

On the road to Catholicism

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a multi-step process that guides inquirers into full initiation with the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil.



Precatechumenate
"Inquirer"
A time of evangelization



Precatechumenate: A time of initial evangelization and inquiry that allows those interested in Catholicism to be introduced into parish life.

Catechumen: An unbaptized person who seeks initiation into the Church who has been accepted into the order of catechumens.

Candidate: A baptized person from another Christian faith who seeks full communion with the Catholic Church.

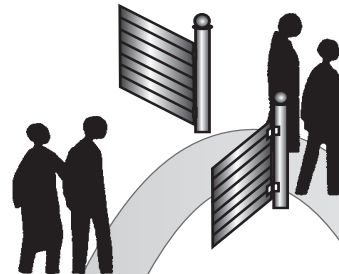
Rite of Acceptance: The ritual in which unbaptized inquirers are accepted into the order of catechumens. Held when the inquirers are deemed ready to make this serious commitment.

Rite of Welcome: Ritual of welcome for candidates entering the catechumenate.

Catechumenate: Process to bring unbaptized children and adults into Christian initiation. Also the period during which catechumens and candidates deepen their relationship with Jesus and learn the truths of Catholic doctrine and moral life.

Rite of Election: Usually held the first Sunday of Lent, a formal celebration wherein the bishop declares catechumens are ready and chosen to receive the sacraments of initiation. Catechumens will now be called "elect" by the Church as they enter the final period of preparation.

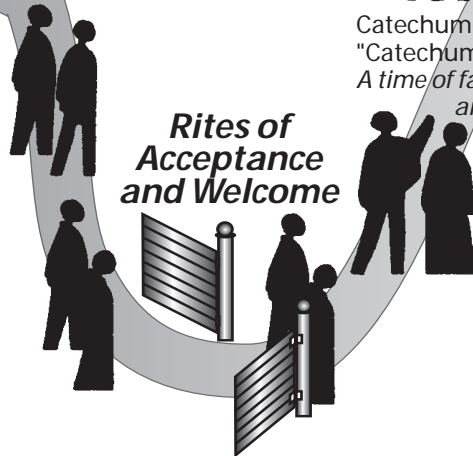
Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion



Purification & Enlightenment
"Elect" and "Candidate"
A time of prayer and discernment

Catechumenate
"Catechumen" and "Candidate"
A time of faith formation and catechesis

Rites of Acceptance and Welcome



Purification and Enlightenment: A period of more intense spiritual preparation consisting primarily of interior reflection. This time, which coincides with the Lenten season, is marked by celebration of the scrutinies and presentations in preparation for the Easter Vigil.

Presentations: Rituals through which the Church passes on the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

Scrutinies: Celebrated on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent, serving to heal and strengthen the hearts of the elect.

Call to Continuing Conversion: Candidates celebrate this at the same time catechumens celebrate the Rite of Election. These candidates have already been elected by God through baptism.

Mystagogy: The final period of initiation from Easter to Pentecost. A time when the neophytes, or initiated, are introduced into a fuller understanding of Christ's mysteries through the sacraments and Sunday liturgy.



Mystagogy
"Neophyte"
A time of ongoing formation



Rite of Initiation

Neophyte: One who is initiated at the Easter Vigil. This term comes from the Greek word meaning "new plant," as in a new sprout on a limb or branch.

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