jn 2:9-10). **HAIL MARY...**

This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory (Jn 2:11). **HAIL MARY...**

Jesus manifested his glory and his disciples believed in him (Jn 2:11). **HAIL MARY...
GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...**



Second Sorrowful Mystery: THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR

For the virtue of purity

OUR FATHER...

They had Jesus bound and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" (Mk 15:1, 2). **HAIL MARY...**

Jesus replied, "Mine is not a kingdom of this world; but yes, I am a king" (Jn 18:36, 37). **HAIL MARY...**

"I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice" (Jn 18:37). **HAIL MARY...**

"Truth?" said Pilate, "What is that?"; and with that he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no case against him" (Jn 18:38). **HAIL...**

"So I shall have him flogged and then let him go." Pilate then had Jesus taken away and scourged (Lk 23:16; Jn 19:1). **HAIL MARY...**

Despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows (Is 53:3). **HAIL MARY...**

Harshly dealt with, he bore it humbly, like a lamb that is led to the slaughterhouse (Is 53:7). **HAIL MARY...**

Yet he was pierced through for our faults, crushed for our sins (Is 53:5). **HAIL MARY...**

Ours were the sufferings he bore, ours the sorrows he carried (Is 53:4). **HAIL MARY...**

On him lies a punishment that brings us peace, and through his wounds we are healed (Is 53:5). **HAIL MARY...**

GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...



First Sorrowful Mystery: THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

For true contrition

OUR FATHER...

Jesus came with them to Gethsemane. And sadness came over him, and great distress (Mt 26:36, 37). **HAIL MARY...**

Then he said, "My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and keep awake with me" (Mt 26:38). **HAIL MARY...**

Then he withdrew from them, and knelt down and prayed (Lk 22:41). **HAIL MARY...**

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, let your will be done, not mine" (Lk 22:42). **HAIL MARY...**

Then an angel appeared to him, coming from heaven to give him strength (Lk 22:43). **HAIL MARY...**

In his anguish he prayed even more earnestly (Lk 22:44). **HAIL MARY...**

And his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood (Lk 22:44). **HAIL MARY...**

Then he came back to his disciples and found them sleeping, and he said, "So you had not the strength to keep awake with me one hour?" (Mt 26:40). **HAIL MARY...**

"You should be awake, and praying not to be put to the test" (Mt 26:41). **HAIL MARY...**

"The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mt 26:41). **HAIL MARY...**

GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...



Third Luminous Mystery: THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL

For seeking God's forgiveness

OUR FATHER...

When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him (Mt 5:1). **HAIL MARY...**

He began to teach them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:2-3). **HAIL MARY...**

"Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Mt 5:4). **HAIL MARY...**

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land" (Mt 5:5). **HAIL...**

"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied" (Mt 5:6). **HAIL MARY...**

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy" (Mt 5:7). **HAIL MARY...**

"Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God" (Mt 5:8). **HAIL MARY...**

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Mt 5:9). **HAIL MARY...**

"Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:10). **HAIL MARY...**

"Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven" (Mt 5:11). **HAIL MARY... GLORY BE... O MY JESUS...**



Fourth Luminous Mystery: THE TRANSFIGURATION

For becoming a new person in Christ

OUR FATHER...

He took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray (Lk 9:28).

HAIL MARY...

As he was praying, the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white (Lk 9:29).

Behold, two men talked with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory (Lk 9:30).

Peter said, "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah" (Mk 9:5).

As he said this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud (Lk 9:34).

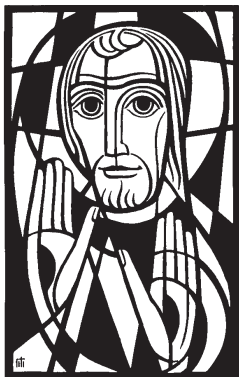
A voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (Mt 17:5).

When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces, and were filled with awe. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear" (Mt 17:6-7).

When they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only (Mt 17:8).

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead" (Mt 17:9).

So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant (Mk 9:10).



Fifth Luminous Mystery: THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST

For active participation at Mass

OUR FATHER...

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end (Jn 13:1).

Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it" (Lk 22:8).

"When you go into the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house which he enters" (Lk 22:10).

"Tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I am to eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large upper room" (Lk 22:11-12).

They went, and found it as he had told them (Lk 22:13).

When the hour came, he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Lk 22:14-15).

He took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk 22:19).

He took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt 26:27-28).

"I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Mt 26:29).

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives (Mt 26:30).



APPENDIX V

SPONSOR AND GODPARENT RESOURCES

Sample job description for a godparent or sponsor:

- Position:* RCIA godparent/sponsor
- Accountable to:* RCIA godparent/sponsor coordinator and RCIA leader
Ultimately accountable to the pastor
- Short-Term Commitment:* Duration of catechumen's/candidate's presence in the RCIA process
Weekly RCIA sessions
Participation in all relevant liturgical rites
Regular personal contact with the catechumen/candidate
- Long-Term Commitment:* Life (if chosen as godparent or sponsor for the sacraments)
Regular contact especially during the new Catholic's first year
Periodic personal contact thereafter

Specific Gifts Needed:

- ⊕ Fully initiated and active registered parishioner of our parish, in good standing
- ⊕ Love for Christ and his Church
- ⊕ Basic understanding of the Church's teaching
- ⊕ Steadfast commitment to the teachings of the magisterium of the Catholic Church
- ⊕ Evidence of a lived faith in one's personal life (fruits of the Holy Spirit are evident)
- ⊕ Mature Christian understanding of the meaning of "servant" and "service"
- ⊕ Punctual and flexible
- ⊕ Good communication and listening skills
- ⊕ Openness to new relationships
- ⊕ Prudent and able to keep confidentiality

Specific Duties/Responsibilities:

- ⊕ Commit to daily prayer for the person you are serving
- ⊕ Become familiar with the stages of the RCIA process
- ⊕ Attend weekly RCIA sessions
- ⊕ Maintain personal contact between gatherings
- ⊕ Attend RCIA retreats, relevant liturgical rites, and rehearsals as needed
- ⊕ Assist pastor and other RCIA leaders with discernment of a participant's readiness
- ⊕ Offer spiritual support throughout the process to the person you are serving
- ⊕ Model holiness, sacramental living, Christian charity, and prayer
- ⊕ Work to draw the person into the life of the parish
- ⊕ Answer doctrinal questions as you can; direct the person to catechists as needed
- ⊕ Explain as you can liturgical and devotional practices; direct the person to catechists as needed
- ⊕ Gently help the person deal with life situations (family problems, need to forgive, etc.) in a Christian way
- ⊕ Obtain a faithful intercessor who will agree to pray regularly for your work as a godparent/sponsor
- ⊕ Strive to love the person as Jesus would



Interview Questions for a Potential Godparent or Sponsor

Interviewer: *This form would be used to assist in discernment with a person who is willing to be a godparent or sponsor, but who is not sufficiently well known to the pastor and initiation leadership. Use the following questions as a guide for a conversation with the potential godparent or sponsor. Use of these questions should be preceded by ensuring that the person being interviewed meets the canonical requirements for this responsibility in the Church (see paragraphs 872-874 and 892-893 of the Code of Canon Law), and has had a chance to become aware of and consider the basic requirements and duties that a parish desires of a godparent or sponsor.*

The basic requirements include: in good standing sacramentally in the parish, evidence of a converted heart and a love for Jesus and his Church, desire to participate in the Church's mission of evangelization, basic knowledge of the Church's teachings, living in accord with the Church's teachings, desire to continue his/her formation, punctual and flexible, open to new relationships, open to questions, open to being a witness of faith to others, prudent and able to keep confidentiality. If these things are not known about the potential godparent/sponsor, then questions about the above requirements should be included in the interview.

The basic duties include: participate in weekly catechumenal gatherings, participate in all relevant liturgical rites, maintain some form of regular personal contact with the person during his/her time in the catechumenal process, continue regular contact especially during the person's first year as a Catholic, maintain periodic personal contact (if chosen as a godparent) with the person throughout your life. If these duties have not already been made known to the potential godparent or sponsor, then they should be discussed as part of the interview. Notes on the conversation should be taken as needed.

Today's Date: _____

Name of person being interviewed: _____

Name of interviewer: _____

Questions:

1. Describe your prayer life.
2. What is your previous experience in parish ministries?
3. What experience (formal or informal) have you had specifically in developing communication skills?
4. What is your previous experience with working with individuals in a group setting?
5. What gifts do you believe you have based on the "job description" of a godparent/sponsor?
6. In what areas do you think you would have the most difficulty?
7. It is vital that a godparent or sponsor be willing to share his or her own faith life with the person he or she is serving. Do you have any concerns or questions about the importance of this?
8. What are your employment and family commitments at this time?
9. Are you involved in any other volunteer work at this time?
10. Would you have the time necessary to serve as a godparent or sponsor if asked this year?

Summary remarks by the interviewer (based on notes):

Recommendation:



Godparent/Sponsor Information

Name (First and Last): _____

_____ Please initial after reading the following paragraph:

I understand that as a godparent or sponsor I am to live a life in harmony with the nature of this responsibility, meaning, for example, that I regularly attend Mass; I receive the Eucharist regularly; I make use of the sacrament of Reconciliation; I am not in an irregular marriage; I am not an active homosexual; and I seek to the best of my understanding of my Catholic faith to be faithful to the teachings of the Church. I attest that I have received the sacrament of Confirmation and that I am at least 16 years old. I also understand that being a godparent or sponsor is a commitment of time. I will attend weekly sessions for catechesis, the celebrations of liturgical rites, and other initiation-related events to the best of my ability. I further understand that being chosen as a godparent or sponsor is a lifetime commitment to be, as I am able, a faithful witness of the Catholic way of life to the individual I am called to serve. If I am not a member of the same parish as the person who I am serving, then I will obtain a Letter of Good Standing from my own parish, attesting to the fact that I attend Mass regularly on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, follow the precepts of the Church, and possess no impediments for serving as a godparent or sponsor.

I. CONTACT INFORMATION

Full Mailing Address: _____

Phone: (Daytime) _____ (Evening/Weekend) _____

Cell/Mobile Phone: _____ Occupation: _____

Email: (Home) _____ (Other) _____

II. SACRAMENTAL HISTORY

1. Place Where You Were Baptized: _____

(include **church name** (or hospital, etc.), **locality** (town, city, county, etc.), **region** (state, province, territory, etc.), and **country**)

2. Parish Where You Are Currently Registered: _____

Full Mailing Address: _____

Pastor's Name: _____ Phone: _____

For Office Use

Godparent/Sponsor for: _____ Date: _____

Completed Initial Sponsor Formation by Date: _____

If from Another Parish, Letter of Good Standing Received by Date: _____

Notes: _____

Sample outline of godparent and sponsor training session(s):

1) **Give an Overview of the Initiation Process**

What is Christian initiation process?

- Purpose (conversion of heart to God, turning away from sin, desire for holiness through the Church)
- Distinction between catechumens and candidates
- Periods and rites of the process

Why are there godparents/sponsors?

- Representatives of the community
- Establish a relationship with the participant

What do godparents/sponsors do?

- Attend weekly meetings, liturgical rites, and other initiation-related events
- Sponsors may or may not become godparents
- They are friends (companions on the journey)
- They are not catechists

2) **Discuss Qualities of a Godparent/Sponsor**

Welcoming

- Will I show an inquirer around the parish grounds and introduce them to staff, other parishioners?

Listening

- Can I listen to another's faith journey?

Sharing Life and Sharing Faith

- Can I be a friend?
- Am I comfortable sharing about my interior life and struggles?

Faithful to Church Teaching

- Do I support the Church's teachings?
- Can I say "I don't understand..." instead of "I've never understood why...?"

Helpful

- Am I willing to say "I don't know" and try to find an answer?

Active in the Parish/Community

- Do I participate in some form of outreach?

A Pray-er

- Will I pray for the person I am asked to sponsor?
- Will I daily ask God to help me to serve the person to the best of your ability?

Open to Differences in Participants

- Will I be open to varied types of Catholic spirituality and different ways of living a Catholic life?
- Will I be open to gently challenging and seeking to redirect spiritualities that conflict with a Christian understanding of God?

Able to Trust in God's Plan

- Can I be detached when things go differently than I hope?

3) **Discuss Handing on Catholic Culture**

- Importance of helping RCIA participants understand and appropriate Catholic culture
- Identify "Catholic culture" and "parish culture"
- How to share our Catholic/parish culture with others

4) **Explain Conversion**

- How conversion is a change in outlook and action
- Be aware of signs of conversion; what to look for
- Have trainers tell about their own journeys of conversion to the Lord

5) *Discuss How to Model Prayer and Pray with Participants*

Explain the importance of having a prayer life and helping participants learn to pray.

Discuss different prayer styles

- ⊗ Praying aloud
- ⊗ Praying with Scripture
- ⊗ Praying the Mass
- ⊗ Basic Catholic prayers

Provide information on aids to prayer (e.g., scriptural rosary, Magnificat magazine, etc.)

Require each godparent/sponsor to obtain a faithful intercessor who will agree to pray regularly for their work on behalf of the catechumen or candidate

6) *Encourage Godparents/Sponsors to be Witnesses to Charity*

Explain the importance of helping participants learn to live the Gospel message through acts of charity

How to participate in the corporal works of mercy

How to invite an RCIA participant to do so

7) *Discuss Issues that are Commonly Encountered When Serving as a Godparent/Sponsor*

What if we do not get along as well as hoped?

What if the person has an irregular marriage?

What if the person is not progressing in virtue, or desire for the Lord?

What if the person stops attending RCIA sessions, or attends very inconsistently?

What if the person is not ready to become Catholic?

Why do I have to attend so many events?

What if I or the person I am assisting is likely to move from the parish (e.g., military transfer)?

Some Practical Suggestions for Godparents and Sponsors

From the Church's Guidelines for the RCIA Process

“Sponsors are persons who have known and assisted the candidates and stand as witnesses to the candidate’s moral character, faith, and intention.” (RCIA 10)

“It is the responsibility of godparents to show the candidates how to practice the Gospel in personal and social life, to sustain the candidates in moments of hesitancy and anxiety, to bear witness, and to guide the candidates’ progress in the baptismal life.” (RCIA 11)

- ✦ Above all, pray for the person you are serving as a godparent or sponsor.
- ✦ Exchange telephone numbers and email addresses with the person.
- ✦ To help the person feel at home in the RCIA setting, try to arrive for the RCIA sessions and rites before the person.
- ✦ Ask your inquirer/catechumen/candidate to notify you or a team member in the event that he or she will miss a session.
- ✦ If the person misses an RCIA session, call afterwards to show concern.
- ✦ Extend an invitation to attend Mass or other parish activities/ministries with you.
- ✦ Introduce the person to other parishioners.
- ✦ Extend an invitation to attend a Catholic Baptism, wedding, funeral, parish reconciliation service, or other liturgical event with you. Allow time to discuss the experience before or after.
- ✦ Offer to baby-sit sometime so that the person you are serving can have a special night out with his or her spouse.
- ✦ Share good Catholic resources (books, magazines, tapes), or go to a Catholic bookstore together to browse.
- ✦ Suggest having a casual lunch or coffee or dessert together sometime.
- ✦ Send a Christmas card, or give a small gift.
- ✦ Prior to receiving Baptism, the person you are serving will be asked to participate in the long-standing tradition of choosing a patron saint’s name from among the many saints of the Bible and the Church’s history. You can assist in this process in many ways, especially by praying for guidance, discussing your favorite saints, and helping the person you are serving think about how to decide and to look for resources on saints.
- ✦ Give an appropriate gift at the time of the person’s initiation (patron saint medal, book on the chosen patron saint, rosary, subscription to a good Catholic periodical)
- ✦ Remember the anniversary of the person’s Baptism or reception into the Church (card, note, phone call, etc.)
- ✦ Be creative!

St. John Chrysostom, 4th Century Bishop of Constantinople

“They should not consider that what they are doing is a routine action. Rather, they should be fully aware that they will share the credit if they guide their charges to the path of virtue by their advice, but if they are negligent, then grave condemnation will fall upon them. For this reason it is the custom to call them ‘spiritual fathers’ in order that they may learn from their office the affection they owe to their charges in giving them spiritual instruction. For if it is a noble thing to lead those who are in no way connected with us to desire virtue, we have a much greater duty to fulfill this obligation to one whom we have received to the position of spiritual son. To sum up, negligence brings no small danger to those of you who are acting as sponsors.”

The Heart of this Ministry of Service

“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.” (1 Thessalonians 2:8)

APPENDIX VI

PREPARING FOR THE RITES



Discernment Interview Prior to the Rite of Acceptance or the Rite of Welcoming

Interviewer: Before beginning, read RCIA 42 and 43. This meeting should be preceded by a discussion with any members of the RCIA community (clergy, team members, godparents, sponsors, etc.) who have assisted in the formation of the individual regarding the person's readiness to take this step.

Use the following questions as a guide for a conversation with the inquirer. As you talk, let the inquirer know how you have seen God at work in his or her life during the inquiry period. Be sure to explain that, while some individuals may be ready to go through this Rite at this point, others may not, and that if someone needs more time to discern, learn about, and decide to follow the Catholic way of life, that is fine. If the individual is interested in celebrating these Rites, and you or others with whom you have spoken have concerns about his or her readiness, explain your concerns and that it might be in the inquirer's best interest to continue to discern for a period of time. At the conclusion of your conversation, unless you or the inquirer needs more time to come to a decision, let him or her know whether or not he or she will participate in the Rite of Acceptance or Welcoming. Notes on the conversation should be taken as needed.

Name: _____

Seeking admission as a catechumen (unbaptized) candidate (baptized)

Godparent(s)/Sponsor(s), if determined: _____

-
- 1) What has been your experience of the sessions up to this point? What has affected you the most? What have you enjoyed the most? What has challenged you the most?
 - 2) What changes have occurred in your relationship with God or with your family or friends during this time?
 - 3) What kind of changes do you see in yourself?
 - 4) How has your relationship with your godparent/sponsor (if established) been working out?
 - 5) What experiences have you had in this parish community up to this point? Are you beginning to have a sense of belonging to this parish community?
 - 6) What experiences have you had in reading the Scriptures?
 - 7) Tell me about how you pray.
 - 8) How would you describe your relationship with Jesus Christ?
 - 9) To what degree do you see yourself turning away from sin and developing a desire for virtue?
 - 10) Do you feel that you have a good grasp of the gospel (the good news) that Jesus Christ came to reveal? What do you most desire to learn more about?
 - 11) How would you describe what being a Catholic/living a Catholic life means? What does it mean to you that a Catholic is called to live a life of charity?
 - 12) What does it mean to be a member of the Body of Christ? A member of the Roman Catholic Church?

After explaining the importance of the Rite of Acceptance or the Rite of Welcoming, and the questions that will be asked of the inquirer during the Rite, then ask:

- 13) Do you understand what is being asked of you in the Rite of Acceptance or the Rite of Welcoming?
- 14) Do you feel that you are prepared to take this step in the initiation process?



Discernment Interview Prior to the Rite of Election or the Rite of the Call to Continuing Conversion

Interviewer: Before beginning, read RCIA 120 and the questions that are asked of the catechumens and candidates during the Rite of Sending (RCIA 537-542) and the Rites of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion (RCIA 551-557). This meeting should be preceded by a discussion with any members of the RCIA community (clergy, team members, godparents, sponsors, etc.) who have assisted in the formation of the individual regarding the person's readiness to take this step.

Use the following questions as a guide for a conversation with the catechumen or candidate. As you talk, let him or her know how you have seen God at work in his or her life during the initiation process. Be sure to explain that, while some individuals may be ready to celebrate the sacraments at this time, others may not, and that if someone needs more time to learn about and decide to live the Catholic way of life, that is fine. If the individual is interested in celebrating these Rites, and you or others with whom you have spoken have concerns about his or her readiness, explain your concerns and say that it might be in the person's best interest to delay celebrating the sacraments for a period of time. At the conclusion of your conversation, unless you or the catechumen/candidate needs more time to come to a decision, let the person know whether or not he or she will participate in the Rite of Sending and Rite of Election or the Rite of the Call to Continuing Conversion. Notes on the conversation should be taken as needed.

Name: _____

Catechumen Candidate for full communion Candidate for completion of initiation

Godparent(s)/Sponsor(s): _____

- 1) What has been your experience during the initiation process? What has affected you the most? What have you enjoyed the most? What has challenged you the most?
- 2) How has your life changed in the time that you have been in the catechumenal process?
- 3) What changes have occurred in your relationship with God or with your family or friends during this time?
- 4) How has your relationship with your godparent/sponsor been working out?
- 5) Tell me about some of the people in the parish whom you have come to know or experiences in the parish you have had during the initiation process.
- 6) How comfortable are you reading the Scriptures?
- 7) Tell me about how you pray.
- 8) How would you describe your relationship with Jesus Christ?
- 9) Do you find yourself relating to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints?
- 10) Do you understand what it means to be faithful to the teachings and magisterium of the Church?
- 11) Do you feel that you have a good grasp of the teachings of the Church? Do you have questions about any of them? What areas do you wish to learn more about?
- 12) Do you understand what becoming a member of the Catholic Church entails? How would you describe what being a Catholic/living a Catholic life means?
- 13) To what degree do you see yourself turning away from sin and developing a desire for virtue?
- 14) How do you understand the call to holiness? What does it mean to you that a Catholic is called to live a life of charity?
- 15) Do you desire the sacraments? Specifically the Eucharist?

Explain to the initiate what will take place at the Rite of Sending (RCIA 537-542) and the Rite of Election or the Rite of the Call to Continuing Conversion (RCIA 551-557), then ask:

- 16) Do you understand what is being asked of you in these Rites? Are you prepared to take this step?
- 17) Do you wish to be baptized/be received into full communion/complete the sacraments of initiation?

LITURGY PREPARATION FOR THE

Celebration at the Easter Vigil of the Sacraments of Initiation and the Rite of Reception

(see RCIA 562ff)

The following questions are based on the combined celebration of the sacraments of initiation and Rite of Reception at the Easter Vigil. For the celebration of the sacraments of initiation for elect ONLY see RCIA 206ff, and the applicable questions below; for the Rite of Reception for Candidates ONLY see RCIA 487ff, and the applicable questions below.

Questions to Prepare for the Liturgy

BEFORE THE LITURGY

1. Where will the elect (and candidates, if present) be before the Vigil begins?

Will they be gathered where the fire will be lit? In pews at the front of church? In a separate space awaiting the beginning of the Vigil?

2. Who will have candles?

Technically, since the elect have not yet been baptized, they would not hold candles, while the candidates, if present, who have been baptized, would hold candles. Practically, many parishes have all participants in the Mass hold candles. When will the candles be extinguished?

3. Will the elect and their godparents, and candidates and their sponsors, be in the procession from where the fire is lit into the church?

4. Where will the elect, godparents, candidates and sponsors (if present), and families of the initiates be seated?

CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM

5. Where will the Baptisms take place?

In the sanctuary or at a separate baptistery/font?

6. How will the elect be presented?

The presentation of the elect is dictated by the way in which they will be baptized (see RCIA 568 for options).

7. Will the elect and candidates' patron saints (if candidates are present) be included in the Litany of the Saints?

If so, compile a list and inform the musicians prior to the Vigil.

8. Which option will be used for the Renunciation of Sin?

Will you use Option A, B, or C (RCIA 573)?

9. How will the Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith be made?

Individually by each of the elect or by all of the elect together (see RCIA 573-574)? If each of the elect is questioned individually, does the celebrant know each of their names? It may be a good idea for them to wear name tags, or to have the godparent present them.

10. What form will be used for the Baptisms?

Immersion or pouring may be used (see RCIA 575). In the case of immersion or if a large amount of water is poured, provision will need to be made for a place for the newly-baptized to change into dry clothes.

11. Will an acclamation be sung after each Baptism?

The musicians can lead a short alleluia or other acclamation after each Baptism (see RCIA 575).

12. Which Explanatory Rites within the Baptism liturgy will be celebrated?

The Anointing after Baptism (RCIA 577) is only celebrated if Confirmation does not take place. The Clothing with a Baptismal Garment (RCIA 578) is optional. The Presentation of a Lighted Candle (RCIA 579) is always to be celebrated.

13. If the Clothing with a Baptismal Garment will be celebrated, how will it be done?

What sort of garment will be used? How will it be given to each godparent? How will the godparent give the garment to the newly-baptized? Will the newly-baptized keep the garment or return it to the parish?

14. How will the godparents light the baptismal candles from the Easter candle?

Is the candle near the font? Will the godparents go to the candle or will the candle be brought to the font? If it is in its stand, the height of the Easter candle may make lighting candles from it difficult for some people. It may be helpful to remove the candle from its stand so that this may be done.

15. How will the godparents present the candle to the newly-baptized?

The godparents could say a simple phrase such as "Receive the light of Christ" as they hand the candle to the newly-baptized.

16. Where will the newly-baptized and their godparents go at the conclusion of this Rite?

Following the renewal of baptismal promises by the candidates (if present) and assembly, the newly-baptized will be called for the sacrament of Confirmation, so they could stay in the sanctuary or be seated in their pews. If Baptism by immersion has been celebrated, they should depart during this renewal of promises to change into dry clothes.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

17. If the assembly's candles are to be re-lit, will the newly-baptized assist in lighting the assembly's candles?

The newly-baptized could pass through the Church lighting the assembly's candles from their own in preparation for the renewal of baptismal promises (see RCIA 580). Since the candidates (if present) are already baptized, they would hold lighted candles and join the rest of the community in renewing their own baptismal promises.

18. Which option for the Renunciation of Sin will be used?

Will you use Option A or B?

CELEBRATION OF RECEPTION, IF DONE

19. How will the candidates for reception into full communion be called forward (RCIA 584)?

Will they be called as a group or individually?

20. How will the Profession by the Candidates take place (RCIA 585)?

Will they recite the text from cards, repeat the profession after the celebrant, or answer "I do" to a question form of the profession?

21. How will the Act of Reception take place (RCIA 586)?

Where will the celebrant be located? How will the candidates come to him? Does he know their names? It may be a good idea for them to wear name tags, or to have the sponsor present them.

22. Where will the newly-received and their sponsors go at the conclusion of this Rite?

They will be confirmed with the newly-baptized and those Catholics preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist. Do the newly-received need to move to make room for these others to join them?

CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION

23. How will the newly-baptized and baptized but uncatechized Catholics be called forward to join the newly-received?

Will they be called as a group or individually?

24. How will the candidates for Confirmation and their sponsors be arranged?

Will they face the congregation?

25. How will the laying on of hands take place (RCIA 590)?

The rubrics suggest that the celebrant and any concelebrants simply extend their hands over the entire group. If the size of the group permits it, the celebrant might lay hands on each of the confirmandi individually (see *Rite of Confirmation* 25).

26. How will the Anointing with Chrism take place (RCIA 591)?

The confirmandi can come to the celebrant or the celebrant can go to each of the confirmandi.

27. How will the celebrant know the name/patron saint name of the confirmand?

Will the confirmand wear a name tag with the name printed on it? Will the sponsor tell the celebrant the confirmand's name/patron saint name?

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

28. How will the new Catholics be included in the presentation of the gifts (RCIA 592)?

All the new Catholics can participate in the procession, even if there are more of them than there are gifts to be brought forward.

29. There are special interpolations (texts) that can be included in Eucharistic Prayer I. Will the celebrant use them (RCIA 593)?

These interpolations are marked "From the Easter Vigil to the Second Sunday of Easter Inclusive" in the Roman Missal.

30. Will the celebrant make a brief comment about the reception of the Eucharist prior to the Lamb of God (RCIA 594)?

The celebrant could say the following or similar words: "Before celebrating Communion, I wish to address the neophytes and those who have been received into full communion with the Church tonight. You have traveled a long road in preparation to receive this sacrament, which signifies your union with Christ and with his Church, a sacrament in which Jesus feeds his Church with his Body and Blood. May the Eucharist always be the center of your life as a Christian."

31. How will the newly-baptized, newly-received, and all those involved in their formation, receive Communion?

The Rite suggests that they receive under both forms (RCIA 594). In what order will new Catholics, and their godparents or sponsors go forward? Will the new Catholics be offered the opportunity to go forward with family members instead?

Checklist

- Reserved pews for elect, godparents, candidates, sponsors, and families
- Candles for the Service of Light
- Worship aids (with texts, for example the *Exsultet* and responses that may not be familiar to the elect and candidates, and some explanations for guests who are not Catholic)
- List of the names of patron saints the elect and candidates have chosen for musicians handling the Litany of Saints
- Towels (for after the Baptisms)
- White baptismal garments
- Baptismal candles
- Text for "Profession by the Candidates" (see question 20 above and RCIA 585)
- Chrism oil, soap, and water for the celebrant to wash his hands after Confirmation has been administered
- Special text for Eucharistic Prayer I (see question 29 above and RCIA 593)
- Name tags for elect and candidates to make it easier for the celebrant to remember their names in the Baptism and Confirmation liturgies (see question 9 and 27 above)

Holy Saturday Retreat and Preparation Rites

Preparatory Notes for Retreat Leader and Team

The Context

The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* calls for the Elect to gather together on Holy Saturday in immediate preparation for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil. The Elect are encouraged to “refrain from their usual activities, spend their time in prayer and reflection, and, as far as they can, observe a fast.” (#185 RCIA)

Certain rites of preparation are prescribed, and “the choice and arrangement of these rites should be guided by what best suits the particular circumstances of the Elect.”

This retreat includes the Ephpheta rite, the recitation of the creed, and an adaptation of the rite of choosing a baptismal name. The retreat should be adapted according to need in places where the presentation of the creed has not yet taken place, where the presentation of the Lord’s Prayer has not taken place, or where the choosing of a baptismal name is an appropriate addition. The retreat has four “modules” that can be adapted, interchanged, or used as the basis for creating a retreat suitable to particular groups and circumstances.

The retreat is designed so that it can be adapted to a very small group or even to one person preparing for initiation. Godparents, sponsors, parishioners and Candidates may be invited to be present in support of the Elect who will be participating in the Preparation Rites.

The amount of time designated for each segment of the retreat will depend on the number of participants. Schedule the retreat with a break between each section, and time for reflection as appropriate. The retreat experience is meant to be unhurried, with a gentle, calm pace enhancing the ritual celebrations, reflection and sharing.



The rites are exclusively for those who are preparing for baptism. If the group includes Candidates completing initiation at the Easter Vigil, their preparation may be enhanced by participation in the scripture reflection, sharing and common prayer that are part of the retreat experience.

Word of God

The Scripture texts selected for this retreat are among those recommended in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

- The first text from Isaiah 62, 1-5, is about being called by name and is the centerpiece of the gathering experience for the retreat. If the rite of choosing a baptismal name is appropriate, it may be inserted after the gathering. (#200 RCIA)
- The Ephpheta rite is preceded by the passage from the gospel of Mark 7, 31 – 37 that tells of the deaf-mute person whose ears were opened by Jesus’ command, “Ephpheta!”
- The recitation of the creed takes place after the reading of Matthew 16, 13-17 and a reflection on Jesus’ question to the disciples, “And you, who do you say that I am?”
- Each of these selections draws the Elect to see their own stories in the Word of God proclaimed and lived among them as they prepare to enter the waters of baptism. The retreat design also offers them the opportunity to reflect on a Scripture passage of particular significance to them at this moment in their journey of faith.



Sacred Space

The best place to experience this retreat is somewhere quiet, preferably away from the parish church. Ideally, arrangements would be made to gather at a retreat house, home or convent, or a small chapel. On Holy Saturday morning, the parish church is usually a place of too much activity to provide the atmosphere appropriate for prayer and reflection.

It is important to prepare the space without using the signs and symbols or decor that will be part of the initiation rites to be celebrated in the evening. Candles, water, bread and wine, oil, flowers and other Easter decorations should be avoided. Instead, the sacred space should focus on the Scripture or Book of the Gospels. An appropriate icon may be used. It might be effective to add something from the sacred space created for each of the Scrutiny retreats, such as an empty water jar, a broken lantern, or linen cloths. The simplicity of the sacred space will serve to enhance the atmosphere of fasting and anticipation of what is yet to come.

Living Rite

The central rite in this retreat is the proclamation of the Word. It takes place several times throughout the retreat experience. How the leader handles the Book of the Word, proclaims the Word, and invites both silent and shared reflection on the Word can contribute significantly to the atmosphere of reverence, respect and reflection.

It is of utmost importance that this gathering not be used as a time of rehearsal or instruction for the Easter Vigil. The presider, liturgical ministers and godparents should be familiar with the order of worship and their responsibilities throughout the Vigil, and be prepared to guide the Elect through their initiation. To rehearse with those to be



initiated contributes to their anxiety about doing things “right” and can diminish impact of the experience. Assure the Elect that they will be guided through the celebration by their godparents and the ministers, and leave them free to them to experience fully, in the moment, the sights, sounds, symbols, colors, words, textures, tastes, feelings and discoveries that come from being immersed into the sacramental richness of the Easter Vigil celebration.

What follows is a script that you can follow, adapt, or re-design for your particular community’s needs. Be particularly sensitive to cultural and language needs and sensitivities.



Holy Saturday Retreat and Preparation Rites

I Gathering

Begin with a time for each person to share something about how she or he is at this moment of anticipation.. If the group has not gathered during Holy Week, take time to talk about the experiences of the week, and any questions that may have come up.

- *Invite the participants to quiet themselves, to enter into this time of retreat with open hearts and minds, and to trust that the Spirit of God will continue to guide them through this day and the sacramental celebrations this evening.*
- *Encourage them to let go of any concerns or anxieties and to allow themselves to experience the love of God, the support of the community, and the action of the Spirit in their lives in all that they experience this day and evening.*
- *Remind them that this time of preparation is bringing them closer to the full incorporation into the life and mission of the Church that they have been longing for.*
- *Assure them that this is a special time of grace and peace for them.*

Gathering Song

Begin with a gathering song such as “Here I Am, Lord” by Dan Schutte, “Gather Us In” by Marty Haugen or a sung version of the prayer attributed to St. Patrick, “This Day God Gives Me.”



Opening Prayer

Leader (*with hands in orans position*)

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus Christ,

You are the Living Water for [▲] we yearn,

You are the Light of the World, our Hope and our Life.

Gather us to you today and make us a holy people.

Through your Holy Spirit, guide our day and our ways.

May we be drawn more deeply into the mysteries

of love and salvation that we

together with your whole church will celebrate in faith this night.

We pray in your holy name.

Amen.

Reading

Reader:

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

Proclamation of Isaiah 62, 1-5

Response

Psalm 103, "The Lord is Kind and Merciful" by Jeanne Cotter or by Marty Haugen, a sung version of Psalm 95, or other appropriate response.



Reflection

Leader:*(in these or similar words)*

God's call to each of us is both personal and intimate. Tonight each of you will be called by name as you are baptized into Christ. You will be made new. In the silence of our own hearts, let us simply listen deep within to the voice of God calling us each by name.

After a few minutes of silence the leader continues addressing each of the Elect (and, if appropriate, each person participating in the retreat) in these or similar words:

_____, you have been called by name.

You shall be called God's Delight, because your God rejoices in you!

Following the call and naming of each person, (or every three or four persons if the group is large) all sing a refrain such as "Blessed Be God" by David Haas or say together

"Blessed be God who calls you, _____, by name!"

It may be that for personal, cultural or other reasons, some of the Elect have chosen a new name for baptism. In these cases, the Naming of the elect as described in #202 RCIA may take place at this time.



II Ephpheta

Gospel Acclamation (sung)

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory.

Presider:

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark.

Proclamation of Mark 7, 31-37

Reflection

Leader: *(in these or similar words)*

“Ephphetha!”

And immediately the man’s ears were opened.

We are looking forward not just to the celebration of the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil tonight. We are looking forward to the rest of our lives. There are three aspects of this gospel that can offer us particular guidance for our ongoing journey through the font, to the table and to the rest of our days as fully initiated members of the church.

Jesus, the gospel says, took the man off by himself away from the crowd and then performed the miracle of healing. We know that the touch of Jesus is individual and personal for each one of us. But how important it is to remember how this man got to Jesus! It was through the community. The people brought him to Jesus. Our personal relationship with Jesus is always in the context of a community. We need each other today and will continue to need a community of faith to help us, to support us, to understand our frailties and impediments, and to guide us always back to the source of



our healing and life. As a community of faith, we must pray for one another, work with each other, support one another, and come to the Lord together.

Secondly, notice how the miracle happened. Jesus put his finger into the man's ears. Jesus spat and touched his tongue. And Jesus groaned. The action of God in our lives is not something far away from us, in some other-worldly realm that is removed from the things, people and experiences of every day life. No, God touches us in the same way that other people touch us. To be aware of God's action in our life, we need to be deeply in touch with our own humanness, the rhythms of our own lives.

Jesus, the Son of God, chose to take on our humanness and then to make water and mud and lilies, tax collectors and prostitutes, lepers and widows, women and children, light and oil, bread and wine, all the means through which we find communion with God. To fully live the miracle of our lives, we need to cultivate an awareness of sight, sound, touch, color, taste, smell, and to discover the connections between daily life and the revelation of God in life and liturgy. We need to develop the sensitivity to see the world as a place where the human and divine are one, where the incarnation and passion and resurrection are all over the place. The true spirituality that will sustain us throughout our daily struggle to live gospel lives is a spirituality that is grounded in the belief that "The word was made flesh and dwells among us" and that God will meet us in our humanity and desires to bring our humanity to its fullness in Christ.

Finally, notice that the healed man just had to tell anyone and everyone what had happened to him. He spoke plainly. He told his story. He shared his truth. But the reason he did this was so that the people could know about Jesus. The result was that the man's friends and neighbors exclaimed about Jesus, "He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

What a wondrous thing we look forward to, knowing that our community of faith indeed will be able to say because of each of you, "God has done all things well. God has brought you to our community. We have seen God's glory through the miracle of your



lives, your presence, your faith, and your witness. God's miracle of healing the man who was deaf and could not speak clearly is the same miracle that God is working in and among us today.

II Ephpheta Rite

The ordinary minister of this rite is a priest or a deacon. The minister touches both ears and the lips of each of the elect and says, "Ephphetha: that is, be opened, that you may profess the faith you hear, to the praise and glory of God." (#199 RCIA)

If there is no priest or deacon present, an adaptation of the rite may be used.

Leader

Invite each of the Elect to come forward. Make the sign of the cross on the ears and on the lips as you pray:

May you continue to hear the Story of God in your own lives, in the Scripture, and in the Church.

May your ears be opened + to receive the Word of God
in the Word proclaimed, explained and lived in this community of faith.

May your lips be opened + to proclaim the glory of God
in your own words of compassion, justice, truth, and love.

Follow the ephphetha rite or adaptation with a song such as "Open My Eyes, Lord" by Jessie Manibusan or "Servant Song" by Donna Marie McGargill, OSM.



III Recitation of the Creed

Proclamation of the Gospel

Gospel Acclamation (sung) Glory and Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Proclamation of Matthew 16, 13-17

Reflection

Leader (*in these or similar words*)

“And you, who do you say that I am?”

Tonight you will answer that question with your lives. As you enter the waters of baptism, you will die with Christ and rise with him to new life. As you are anointed with the oil of chrism, you will be confirmed and strengthened in your baptismal mission to proclaim the message of the gospel in all that you do and say and are from tonight until the rest of your life. As you share at the Table of Eucharist, you will receive and become the Body of Christ, and be sent forth to do your part to bring about the reign of justice and peace to your sisters and brothers.

“And you, who do you say that I am?” Tonight you will say that Jesus Christ is all in all, your brother, your Savior, your life, the life of the world.

“And you, who do you say that I am?” Tonight you will be asked to publicly profess your faith. May the Lord open your lips and may your mouth proclaim God’s praise. It is your duty and your privilege to join this community of faith in professing the Creed that has been entrusted to you. With one voice, you and the whole church will proclaim what we profess, what we teach and what we believe.



Prayer

Leader *(with hands outstretched)*

Let us pray.

Lord, we pray to you for these elect,

who have now accepted for themselves

the loving purpose and the mysteries

that you revealed in the life of your Son.

As they profess their belief with their lips,

may they have faith in their hearts

and accomplish your will in their lives.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

And so, I ask you, the Elect of God's Church, what do you believe?

The Elect respond by reciting the Creed that was entrusted to them in the presentation of the Creed, either the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed.

Hymn

Sing a hymn such as "Onward to the Kingdom" by David Haas or a traditional hymn such as "The Church's One Foundation."



IV Scripture Sharing

Invite the Elect (and, if you wish, the Candidates, Godparents and Sponsors) to reflect on the Scripture passages and/or liturgical experiences that have been most significant for them during their catechumenal journey. Ask them to spend some time thinking about what that passage or experience adds to their anticipation of the sacraments of initiation this evening. After some time for private reflection, encourage them to share their insights with the group. In large groups it may be necessary to break up into smaller circles for sharing.

Intercessions

Conclude the sharing with an invitation to prayer. Encourage those gathered to bring to prayer the needs of the world, the church, the parish community and those who will be initiated this evening. If the group is comfortable with shared prayer, do not structure this time of intercession; if necessary, guide it and invite each person to add her or his prayer. It may be helpful to respond as a group to each intercession with a common response such as “Lord, hear our Prayer.”

At the conclusion of the intercessions, the leader invites all to stand and pray together with hands in orans position.

Leader:

With confidence and gratitude, let us join together in the prayer which has been given to us by Jesus and which we are privileged to say as his sisters and brothers:
Our Father...



Dismissal

Leader:

May the Spirit of God be with you until we gather again to celebrate the paschal mystery at our Easter Vigil.



RITUAL SCRIPTS

Scripts for the following rituals may be found and downloaded (as a PDF or Word 2010 file) under the [RCIA Resources](#) section on the [Worship Office](#) webpage of the [Diocese of Owensboro](#) website:

- Rite of Acceptance (introductory notes)
- Rite of Acceptance
- Rite of Welcome
- Combined Rite of Acceptance and Welcome
- First Scrutiny
- Second Scrutiny
- Third Scrutiny