



Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

The Second Step in the Process

The second step in the process is all about conversion and the learning of the faith. This is the time of instruction into the way of Christian life. The pillars of the Christian life are introduced and elaborated on during this time. The pillars include the *Word*, the *Community*, *Liturgy*, and *Service*.

Period of the Catechumenate (Catechumens)

This is a time for continued conversion. It is also a time where the catechumen will grow in the knowledge of the faith.

During this time he deepens his relationship with Jesus Christ and familiarizes himself with Catholic teaching and

discipleship. This is also a time for liturgical catechesis. Liturgical catechesis reflects the seasons and rhythm of the practice of the Faith. The duration of the catechumenate may be different for each catechumen as the he prepares for Christian life and embraces the call to conversion. Please do not promise the sacraments at Easter until the post-catechumenate interview confirms that the catechumen is ready to be accepted at the Rite of Election.

Period of Catechesis (for the Baptized)

The period of catechesis is similar to the catechumenate in that, it is at this time where there is an increased emphasis on the life and traditions of the Catholic Church. Again, the duration of the period of catechesis may be different for each candidate as she prepares for a deeper commitment to renewal. From a practical perspective, there are many programs which can serve as guidelines, often with some adaptation to meet the needs of a particular group of catechumens, as well as the needs of a given parish. Resources may include, but are certainly not limited to:

- Journey in Faith – a magazine series
- Symbolon or the Bishop Barren Catholicism series – a DVD series

1. **The Word.** The proclamation of the message of Jesus Christ (*kerygma*) unfolds through the liturgical year as we pass from one season to another. During the catechetical sessions the catechumens and candidates are exposed to the Word of God and to the Catholic understanding of the Word. Living in the Word is an important element of the faith journey, as it is through the Word that we encounter Christ.

FOUR PILLARS OF THE

- ❖ The Word
- ❖ The Community
- ❖ Liturgy
- ❖ Service



2. **The Parish Community.** There are many ways to involve the community in the RCIA process. First and foremost parishioners act as witnesses to the candidates and catechumens by participating in the life of the parish community. From a practical perspective, there are some specific tasks that they may be engaged in.
 - Full and active participation in the rites
 - As coordinators, catechists and sponsors
 - Priest as presider and catechist
 - Deacons as catechists and witnesses
 - Prayer partners – parishioners who accompany through prayer
 - Hospitality – welcoming and providing refreshments during the catechetical sessions or other events.
 - Host families – members of the community who welcome the catechumens into their homes for a meal and fellowship
 - Leaders of prayer or music – introducing the catechumens and candidates to various leaders will help them in becoming full and active participants in the liturgy during the period of Mystagogy
3. **Liturgy.** The Liturgy of the Word takes precedence as this is where the faithful gather each week as a community. It is into this community that the catechumens/candidates are encouraged to attend the Sunday Liturgy with the sponsor. However, other liturgies are included which assist the catechumens/candidates on their journey are also beneficial, especially when celebrated in conjunction with the Word of God.¹

Dismissal after the homily each Sunday is an important element of the catechetical process. The dismissal enables the catechumens to focus on the Word of God which has the power to transform the lives of the catechumens. It also affords them the opportunity for faith-sharing. Candidates are **not** dismissed as they are included already included as members of the Christian family.

4. **Service.** From a practical perspective, catechumens may be invited to participate in some acts of service with the parish community.
 - This could be any corporal acts of mercy which are normally performed by the community, such as working in a soup kitchen or collecting and delivering clothes to the needy.
 - It may also include acts of service within the parish itself such as spring yard clean-up or assisting in setting up, cooking or cleaning for a parish event.

¹ See Rite Nos. 75, 79, 90-97.