

R.C.I.A.

Right of Christian initiation for adults

Parish of Immaculate Conception
Parish of St. Wenceslaus
Cedar Rapids, IA

What is RCIA?

The RCIA is a process through which adults become members of the Catholic Church. The period of information encompassed by the RCIA process will allow you to deepen your faith, understanding, and readiness, which will culminate in the reception of the Sacrament of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist during the parish celebration at Easter.

The main purpose of the RCIA process is to assist you in your introduction into the faith of the Catholic Church. People are introduced into the faith through the study of the church doctrine, Christian living, the Liturgical worship, and works of service. The process of the RCIA reflects only the beginning of Christian life, a never-ending process of the deepening our love and relationship with Jesus Christ.

The RCIA process involves both those seeking to be baptized, as well as those who have been previously baptized in the Catholic Church but never catechized or those baptized in other Christian denominations, and who seek to become Catholics.

How does RCIA work?

During the period of RCIA, which is separated into four periods, candidates are formed into a deeper participation in the Catholic faith through study, discussion, and experiences concerning doctrine, Christian living and charitable works, and the liturgical worship. Accompanying this formation are three Liturgical “**landmarks**”, each indicating the deepening progress of a candidate toward full initiation into the Catholic Church.

The first period is a **period of inquiry**, or **pre-catechumenate**, it is a time for genuine questioning about the meaning of what life can be like as a Catholic, and how the church provides that meaning. If, after this period, a person still feels the desire to become a member of the church, he or she can request entrance into the church. This desire leads to the **Right of Entrance** into the **catechumenate/Candidacy**. This first “**landmark**” is celebrated during a Sunday mass, the normal place where the Parish community gathers for worship.

The celebration of the right begins **the second period** of RCIA, the period of the **catechumenate/Candidacy**. As their relationship to the church deepens, these people [traditionally called catechumens] continue in their work to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the Catholic faith. This second leads to the Right of **Election/Enrollment**. The **Right of Election** usually takes place at the beginning of Lent [the period of 40 days in which Catholics prepare for Easter} at this time, the catechumens or candidate formally states his or her intent to become a Catholic. With this begins the third period of RCIA, The **Period of Enlightenment**.

This third period corresponds with the season of Lent. This is a time when those desiring membership into the church make their final preparation for full initiation. This full initiation will involve the Sacrament of Baptism [if not already baptized] and a profession of Catholic faith, the Sacrament of Confirmation, and the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. This third period is completed with the Easter Vigil On Holy Saturday night. On this most holy night of the Catholic year of worship, the community gathers to hear the retelling of the actions of God in the history of humanity, and to celebrate God's greatest action, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the source of universal salvation. During this liturgy, the community professes their faith once again, and along with the first profession by the new members, then the church itself is reborn in the resurrection of Christ, and renewed in his Spirit!

The Fourth Period, between Easter and Pentecost [50 days after Easter, commemorating the gift of the Holy Spirit upon the church] is the beginning of the new initiated person's new life as a member of the church. This is a time for study and reflection on all that has happened in each person's journey to his or her new life in Christ Jesus, especially during the Easter Vigil.

During this journey toward full initiation into the church, the parish community will play a very important role. Some will be teachers, some will be sponsors, and others will help with their support, interest, and prayers. As the future of the parish, we take a real concern in your journey towards full initiation.