

RCIA (RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS)

The RCIA process is for all adults interested in learning about and making the Catholic faith their own. It is designed for adults who have experienced a conversion to Christ and seek to follow the way of Christian faith. This process is also for any baptized but uncatechized adult Catholics. Young people in grades 7 and above who have not been baptized are also eligible for this process. It involves a series of ritual steps toward initiation into the Catholic Church. The steps involved are briefly outlined here. In some cases this faith journey may take more than a year.

Step 1: Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate

This is a time of inquiry, asking questions, sharing stories, introduction to Gospel values and is an opportunity for the beginnings of faith. It is also a time to be introduced to the parish at large, to participate in various parish activities and to experience the liturgical year of the church. This period comes to a close and the next period begins with the first liturgical rite, the Rite of Acceptance and Conversion. During this rite the inquirers express and the Church accepts their intention to respond to God's call to follow the way of Christ.

Step 2: Period of the Catechumenate

During this stage the individual learns more about the Catholic faith and moves deeper into conversion. During this period, the individual is dismissed during Mass after the Liturgy of the Word, to reflect and "break open" the scripture readings of the Sundays. This second period and the beginning of the next are celebrated with the Rite of Enrollment and Election. These are liturgical rites usually celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent. During these rites the catechumen or candidate's readiness for the sacraments of Initiation is formally acknowledged by sponsors, the parish and the Bishop of the Diocese.

Step 3: Period of Purification and Enlightenment

This period generally immediately precedes the individual's initiation into the Catholic faith. It is a time to reflect and grow deeper into conversion. This period is generally during the Lenten season and is marked by the celebration of the scrutinies, in which the catechumens and candidates search their souls for grace in their lives, repent and resolve to love God more. Presentations of the Creed and the Our Father are also given to those preparing for initiation into the Catholic Church during this time. It is the final intense preparation for initiation into the church at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday evening.

Step 4: Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

This is the liturgical rite, celebrated at the Easter Vigil, by which unbaptized individuals receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist and baptized individuals make a Profession of Faith, receive the sacrament of Confirmation and receive Eucharist. All can now participate fully with the faithful in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration.

2010-2011 Registration Forms are available at www.steugenes.com/religiousedu.php