

RCIA – Rite of Catholic Initiation for Adults

- Are you an unbaptized adult who needs a process to help you grow in awareness to God's call to conversion as well as ways to respond to that call?
- Were you baptized in another Christian Church and wish to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church?
- Were you baptized in the Catholic but did not receive religious instruction in the Catholic faith?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions the RCIA is for you!

RCIA at Blessed Sacrament Parish

When: Beginning Friday, November 27th 7:30pm to 8:30pm

How often: Every two weeks

Where: Blessed Sacrament Parish, Lower Floor Room

Registration form available in “Forms” section of Website

[THIS NEXT PART CAN BE LABELLED “ MORE ABOUT RCIA” \(or something like that\)](#)

We welcome new members into the Catholic Church through a process of education, faith sharing, and rituals known as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). This process includes several stages marked by prayer, study, and discussion. Included in the process are several Rites, which take place within the context of the Mass. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) describes the RCIA as a process in which participants “undergo . . . conversion as they study the Gospel, profess faith in Jesus and the Catholic Church, and receive the sacraments . . . The RCIA process follows the ancient practice of the Church and was restored by the Second Vatican Council as the normal way adults prepare for baptism.” Initiation within the Church is a journey of conversion that is gradual and ongoing and suited to individual needs. It is a process rather than an educational program and this process takes place within the community of the faithful, the local Church.

Who is welcome to begin the RCIA Journey?

All people who are open to discerning their personal experience of faith and to learning more about the Catholic Church are welcome to begin the RCIA process. Many people come to an awareness of their desire to learn about membership in the Catholic Church in various and different ways. All that is truly required is a sincere desire to learn, to grow, and to develop one's relationship with God.

The RCIA process can be applied to the following 3 groups:

- Unbaptized adults who have never been baptized and who need a process to help them grow in awareness to God's call to conversion, as well as ways to respond to that call. They are considered catechumens.
- Baptized in Another Christian Church and wish to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.
- Baptized but uncatechized Catholic Adults: persons who were baptized as infants and not given any religious instruction in the Catholic faith. These adults will be prepared to celebrate the sacraments of penance, confirmation and Eucharist. They are also considered candidates.

The Steps of the RCIA Journey

The Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA) is based on the principle that the process of conversion proceeds gradually, in stages. Progress from one stage to the next is marked by a liturgical celebration in the midst of the parish community.

RCIA consists of four periods of formation which are marked by rituals that celebrate what has been completed and that calls a person into the next phase.

1. Period of Evangelization and Pre-catechumenate

The first stage, the period of inquiry, or the pre-catechumenate is when the individual first expresses an interest in becoming a Catholic, and begins to explore, with the help of the parish community, what his or her relationship with Christ might be and how that relationship might be fulfilled and deepened by joining the Catholic Church.

First Step: Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

Once the inquirer decides to continue the journey, he or she seeks acceptance into the Order of Catechumens. This is a liturgical rite in which the inquirer states publicly in the midst of the parish community that he or she wants to become a baptized member of the Church. The Church, through the local parish community, affirms this desire by accepting the person and his or her intention to follow God's call. For candidates who have already been baptized and are seeking full communion with the Catholic Church, this step is called the Rite of Welcoming the Candidate.

2. **Period of the Catechumenate**

The second stage is called the catechumenate and is an extended period of formation and education, and learning is based on Sacred Scripture as well as the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Catechumens learn about Catholic teachings and values, what it means to be a member of the Catholic community, prayer and worship, and are also introduced to the apostolic life. This is also a time for the catechumen or candidate to learn how to live as a Catholic Christian through their faith journey and the support of their parish community.

Second Step: Rite of Election

The Rite of Election or Enrollment of Names coincides with the beginning of Lent and is celebrated by the Bishop at the cathedral church of the diocese. The Rite includes the

official enrollment of names of all those seeking baptism at the Easter Vigil. At this Rite the catechumens publicly request baptism and declare their desire to make a faith commitment to Jesus in the Catholic Church.

3. **Period of Purification and Enlightenment**

The third stage is the period of purification and enlightenment. It coincides with the liturgical season of Lent. It is a time of reflection, prayer, and spiritual direction rather than a time of catechetical instruction. This period is intended to enlighten the minds and hearts of the elect with a deeper personal knowledge of Christ.

Third Step: The Pinnacle of the Journey-Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

At the Easter Vigil, the catechumen receives the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and Holy Eucharist. The celebration of the Sacrament of Initiation at the Easter Vigil marks the highlight of each person's spiritual journey, as one celebrates with family and church community full entrance into the Catholic Church.

4. **Period of Mystagogy**

The fourth stage is the period of post baptismal catechesis or mystagogy. At this time, the newly initiated explore their experience of being fully initiated through participation with all the faithful at Sunday Eucharist and through appropriate catechesis.

Companions for the Journey

Jesus recognized the importance of community and teamwork in spreading the Gospel, as displayed by the fact that he called a group of apostles and often sent his apostles out two

by two. The Church recognizes the importance of support as one makes progress through RCIA. However, the journey is made with other adults who are learning about the Catholic Church and also with a team of dedicated people from the parish community who meet with the group regularly to offer assistance and support. Additionally, each candidate is supported by a sponsor. This sponsor, is a true companion for the journey of faith and supports the candidate through each step of the process.

Beginning the Journey

For many people interested in becoming Catholic or entering into full communion with the Catholic Church, the process can be somewhat confusing or intimidating. After all, this is a major decision in one's life. The decision to join the Church is exciting and will lead to a deepening of personal faith and relationship to God, others, and self. No matter what has brought you here, the fact that you are interested in taking the next step shows your openness to God and God's call in your life. Many people have come through the RCIA program and are living lives of service, faith, and love. Perhaps you are asking where to begin the journey. The answer is that you have already begun! Welcome to your faith journey! The next step is to contact Blessed Sacrament Parish and reach out to the RCIA coordinator at 604-874-3636.