

Overview Of The RCIA Program

The RCIA or the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, is a process by which an adult (16 years of age and older) becomes a full member of the Catholic Church. The sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) are received at the Easter Vigil, the Saturday evening Mass held before Easter Sunday.

RCIA is for the following individuals:

- an unbaptized person who wants to be baptized into the Catholic Church
- a member of another Christian denomination who wants to become Catholic
- a baptized Catholic who wants to be fully initiated through Eucharist and Confirmation

Expectations

- Attend Sunday Mass faithfully, every week
- Attend evening sessions
- Be present for an interview prior to the beginning of the process
- Be present for an interview prior to full initiation at the Easter Vigil
- Choose a sponsor, a fully initiated, practicing Catholic

Sessions

- Currently classes are held weekly on Monday evenings at 8:00 p.m.
- Each session will be approximately one and a half to two hours
- Classes begin in the Fall and end during the Spring, depending on the date of Easter
- It is important to register by the beginning of September

Topics

The topics covered include:

- Knowing and Believing in God
- Prayer
- Sacred Scripture and Tradition
- Jesus and the Church
- The Mass
- The Liturgical Cycle/Church Year, a Church tour
- Blessed Virgin Mary and Saints
- Heaven, Hell and Purgatory
- The Creed
- Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation)
- Sacraments of Healing (Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick)
- Sacraments of Mission (Marriage and Holy Orders)
- Catholic Morality
- Ten Commandments
- Preparing for Lent and an Explanation of Holy Week Liturgies.

The Elect and Candidates will also reflect on the meaning of baptism and prepare spiritually during our Enlightenment sessions which focus on Spiritual Dryness and Christ's Living Water, Spiritual Blindness and the Light of Christ and New Life and Freedom in Christ.

Books and reading material will also be provided to supplement the topics covered in class.

Stages In The RCIA Process

- I. INQUIRY (Pre-Catechumenate) – During this phase, the Catholic faith is introduced. Inquirers reflect on their own faith journey and shares experiences. This stage helps them to answer the question: “Do I want to go through the process to become a member of the Catholic Church?”
- II. CATECHUMENATE – Inquirers learn more about the Bible, teachings of the Catholic Church and the way the faith is lived out. Unbaptized participants are now called CATECHUMENS and the baptized are now called candidates.
- III. ENLIGHTENMENT – Those who are preparing to celebrate the sacraments of initiation at Easter move into a more reflective period coinciding with the weeks of Lent. The ELECT and candidates reflect on the meaning of baptism and on being a disciple of Jesus. The emphasis is less on teaching doctrines and more on opening one’s heart in an intense spiritual preparation for the Easter sacraments.
- IV. MYSTAGOGIA – The NEOPHYTES and FULLY INITIATED Catholics deepen their grasp of the mystery of Jesus Christ in his passage from death to resurrected life, and making it part of their lives through meditation on the gospel and sharing in the Eucharist.

Celebration of the Rites

The Rites mark the beginning of a new stage of the R.C.I.A. process:

- First Rites: Rite of Entrance for the Unbaptized
Rite of Welcome for the Baptized

These rites take place on the First Sunday of Advent.

- Second Rites: Rite of Election for the Catechumens
Call to Lenten Renewal of Baptized Candidates

These rites are celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent.

- Scrutinies: for the unbaptized are celebrated at Sunday Mass on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent. A prayer is offered for the baptized candidates.