

During the catechumenate, the catechumens and candidates take part in the Sunday Liturgy of the Word, usually leaving the assembly after the homily so that they can explore the Scripture and the liturgy more fully. This step is characterized by:

- reflection on the Scriptures
- exploration of the richness of Catholic Tradition
- experiences in prayer and worship
- introduction to the apostolic life

**Leave your country and come into the land
I will show you.**

Genesis 12:1

Liturgical Rite:

*The Rite of Sending and Rite of Election/
Call to Continuing Conversion*

Period of Purification and Enlightenment, usually coincides with the liturgical season of Lent. Lent is celebrated by the whole Church as a special season of reconciliation, prayer and spiritual renewal.

The candidates and catechumens join with the Christian Community to:

- enter more deeply into prayer and reflection
- journey with Jesus on His path of suffering, death and Resurrection
- prepare for the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

**Your ways, Oh Lord, are love and truth to
those who keep your covenant.**

Psalm 25

Liturgical Rite:

Rite of Full Initiation at the Easter Vigil

Mystagogia, a Greek term that means to “enter more deeply into the mystery,” is the final stage of RCIA. Mystagogia is a lifelong stage of conversion. This stage is marked by:

- participation in the Eucharist
- immersion into the missionary spirit of the Catholic Church
- appreciation of the Gospel message

For more information on the process of RCIA, please contact your local Catholic Church. Most parish bulletins and websites contain information on RCIA. You may also contact Erin McGeever, Diocesan Director of Christian Formation, at (904)262-3200, ext. 118 or emcgeeve@dosafl.com. She can put you directly in touch with the individual who leads the RCIA at the closest Catholic Church.

**You are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood,
a holy nation, a people of his own, so you
may announce the praises” of him who
called you out of darkness into his
wonderful light.**

I Peter 2:9

Local contact information

R.C.I.A.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and Children of Catechetical Age



An Informational Guide for
Becoming Catholic in the

Diocese of St. Augustine

Office of
Christian Formation

What is R.C.I.A.?

The RCIA is a process of prayer, study, service, worship, discussion, faith sharing and celebration for:

✠ Unbaptized adults and children of catechetical age who wish to learn more about the faith and the possibility of becoming Catholic.

✠ Baptized Christians from other faiths who want to learn more about the Catholic faith and possibly become Catholic.

✠ Baptized Catholics who have not received the sacraments of First Eucharist and Confirmation and who desire to enter fully into the community of the Catholic faith.

✠ Children baptized Catholic or in another faith who are not catechized also participate at their own level in the RCIA process.

The length of the RCIA process differs for each individual. The normal timeframe for an unbaptized adult to be active in the RCIA process is 1-3 liturgical years. Those adults from other faith traditions might be received into the Catholic Church sooner than this. This is best discussed with the your parish.

Children in the Diocese of St. Augustine participate in the process of RCIA for 2 years and sometimes longer.

Background and History

During the first centuries of Christianity, persons who desired to be followers of Jesus engaged in a thorough period of prayer, preparation, instruction and apprenticeship all set within the Christian Community. They spent one to three years in formation in what became known as the **catechumenate**.

The term **catechumen** simply means one who is learning. Throughout the process of preparation, the catechumens became immersed in the teachings of Jesus and in the prayer life of the Church. This period of immersion ended with the reception of the sacraments of initiation: baptism, confirmation and First Eucharist—in that order, at Easter. The process generally took several years.

During the fifth century, after Christianity became legal, large numbers of people desired to be Christian. The catechumenate was dissolved and people were brought into the Church without much preparation.

In recent years, the Catholic Church has returned to this earlier formation process, now called the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Every parish in the Diocese of Augustine is expected to offer an RCIA process.

Basic Concepts of the RCIA

✠ Conversion is a process involving both the mind and the heart.

✠ The RCIA takes place among the community of believers.

✠ The RCIA follows the flow of the liturgical seasons and its stages are marked by liturgical rites.

✠ The RCIA process encourages authentic Catholic faith.

The Process Explained:

The process of RCIA consists of four periods, each with its own focus. Each of the four periods ends with the celebration of a ritual which marks the end of one step and the beginning of the next step.

Period of Inquiry is a time of “Come and See” wherein the inquirer has time to:

- hear the faith stories of Catholics
- ask initial questions
- learn about the parish
- foster initial conversion

Lord, let your mercy be on us as we place our trust in you.

Psalm 33

Liturgical Rite:

Rite of Acceptance into the Catechumenate

Period of the Catechumenate marks the beginning of formal instruction in the faith. Catechumens are unbaptized inquirers seeking instruction with a view toward baptism. Inquirers from another Christian denomination are called candidates because of their prior baptism. When catechumens and candidates enter this stage, the community assigns each one a sponsor, a member of the faith community who will walk the faith journey with them.