

RCIA; Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

- RCIA is the process of bringing new members, other than infants, into the Catholic Church.
 - It is a series of rites, each followed by a period of instruction and faith formation.
 - It is a revival of the ancient process of catechesis made holy by liturgical rites.
 - It calls for parish community involvement and is a model for other sacramental preparation.
 - RCIA is a means of renewal for parishioners and catechist team, as well as for sponsors and inquirers.
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1. PERIOD OF INQUIRY:

- Open, flexible and of undetermined length, to fit the needs of inquirers.
- No commitments asked in this period.
- A time to ask questions and investigate our Church. Questions take precedence at each session.
- Parishioners made aware of inquirers and pray for them and welcome them.
- Personal testimonies of team and selected parishioners, sharing how Jesus and Church helped them.
- Basic Good News message about Jesus our Savior.
- Overview and expectations of RCIA.
- Preliminary Catholic information.

2. RITE OF ACCEPTANCE INTO THE ORDER OF CATECHUMENS:

- Those yet to be baptized are called Catechumens. Those already baptized elsewhere are called candidates.
- Sponsors and community involved in this rite.
- After this they are Catholic but not yet in full communion. They have other rights as Catholics now.
- They may participate in services except sacraments. They now have Catholic obligations too.

3. PERIOD OF THE CATECHUMINATE:

- This period is several months to two or more years in duration.
- Led by RCIA team and sponsoring partners from parish.
- God-parent sponsors invited to participate.
- Faith formation rather than just convert classes.
- Instruction uses Sunday liturgical readings as well as Catechism.
- Prayer, Spiritual growth, sacramentals, and Holy Scripture are important elements.
- Friendships, community experiences, and Catholic practices included.

4. RITE OF ELECTION:

- This rite is normally offered near the First Sunday of Lent, at the Cathedral with the Bishop.
- It is preceded in parish by the related Rite of Sending for Election.
- There are separate rites for catechumens and candidates.
- Sponsors/ godparents participate.
- Enrolment of names in Book of the Elect.

5. PERIOD OF PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT:

- Normally in Lent. (The origin of Lent.)
- Time of prayer, self denial, and preparation of soul.
- Three Scrutinies for catechumens and preparation for first confession for candidates.
- Former catechumens now called the Elect.
- Awareness and expectation of receiving gifts of the Holy Spirit in Baptism and Confirmation.
- Rites of presentation of Creed and Lord's Prayer.

6. SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION:

- Baptism of Elect; Confirmation and first Eucharist for elect and candidates.
- Reception of candidates into full communion with our Church.
- Normally at the Easter Vigil Mass, Holy Saturday evening.

7. PERIOD OF MYSTAGOGIA:

- 50 day Easter season to Pentecost.
- During this period they are called neophytes.

- This is a period of guided entry into parish life and experience of being Catholic.