

Faith in 5
Lent: Week 5
Adults

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

A group of individuals in your parish may be seeking to enter the Catholic faith. The Church offers a process called the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), where interested adults participate in a program of intense study and are guided spiritually. The highlight of the preparation is the reception into the Church at the Easter Vigil celebration!

During the Lenten season, you may witness these individuals participating in a portion of the Sunday liturgy. They are dismissed after the Liturgy of the Word, as they have not yet received the sacrament of Holy communion. The church community is encouraged to pray for these individuals during their formation as Catholics.

The individual preparing to become Catholic must undergo the following steps:

1. **Period of Evangelization and Pre-catechumenate:** There are a variety of reasons why adults may want to enter the Catholic church and participate in RCIA. Whatever the reason, the hope is that their desire is genuine! Once this group has reached out to begin the process, they will seek acceptance through the Rite of Acceptance. Here, they are presented to the parish community, express their desire to become part of the church, and become catechumens.
2. **Period of the Catechumenate:** This is a phase of studying the Scriptures, reflection, and prayer. The catechumenate attends classes and learns about the Faith through classroom discussion and guidance from sponsors and instructors. Catechumens learn to open their hearts and minds to what the Holy Spirit is teaching them, developing a closer relationship with God. At the Rite of Election, catechumens affirm their desire to enter the Church in the presence of their sponsors. The names of the catechumens are inscribed in the Book of the Elect in the presence of the bishop (or his designate).
3. **Period of Purification and Enlightenment:** This stage involves a deeper dive into the faith for the Elect before they receive the sacraments. During this time, the Elect undergoes Scrutinies on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent. The Gospel readings center around themes of sin, darkness, and temptation, but they highlight God's mercy and love. Individuals cannot fully appreciate God's gift of His Son to save us from our sins, unless they understand what a life without Christ means.
The sacraments of Baptism, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation are administered during a beautiful Easter Vigil celebration and the Catholic Church rejoices in her new family members!
4. **Period of Post-Baptismal Catechesis (Mystagogy):** During the period after baptism, the new Catholic (also known as neophyte) can participate in the liturgy fully and will continue to learn and grow in the Catholic faith. Here, the community of believers can support and inspire them into a more personal relationship with Christ through participation in prayer, church life and ministry.

Learn More: *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, International Commission on English in the Liturgy (Author)

This is a free resource! For more information, check out www.acatholicmomslife.com