



Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

The First Rites

At some point in the inquiry process, a discussion may occur as to the process of becoming a Roman Catholic. It is important at that point to complete the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) Form.¹ It is also important to prepare the inquirer for the **Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens** or the **Rite of Welcoming Candidates for Confirmation and Eucharist**. The path through which the inquirer or seeker will enter into the Catholic Church is dependent on baptism.

PREREQUISITE FOR THE FIRST RITES

- ❖ A simple prayer life
- ❖ A sense of Church
- ❖ Experience of Christianity through contact with the community or the priest
- ❖ Instruction about the liturgy of the appropriate rite.

The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens is **not** to be celebrated with the Rite of Welcoming Candidates for Confirmation and Eucharist.²

If the seeker is not baptized, then the path to follow is that of the catechumen.³ The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is for him or her. It is the process by which he or she will enter the Church. *(Turn now to the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens.)*

If the inquirer is baptized, then the path her or she follows is that of the candidate.⁴ The Pastor will meet with the candidate and indicate to the team the best path for the candidate. In some cases, this will come in the form of individual instruction. The Rite of Welcoming may be included in the process. *(Turn now to the Rite of Welcoming Candidates for Confirmation and Eucharist.)*

Before any of the rites take place, an evaluation is to take place with the Pastor. The Pastor will decide if the candidate is sufficiently prepared to take the next step in the process. For this reason, it is important not to promise progression in the process on specific dates. The Holy Spirit guides the process and it is the Holy Spirit who leads the process as well.

¹ See Form 612A.

https://caedm.ca/Portals/0/documents/policies/612A_eRiteofChristianInitiationOfAdultsRCIAForm4Feb14.pdf

² See Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults No. 466.

³ This path is outlined in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Nos. 36-241.

⁴ This path is outlined in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Nos. 376-386 or 387-399.



Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

The first step in the process of becoming a Roman Catholic is called the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens.⁵ To assess the readiness of the inquirer to take this step, outward signs of the beginnings of a spiritual life and some understanding of Christian teaching are noticeable.⁶ The rite takes place when the inquirer is ready to make a commitment to becoming Catholic. This rite may take place at several times throughout the year, according to the needs of each inquirer, and the circumstances of the particular parish.

Rite of Welcoming Candidates for Confirmation and Eucharist

The ritual that welcomes candidates entering the catechetical stage is the Rite of Welcoming Candidates for Confirmation and Eucharist.⁷ This rite may be held, if this is appropriate, when the seeker is found ready to make a serious commitment to becoming Catholic. The rite is followed by a period of catechesis. The rite is celebrated at times during the year when the candidates are found to be ready but is **not** to be celebrated at the same time as the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens. As part of the rite, the candidate may be presented with a cross.

The RCIA Team

A team of catechists is helpful. It is also important for the team to meet regularly to discuss catechetical needs and to assess each catechumen/candidate, especially towards the end of the catechetical process and before Lent and the Rite of Election. It is also essential for the Pastor to be involved in the interview process and to assess readiness for the each step. Team members also need the above qualities.

⁵ See the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults Nos. 48-74.

⁶ See the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults Nos. 42-43.

⁷ See the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults Nos. 463-487.