

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

“The catechumenate for adults, divided into several stages, is to be restored and put into use at the discretion of the local Ordinary. By this means the time of the catechumenate, which is intended as a period of well-suited instruction, may be sanctified by sacred rites to be celebrated at successive intervals of time.”
(*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, no. 64)

In the sacraments of Christian initiation we are freed from the power of darkness and joined to Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. We receive the Spirit of filial adoption and are part of the entire people of God in the celebration of the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection. ...The three sacraments of Christian initiation [baptism, confirmation and Eucharist] closely combine to bring us, the faithful of Christ, to his [Christ's] full stature and to enable us to carry out the mission of the entire people of God in the Church and in the world.” (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, General Introduction, nos. 1-2)

The mission of the Church is a mission of hospitality, evangelization, and justice. Through the process of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) the Diocese of Las Cruces strives to form and celebrate a people who will embrace and carry on this mission of the Church, the mission of Jesus. (Cf. *Heritage and Hope, Our Story as a Diocesan Family*, Diocese of Las Cruces, 1999)

Part I - Administrative Information

1. Norms

The Diocese of Las Cruces, in keeping with the process of renewal of the Second Vatican Council accepts the process outlined in the ritual book for the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (1988) as the norm for the reception of unbaptized adults into the Catholic Church. **The Rite identifies children of catechetical age in the category of adults, thus, the process also applies to unbaptized children from the age of seven years.** (*National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, no. 18)

In accord with the directives of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, unbaptized adults and children of catechetical age are to receive baptism, confirmation and eucharist in a single eucharistic celebration, whether at the Easter Vigil, which is regarded as the proper time for the sacraments of initiation or, if necessary, at some other time. (*Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, no. 2; RCIA nos. 8, 17, 23, 207; *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, no. 14)

The priest who baptizes an adult or a child of catechetical age should, when the bishop is absent, also confer confirmation. (RCIA nos. 14, 215-216, 232; *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, nos. 12, 18)

2. Roles of the Parish Pastor/Administrator and RCIA Director and Team

Each parish is to appoint a director and team for the implementation of the RCIA who will provide for the journey of faith that takes place within the context of the parish community. This director and team help the pastor/parish administrator in the interviewing process, faith formation, and faith development of both adult and children inquirers, as well as the ongoing celebration of the rites for both adults and children. (*Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, nos. 7, 13-14) Priests have the responsibility of attending to the pastoral and personal care of the catechumens, with the help of deacons and catechists. (RCIA no. 13, 15-16, 75, 78, 121, 144-145, 247-250)

The pastor/parish administrator is to take care that the director and team receive training and on-going formation in the areas of Christian formation and the RCIA, with particular attention to both the additional rites approved for use in the dioceses of the United States of America and the 1988 *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*. It is recommended that each member of the team have their own copy of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults Study Edition*, available in both English and Spanish, and that it be used for team study and reflection. It is also recommended that the team use the applicable resources of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC), and the internet-based Team RCIA, among others. (See usccb.org, fdlc.org, and teamrcia.com)

The pastor/parish administrator is also to take care that both the RCIA and Religious Education/Formation catechists of the children in the process receive this same training and on-going formation, as some elements of the children's process may take place within the context of the religious formation of their peers.

So that pastors/parish administrators may carry out their responsibilities in appointing and maintaining a director and team within the parish, they too, are to receive training and on-going formation for the effective celebration of the various rites within the RCIA. They are encouraged, if not actually the provider of the training and on-going formation of their RCIA catechists, to participate in the training and on-going formation with their catechists.

3. Interviewing Process

Each parish is to develop or provide for a process of interviewing persons seeking to enter the Catholic Church or who wish to complete the sacraments of initiation. The interviewing process must carefully explore the faith journey of each inquirer and offer a process of faith formation appropriate to the person's age, background, knowledge of the faith, and desire for conversion in the context of the Catholic Church. (See Addendum A: *Adults Suggested Initial Interview Form, Including Marital Status, for RCIA Inquirers*) The interviewer, or interviewing team, in consultation with the pastor/parish administrator, is to determine the readiness of each inquirer for a particular period of preparation and celebration of the rites.

For children of catechetical age, this interviewing process must involve and include the parents/guardians/family. (See Addendum C: *Children: Sample Initial Interview Form for/with Unbaptized Children*)

For adults, this interviewing process must carefully explore the marriage status of each seeker so that any impediments or circumstances that indicate an irregular marriage (prevent a lawful marriage in the Catholic Church) are made known. **A catechumen or candidate in an irregular marriage is to have his/her marriage in right order with the Church before being sent to the rite of election and receiving the sacraments of initiation.**

If a catechumen has filed a petition for a decree of invalidity (annulment), the Tribunal staff is to be notified that the petitioner is a catechumen. (See Addendum B: *Statement of RCIA Candidate Petitioning the Tribunal for a Decree of Nullity*) If there are any questions as to marital status, the Tribunal staff should be contacted immediately!

Note: While cohabitation is not an impediment to marriage, it is an obstacle to receiving the sacraments of initiation. Living together without the benefit of marriage contradicts fundamental Church teachings. Thus, the situation is to be resolved through either separation or marriage prior to the celebration of the Rite of Election. (Cf. *Pastoral Manual L-11*)

4. Roles of the Sponsors and Godparents

Each inquirer, as he/she becomes a catechumen, is to have a sponsor who helps the catechumen understand the teachings of the church and serves as an example for living the Christian life in accord with the scriptures and the laws and practices of the Catholic Church. (RCIA nos. 10, 75) It is recommended that the parish appoint or assign sponsors from the parish, so that there is frequent contact and the sponsor will be instrumental in the faith journey of the inquirer. (RCIA nos. 48-49, 53-56, 75, 112, 119, 123, 130-133, 153, 167, 174, 219, 224-226, 230, 235, 246, 248)

For children, it is possible that the parents serve as sponsors; for married adults, it is possible that the fiancé/spouse serve as sponsor.*

The sponsor may also become the godparent at the time of receiving the sacraments, but if the catechumen so chooses, another person may become the godparent. (RCIA nos. 11, 80, 123) All the qualifications and requirements of a godparent that apply to infant baptism also apply to the godparent of an adult or a child of catechetical age; the godparent is to be a fully initiated Catholic who is free to receive the sacraments of the Catholic Church. For adult baptism, only one godparent is required, however two may be chosen, one male and one female.

*The parents of children to be baptized cannot also serve as godparents. While there is no church law that prevents a fiancé or spouse from being the sponsor/godparent, the catechumen is encouraged to have someone else serve in this capacity so that the relationship with the larger Christian community is broadened and strengthened. (*Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, nos. 8-10)

For more information on Sponsors and Godparents, see the *Revised Code of Canon Law* nos. 872-874.

5. Role of the Parish Community

The initiation of catechumens is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful. By joining the catechumens in reflecting on the value of the paschal mystery and by renewing their own conversion, the faithful provide an example that will help the catechumens to obey the Holy Spirit more generously. The people of God, as represented by the local Church, should understand and show by their concern that the initiation of adults (and children) is the responsibility of all the baptized. Hence, the entire community must help the candidates and catechumens throughout the process of initiation during all the periods of the process.

In particular, the faithful should be welcoming, should seek to be present at celebrations, should be prepared to give testimony about the catechumens, should give example of their own renewal, and should help the neophytes to feel at home in the community. (*Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, no. 7; RCIA nos. 4, 9, 45, 53, 80, 107, 112, 119, 121, 128, 138), 146, 157, 178, 207, 237, 244, 247-248)

If the catechetical preparation takes place in a non-parochial setting such as a school, the catechumens should be introduced into the Christian life of a parish or similar community from the very beginning, so that after their initiation they will not find themselves isolated. (*National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, no. 4)

Part II - Process

Stages and Periods of Preparation and Celebration

The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* specifies that unbaptized adults and children of catechetical age are invited into a journey of faith consisting of four time periods and three rites as outlined by the Rite. (RCIA nos. 6-7) The periods and rites imply appropriate time for catechesis, faith formation and preparation for the celebration of each rite.

The “Rite of Christian Initiation of Children Who Have Reached Catechetical Age” assumes that these children seek Christian initiation either at the direction of their parents/families or have parental permission to do so. The Christian initiation of these children thus requires a personal conversion in proportion to their age. The process must be adapted to their growth in faith, and the formation they receive, as with adults, marked by the periods and steps of the RCIA. Given that the help and example of their companions and parents/families greatly influences their progress, it is therefore imperative to work closely with their catechists and parents/guardians/family to set the expectations of on-going faith formation in the community and practice of the faith in the home. (RCIA nos. 252-259)

The following is a list of the RCIA time periods and rites:

PERIODS	rites
1. Evangelization/Pre-catechumenate	Followed by becoming a Catechumen via the: Rite of Acceptance
2. Catechumenate	Completed by enrollment as an Elect via the: Rite of Election
3. Purification/Enlightenment	Followed by reception of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist
4. Mystagogia	Leading to a lifetime of missionary discipleship!

1. Period of Evangelization/Pre-catechumenate (RCIA nos. 36-40)

The period of evangelization, also known as the pre-catechumenate, is a time of evangelization on the part of the Church and of inquiry on the part of the seeker. During this period, the living God is proclaimed and Jesus Christ whom he has sent for the salvation of all. (RCIA no. 36) The inquirers are to be given a suitable explanation of the Gospel and opportunities provided for them to meet families and other groups of Christians. (RCIA no. 38) As the goal is for each inquirer to develop a genuine will to follow Christ and seek baptism, this period is to last for an indeterminate length of time depending upon the needs of each individual. (RCIA no. 37)

Children may join their peers in the parish catechetical process as a way of receiving age-appropriate catechesis and formation about the faith and way of living. (RCIA nos. 253-255; *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, no. 19) Additional time will be needed to assess their readiness and prepare them for the rites.

A. First Step: Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens (RCIA nos. 41-74)

Once the beginnings of the spiritual life and the fundamentals of Christian teaching have taken root, and there is evidence of conversion and repentance in the inquirer, the “First Step: Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens,” the Rite of Acceptance, is scheduled. In this rite the inquirer declares intention to belong to the Church and the Church accepts him/her as a person intending to become a member. Before the rite is celebrated, sufficient and necessary time should be taken to evaluate the inquirer’s motives and dispositions. (RCIA nos. 41-43) It is recommended that this rite occur during a weekend liturgy of the parish, but it may take place in the parish on days suited to local conditions, as long as members of the community take an active part in the celebration. (RCIA nos. 44-45)

This First Step for children of catechetical age is not normally combined with celebration of the eucharist, but it is important that it be celebrated in the church with an actively participating small congregation including the children’s parents/guardians/family. (RCIA nos. 260-276)

After the rite, the names of the unbaptized adult and children inquirers, now officially referred to as catechumens, their sponsor/s, and the date and place of the celebration are to be inscribed in a *Register of Catechumens*. (RCIA no. 46; see *Part V – Record Keeping*) Note: The term catechumen should be strictly reserved for the unbaptized who have been admitted into the order of catechumens; the term convert should be strictly reserved for those converted from unbelief to Christian belief and never used of those baptized Christians who are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church. (*National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, no.2)

2. Period of the Catechumenate (RCIA nos. 75-117)

The period of the catechumenate is an extended period for faith formation and a thoroughly comprehensive catechesis on the truths of Catholic doctrine and moral life, aided by approved catechetical texts. **Beginning at acceptance and including the period of purification and enlightenment, this period should extend for at least one year of formation, instruction, and probation. Ordinarily this should go from the Easter season of one year to the next; preferably it should begin before Lent in one year and extend until Easter of the following year.** (RCIA nos. 76-77; *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, no. 6-7) *The initiation of children, as with adults, is to be extended over several years, if need be, before they receive the sacraments.* (RCIA no. 253)

Catechumens are joined to the Church and are part of the household of Christ. They are nourished with the word of God and are strengthened in their journey by other liturgical celebrations provided for in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. They may celebrate marriage in the church and, in case of death, the catechumen may receive Christian burial. (Canons 1109-1110; RCIA no. 47; *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, nos. 8-10)

Instruction during the period of the catechumenate not only continues to present Catholic teaching but also seeks to enlighten faith, direct the heart toward God, foster participation in the liturgy, inspire apostolic activity, and nurture a life completely in accord with the Spirit of Christ. (RCIA no. 78) It is recommended that the *Lectionary* be the primary catechism so that catechumens learn to connect their life stories to the stories of salvation history as found in the *Lectionary*. Adults and children are to be introduced to the Sunday readings by participating in the Liturgy of the Word with the Catholic community. The catechumens are then, in accordance with the "Rite of Dismissal" in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, to be dismissed after the homily. There are also to be other celebrations of the word. (RCIA nos. 75, 81-89)

As mentioned before, some catechesis of unbaptized children may be in conjunction with baptized children of their same age. **Their status as catechumens, however, is not to be compromised or confused.** (Canon 852; *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, nos. 34-35; RCIA nos. 253-257; *Rite of Baptism For Children*, nos. 27-31) (Cf. *The Rite for Unbaptized Children of Catechetical Age: Applications and Adaptations*. Office of Liturgical Education, Diocese of Las Cruces, 2002)

The Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens as well as the Minor Exorcisms and Blessings may be celebrated one or more times during the Period of the Catechumenate giving the person strength and encouragement to overcome obstacles and recognize their God-given gifts. (RCIA nos. 79, 90-94, 95-97, 98-103)

B. Second Step: Election or Enrollment of Names (RCIA nos. 118-137)

Unbaptized persons who have gone through preparation appropriate to their age and development as catechumens are brought to the Cathedral or other designated church on or near the First Sunday of Lent for the “Second Step: Election or Enrollment of Names,” the Rite of Election. During this rite the Church judges their readiness, makes its election, and by the bishop or his delegate, welcomes and receives these persons as those elected to receive the sacraments of initiation at the coming Easter Vigil. Now officially referred to as “the elect,” they are to participate in the scrutinies and other rites designated throughout the Lenten season. (RCIA nos. 118-119, 121, 125)

As with the first step, before the rite is celebrated, the entire community should arrive at a judgement about the catechumen’s state of formation and progress. This deliberation may take various forms. (RCIA nos. 121-122) It is recommended that every parish with catechumens being sent for election celebrate the “Sending of the Catechumens for Election” before the diocesan rite.. This rite offers the local community the opportunity to express its approval of the catechumens and to send them forth assured of the parish’s care and support. (RCIA nos. 106-117) **Persons still in irregular or invalid marriages are not to be enrolled for election until their marriage is in right order with the marriage laws of the church.**

This Second Step, optional in the RCIA for children of catechetical age, has a specially adapted celebration. (RCIA nos. 277-290) **However, children who will receive their sacraments of initiation at the next Easter Vigil/Sunday (or during Eastertime) are also to celebrate the “Sending of the Catechumens” and be sent to one of the diocesan rites of election held the first weekend of Lent.**

It is during the sending that the catechumens should sign the parish *Book of the Elect*. (RCIA no. 132; see *Part V – Record Keeping*) The *Book of the Elect* is then brought to the Rite of Election for Bishop to sign.

3. Period of Purification and Enlightenment (RCIA nos. 138-205)

This period of purification and enlightenment is a time of more intense preparation intended to purify the minds and hearts of the elect as they do penance, and enlighten their hearts and minds with a deeper knowledge of Christ. Customarily coinciding with Lent, the reminder of baptism already received or the preparation for its reception, as well as the theme of repentance, renew the entire community to celebrate the paschal mystery. (RCIA nos. 138-139) **It is preferable that this final period of preparation for children also coincide with Lent.** (RCIA no. 256)

The three scrutinies on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent serve to uncover and heal what is weak, defective or sinful in the elect, and bring out and strengthen what is upright, strong and good. These scrutinies should complete the conversion of the elect and deepen their resolve, as well as help them achieve knowledge of Christ and the Church as they examine their lives and truly repent. (RCIA nos. 141-146; 150-156; 164-170; 171-177) **Rather than three scrutinies, children celebrate one or more penitential rites. Held within a celebration of the word of God, and with their godparents and baptized catechetical companions, these rites are a potential occasion for the baptized children to celebrate the sacrament of penance.** (RCIA nos. 291-303)

In the presentations of the Creed and Lord's Prayer during or at the end of this period, the elect are entrusted with the Church's faith and prayer. (RCIA nos. 147-149; 157-163; 178-184; 185-205)

C. Third Step: Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation (RCIA nos. 206-243)

The Easter Vigil is the usual time for the "Third Step: Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation." Through the reception of baptism, confirmation and eucharist, the elect, receiving pardon for their sins, are admitted into the people of God and graced with adoption as children of God. (RCIA nos. 206-207)

At this third step of their initiation, once it is established that they are ready, children will receive baptism, the bishop or priest who baptizes them will also confer confirmation, and they will fully participate in the liturgy of the eucharist. (RCIA 256, 305; *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, no. 18) All the children to be baptized are to be accompanied by their own godparent/s, chosen by themselves and approved by their priest. Baptized children of the companion catechetical group may be completing their initiation in the sacraments of confirmation and the eucharist at this same celebration. (RCIA nos. 305-329)

At times, a pastoral judgment may be made to administer these sacraments at some other time of the year. Careful consideration must be given to the benefits of celebrating the stages and periods that are built into the cycle of the liturgical year, and care taken to ensure that any celebration has a markedly paschal character. (RCIA no. 208, 256)

4. Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy (RCIA nos. 244-251)

The period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy is a time for the community and the newly initiated, referred to as the neophytes, to deepen their grasp of the paschal mystery and make it part of their lives through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the eucharist, and doing works of charity. (RCIA no. 244)

Newly initiated children, as well, should be provided a period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy to assist them and their companions, arranged by an adaptation of the guidelines for adults. (RCIA no. 330)

Throughout this period the neophytes, with their godparents, should experience a full and joyful welcome into the community and develop closer ties with the faithful. As the main setting of mystagogy is the Sunday Masses of the Easter season, special places are to be reserved for the neophytes and their godparents. To close this period, some sort of celebration should be held for them at the end of the Easter season near Pentecost Sunday. A year later, on the anniversary of their baptism, the neophytes should be brought together to give thanks to God, share their spiritual experiences, and renew their commitment. (RCIA nos. 246-250)

Part III – Particular Circumstances

1. Christian Initiation of Children who Have Reached Catechetical Age (RCIA nos. 252-330)

As with adults, the initiation of children of catechetical age is to be extended over several years, if need be, before they receive the sacraments. Also as with adults, their initiation is marked by several periods and steps leading to the celebration of the sacraments of initiation. (See the notes in *Part II – Process* that apply to children of catechetical age.)

2. Christian Initiation of Adults in Exceptional Circumstances (RCIA nos. 331-369)

It is up to the bishop to determine the exceptional circumstances – events that prevent the candidate from completing all the steps or a depth of Christian conversion and a degree of religious maturity – that allow the use of a form of Christian initiation that is simpler than the usual complete rite. It is also up to the bishop to determine if the extraordinary circumstances warrant use of an expanded form. With even the abbreviated rite, the inquirer must have gone through an adequate period of formation and preparation, and should have chosen godparents or a godparent and become acquainted with the local Christian community. (RCIA nos. 331-336; *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, nos. 20-21) This rite, which includes elements of presentation, welcome, expression of resolve, approval of the Church, a liturgy of the word, and the sacraments of initiation, is celebrated within Mass, if possible, on a Sunday with the community taking part. (RCIA nos. 336-339)

3. Christian Initiation of a Person in Danger of Death (RCIA nos. 370-399)

Persons near death but able to hear and answer the questions may be baptized with this rite. Catechumens must make a promise that upon recovery they will complete their catechesis; persons not catechumens must promise that upon recovery they will go through the complete program of initiation as it applies to them. (RCIA nos. 370-371) Designed for use by catechists and laypersons, a priest or deacon may use it in case of an emergency. (Normally a priest or deacon is to use the abbreviated form for exceptional circumstances above.)

Persons at the point of death may be baptized omitting everything else but the pouring of natural water on their head while the usual sacramental form is said. (RCIA no. 373)

4. Preparation of Uncatechized Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist (RCIA nos. 400-472)

Much of the catechumenal process also applies to adults baptized as Roman Catholics as infants but who did not receive further catechetical formation nor the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist.

Their status differs from catechumens, since by baptism they have already become members of the Church and children of God, but as in the case of catechumens, their preparation requires considerable time. A program of training, catechesis suited to their needs, contact with the community of the faithful, and participation in certain liturgical rites are needed in order to strengthen them in the Christian life. (RCIA nos. 400-402)

It is recommended that baptized but uncatechized children that begin their faith formation between the ages of 10 and 15 be included in the faith formation process of their peers in the parish as well as be given instruction appropriate to their age that prepares them to receive the sacraments of reconciliation and eucharist. In keeping with the confirmation policy of the diocese, they are then to participate in the preparation for the sacrament of confirmation with their peers.

The first of the optional rites for uncatechized adults is the “Rite of Welcoming the Candidates.” (RCIA nos. 405, 411-433) A sponsor presents these adults to the community. Their godparents then work with these adults as the representatives of the community and have the same responsibilities as the godparents have toward catechumens. The same persons who were the godparents at their baptism may be chosen as godparents at this time if they are capable of carrying out the responsibilities. (RCIA no. 404)

The uncatechized adults then take part in celebrations of the word of God with both the entire assembly and those arranged for the catechumens. If the period of preparation is properly coordinated with the liturgical year, at the beginning of Lent the candidates will celebrate either the “Rite of Sending the Candidates for Recognition by the Bishop and for the Call to Continuing Conversion” or the “Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion.” (RCIA nos. 406, 434-445, 446-458) During Lent, especially on the Second Sunday, penitential services should be arranged to prepare them for the sacrament of penance. (RCIA nos. 459-472) **As with inquirers and catechumens, any irregular marriage is to be resolved before the celebration of the completion of the sacraments of initiation.**

The high point of their entire formation will normally be the Easter Vigil. At that time they will make a profession of the faith in which they were baptized, receive the sacrament of confirmation, and take part in the eucharist. If, because neither the bishop nor another authorized minister is present, confirmation cannot be given at the Easter Vigil, it is to be celebrated as soon as possible and, if this can be arranged, during the Easter season. (RCIA no. 409) **Note that as of March 2015, Bishop Cantú’s preference is to have the opportunity to confirm (previously) uncatechized baptized Catholics at a celebration of adult confirmation, therefore priests do not have faculties to confirm these adults at the Easter Vigil or at any other times.** Celebrations of confirmation with adults will continue to be scheduled throughout the year including during the Easter season. (Canons 842:2, 883.2, 884:1; *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, nos. 28-29; *Faculties to Confirm*, 26 March 2015)

5. Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church

(RCIA nos. 473-504)

When persons validly baptized in a separated ecclesial Community seek to become members of the Catholic Church they are welcomed as candidates for full communion and the rite is so arranged that no greater burden than necessary is required for communion and unity. (RCIA no. 473) During an initial interview, an assessment is made of their faith formation and knowledge of Catholic doctrine. A process of doctrinal and spiritual preparation, adapted to individual pastoral requirements, then begins. At times, it may be appropriate for candidates to join the catechumens in some of their formational process.

Care must be taken to distinguish and respect the baptized status of the candidate and anything that would equate candidates for reception with those who are catechumens is to be absolutely avoided. (RCIA no. 477) **Those who have been baptized should not take part in rites intended for the unbaptized catechumens, but may be included with uncatechized adult Catholics in rites as may be appropriate.** (*National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, nos. 30-31)

Children of catechetical age who seek full communion of the Catholic Church follow a process similar to that of adults. Age-appropriate preparation is to be given based on their faith formation and understanding of Catholic doctrine, and the decision to welcome them based on their ability to fully participate in the life of the Church. Children whose parents/guardians are entering into full communion in the Catholic Church, if they also choose to become Catholic, may be included in the preparation with their parents and with their parents make a profession of faith, be confirmed and receive eucharist. They then continue their faith formation with their peers.

If the adult seeking to become Catholic is married, the status of their marriage history, as well as that of their spouse's, must be examined by the Tribunal for regularity within the marriage laws of the Catholic Church. **If the present marriage is irregular, the process to regularize the marriage must be begun and completed before the person can make a profession of faith and be welcomed to the eucharistic table.** Care is to be taken to respect the validity of the existing marriage versus one that has need for convalidation. Someone from the RCIA Team should monitor the progress of the annulment case with the petitioner and petitioner must be told that a negative decision from the Tribunal is always a possibility.

If the adult seeking to become Catholic is cohabitating, it is an obstacle to receiving the sacraments of initiation. Living together without the benefit of marriage contradicts fundamental Church teachings. Thus, this situation is to be resolved through either separation or marriage prior to the celebration of any of the sacraments of initiation. (Cf. *Pastoral Manual*, L-11)

At a time prior to and distinct from the celebration of the rite of reception into full communion, the candidate should make a confession of sins. (RCIA no. 482; *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, no. 36) At the reception itself, the candidate should be accompanied by a sponsor and may even have two sponsors, with consideration for anyone who has had the principal part in guiding or preparing the candidate. (RCIA no. 483) **The rite of reception should normally take place at a Sunday Mass of the parish community** with its high point eucharistic communion. **It is preferable that reception into full communion not take place at the Easter Vigil.** Nevertheless if there are both catechumens to be baptized and baptized Christians to be received at the Vigil, for pastoral reasons, the combined rite is to be followed. (RCIA no. 475; *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, nos. 32-34)

If celebrated outside Mass, the Mass in which the newly received will take part in communion should be celebrated as soon as possible after the rite of reception. (RCIA nos. 475-476)

When the bishop entrusts the celebration of the rite of reception to a presbyter, the priest receives from the law the faculty to confirm the candidate for reception and is obliged to use it. The confirmation of candidates should not be deferred, nor should they be admitted to eucharist until they are confirmed. (Canons 883:2, 885:2; RCIA no. 481; *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, no. 35; *Rite of Confirmation*, no. 7.b.)

Note that as of March 2015, Bishop Cantú entrusts the celebration of the rite to priests in the parishes, and priests, therefore, as stated above, receive from the law the faculty to confirm candidates when celebrating the “Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church.” (*Faculties to Confirm*, 26 March 2015)

The names of those received into the full communion of the Catholic Church should be recorded in a special book, with the date and place of their baptism noted. (RCIA no. 486; see *Part V – Record Keeping*)

Addendum D contains a directory listing those baptisms that are usually considered valid or not valid by the Catholic Church. If there is a question about whether a candidate’s baptism is considered valid, a consultation with the diocesan director of the RCIA and/or a member of the Tribunal office staff is to be sought. If a record of a baptism cannot be obtained, and there are credible witnesses, a witness form, an “Affidavit Concerning Baptism When A Certificate Absolutely Cannot Be Furnished” may be submitted. (*Cf. Pastoral Manual*, C-8) If reasonable doubt about the fact or validity of an already conferred baptism remains, the baptism can be conferred again conditionally. In this case, a nonsolemn form of baptism must be celebrated privately and the minister should explain beforehand the reasons why this is being done. (RCIA no. 480; *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, no. 37) The reception into full communion should take place later at a Sunday Eucharist of the community.

In cases where a person seeking full communion of the Catholic Church believes that they have already been confirmed and there is a question of validity, a consultation with the diocesan director of the RCIA and/or a member of the Tribunal office staff is to be sought. If a record of a confirmation cannot be obtained, and there are credible witnesses, a witness form, an “Affidavit Concerning Confirmation When a Certificate Absolutely Cannot Be Furnished” may be submitted. (*Cf. Pastoral Manual*, C-8a)

Part IV – Additional (Combined) Rites

The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* contains the following combined rites which all parishes should consult and celebrate as circumstances dictate:

**1. Celebration of the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens
and of the Rite of Welcoming Baptized but Previously Uncatechized Adults
Who are Preparing for Confirmation and/or Eucharist
or Reception into Full Communion of the Catholic Church**

(RCIA nos. 505-529)

This rite is for use in parishes where catechumens are preparing for initiation and where baptized but previously uncatechized adults are beginning catechetical formation. Care must be taken to maintain the distinction between the catechumens and the baptized candidates.

**2. Parish Celebration for Sending Catechumens for Election
and Candidates for Recognition by the Bishop (Optional)**

(RCIA nos. 530-546)

This optional rite is for parishes whose catechumens will celebrate their election and whose adult candidates for confirmation and eucharist or reception into full communion will celebrate their recognition in a subsequent celebration. Care must be taken to maintain the distinction between the catechumens and the baptized candidates.

**3. Celebration of the Rite of Election of Catechumens
and of the Call to Continuing Conversion of Candidates
Who Are Preparing for Confirmation and/or Eucharist
or Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church**

(RCIA nos. 547-561)

This diocesan rite is for use when the election of catechumens and the call to continuing conversion of candidates are celebrated together. It should normally take place on the First Sunday of Lent; the presiding celebrant is Bishop or his delegate. Care must be taken to maintain the distinction between the catechumens and the baptized candidates.

**4. Celebration at the Easter Vigil of the Sacraments of Initiation
and of the Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church**

(RCIA nos. 562-594)

On the part of the parish, pastoral and liturgical consideration must be given to the combined celebration of the sacraments of initiation and reception into full communion, especially as the person to be received should always be consulted about the form of reception. In its actual arrangement the celebration must reflect the baptized status of the candidates for reception.

Part V - Record Keeping

1. Rite of Acceptance into the Catechumenate: Each unbaptized person received into the Catechumenate at a Rite of Acceptance is entered into a record book, the *Register of Catechumens*, for entrance into the catechumenate. This record is important because Catechumens acquire certain rights such as the right to Christian burial in case of death before receiving the sacraments. (A *Register of Catechumens* can be obtained from D. P. Murphy Co., Inc., at www.pdmurphy.com or 700.424.8724.)
2. Rite of Election: The names of those catechumens ready for the Easter sacraments are to be entered into the *Book of the Elect* before the Rite of Election, preferably at the parish "Sending of the Catechumens for Election." The *Book of the Elect* is an official record book to be kept safe in each parish. (A *Book of the Elect* can be obtained from Catholic Book Publishing Corporation at www.catholicbookpublishing.com or 877.228.2665)

3. Celebration of Baptism: At the time of baptism, documentation is to be recorded in the parish *Baptismal Register* with the names of those baptized, of the minister, parents and godparents, the place and date, and appropriate notation of reception of confirmation and first communion. (*Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, no. 29) A copy of each inquirer's birth certificate should have requested as a part of the initial interview process, which can now be used as an aid in obtaining and recording accurate information for the baptismal documentation. (*Baptism, Confirmation, First Communion and Marriage Registers* can be obtained from F. C. Ziegler Co. at www.zieglers.com or 800.331.4117)
4. Completion of Sacraments of Initiation: Persons baptized in the Catholic Church who are completing the sacraments of initiation as adults must secure a record of baptism prior to receiving confirmation. If the baptism was in a Catholic church other than the church of confirmation, the appropriate record of confirmation is to be sent to the church of baptism.
5. Reception of Baptized Christians into Full Communion: When a candidate is received into full communion in the Catholic Church, the date of their profession of faith, confirmation and first eucharist are to be recorded in a special book with the date and place of their baptism noted. (*A Register Into Full Communion* can be obtained from D. P. Murphy Co., Inc., at www.pdmurphy.com or 700.424.8724.)

Part VI – Suggested Parish Resource List

General Resources:

<i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: Study Guide</i>	LTP 1988
<i>Rito de la Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos: Edición de Estudio</i>	USCCB 1993
<i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: A Pastoral Liturgical Commentary</i>	FDLC 2002
<i>Celebrating Initiation: A Guide for Priests</i>	WLP 2007
<i>TeamRCIA</i>	teamrcia.com
<i>The Catechumenate and the Law: A Pastoral and Canonical Commentary</i>	LTP 1994
<i>Year-Round Catechumenate</i>	LTP 2002

Process Resources:

<i>A Harvest for God: Christian Initiation in the Rural and Small-Town Parish</i>	LTP 2003
<i>Making Disciples, Second Edition</i>	OSV 2006
<i>The Way of Faith: A Field Guide for the RCIA Process</i>	23rd Publications 2008

From the Augustine Institute at www.augustineinstitute.org:

<i>Opening the Word: Your Journey Into the Sunday Readings</i>	FORMED.org
<i>Symbolon: The Catholic Faith Explained</i>	symboloncatholic.org

From Ligouri Publications at www.ligouri.org:

Come and See
Journey of Faith/Camino de Fe

From RCL Benziger at www.RCLBenzier.com:

Foundations in Faith

Addendum A: Adults – Page One

***SUGGESTED INITIAL INTERVIEW FORM FOR RCIA INQUIRERS
INCLUDING MARITAL STATUS***

BASIC INFORMATION (OF THE INQUIRER)

Name (First) (Middle) (Last)

(Other First "Nick" Name) (Maiden Name)

Cell Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____
(Street or PO Box) (City) (Zip Code)

Father's Full Name: _____

Mother's Full Name: _____

Please check which of the following apply to you:

- _____ I have questions to ask the Catholic Church.
- _____ I am just looking to see what the Catholic Church has to offer.
- _____ I am thinking about becoming a Catholic.
- _____ I want to become a Catholic.
- _____ I want to update my understanding of my Catholic faith.
- _____ I want to receive the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist.
- _____ I want to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.
- _____ I want to get married in the Catholic Church.
- _____ I have been asked to be a sponsor/godparent.
- _____ I want to be received into the Catholic Church. *(Am already baptized in another faith denomination.)*

RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND (OF THE INQUIRER)

BAPTIZED: Yes or No

If yes, DENOMINATION of BAPTISM: _____

Name and City of Church of Baptism: _____

Name(s) of Godparent(s): _____

Addendum A: Adults – Page Two

Describe your religious upbringing as a child...

If baptized, have you celebrated First Eucharist in the Catholic Church? Yes or No

If baptized, have you celebrated First Eucharist in another Christian church? Yes or No

If yes, what is the name of the church? _____

If yes, where is this church located? _____

If yes, approximately when did you first receive Communion? _____

If baptized, have you celebrated Confirmation in the Catholic Church? Yes or No

If confirmed, have you celebrated Confirmation in another Christian church? Yes or No

If yes, what is the name of the church? _____

If yes, where is this church located? _____

If yes, approximately when were you confirmed? _____

Sponsor(s) for Confirmation: _____

Describe your Catholic Church formation and/or your religious education background...

As an adult, have you ever been a part of a faith or church community? Yes or No

If yes, what faith or church? _____

When were you active in this faith or church? _____

What other information about your religious background do you feel would be helpful to us?

Addendum A: Adults – Page Three

MARITAL STATUS

1. What is your current marital status?

single engaged married separated divorced widowed cohabitating

If married, is this your first marriage? Yes or No

If married, is this your spouse’s first marriage? Yes or No

If no for either of you, on the reverse side of this page,
please list your previous marriages and write brief explanations of how they ended.

When were you married? (Current Marriage) _____

Church and City of current marriage ceremony: _____

Before whom: Priest Deacon Other Minister Justice of the Peace

Your religion at the time of the ceremony: _____

Religion of spouse at time of ceremony: _____

2. If either you or your spouse has been previously married, please complete the following:

2.1 _____ There is a **previous marriage on my part** which has not yet been examined by the Catholic Church.

2.2 _____ There is a **previous marriage on the part of my spouse** which has not yet been examined by the Catholic Church.

2.3 My previous spouse is: still living a Catholic
 previously married before marrying me.

2.4 _____ I have received a decree of nullity from my previous marriage by the Catholic Church. Date of Decree _____

2.5. _____ My spouse has received a decree of nullity from a previous marriage by the Catholic Church. Date of Decree _____

2.6 _____ There is a **previous marriage** on my part, but at this time I am single.

NOTE: If there is a **previous marriage**, and you are currently in another marriage, the **previous marriage** (either on your part or that of your spouse) must first be resolved before you can be received into the church and receive/complete the sacraments of initiation.

3. There is no pending marriage in my regard. Yes or No

Addendum A: Adults – Page Four

Information on Previous Marriage(s)

INQUIRER

Name of former spouse 1: _____

Date of former marriage 1: _____

Place of former marriage 1: _____

How former marriage 1 ended: _____

Name of former spouse 2: _____

Date of former marriage 2: _____

Place of former marriage 2: _____

How former marriage 2 ended: _____

FÍANCE/SPOUSE

Name of former spouse 1: _____

Date of former marriage 1: _____

Place of former marriage 1: _____

How former marriage 1 ended: _____

Name of former spouse 2: _____

Date of former marriage 2: _____

Place of former marriage 2: _____

How former marriage 2 ended: _____

PLEASE RETURN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO YOUR PARISH OFFICE OR CATECHIST
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Addendum A: Adults – Page Five

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE INTERVIEWER:

Name of Interviewer:

Date of Interview/Reception of Paperwork:

Recommendations for beginning the faith journey (type of process and placement within the process):

Type of Canonical Process Required (if any): _____

Forms Given to Inquirer: _____

Date for Follow-up Discussion: _____

Addendum B

**STATEMENT OF RCIA CANDIDATE
PETITIONING THE TRIBUNAL FOR A DECREE OF NULLITY***

On _____, 20__ I was interviewed by _____,
(Date) (Name of Interviewer)

at _____ Church in _____, New Mexico.
(Name of Church) (City)

During the interview, I was informed that it is necessary to obtain a decree of nullity of (my) and (my spouse's) (my fiancé's) previous marriage(s). I understand that the process for a decree of nullity can take 12 months or longer. I also understand that the acceptance of a petition does not guarantee that the decree of nullity will be granted. *(A divorced person who has not remarried and is not engaged to be married need not receive a decree of nullity prior to sacramental initiation. However, a decree of nullity would be required if the person wished to remarry after becoming Catholic.)*

For a Non-baptized Candidate:

For these reasons I understand that while I may be admitted to the Period of Evangelization/Pre-catechumenate and the Period of Catechumenate, I will not be able to participate in the Rite of Election or Enrollment of Names or in any of the liturgical rites of the Period of Purification and Enlightenment or receive the sacraments of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) until the marital situation is resolved. _____ (Initial Here)

For a Candidate Validly Baptized in Another Faith:

For these reasons, I understand that while I may continue my study and formation toward full Christian Initiation in the Catholic Church (Profession of Faith, Confirmation and Eucharist) I may not participate in the celebration of the Call of Continuing Conversion or complete the sacraments of Christian Initiation until the marital situation is resolved. _____ (Initial Here)

Because I want to discern a call to membership in the Catholic Church and receive the support and prayer of the parish community, I wish to initiate and/or continue my participation in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) process to the extent allowed while awaiting a decision regarding the annulment petition.

Signature of Candidate

Date Signed

Signature of Interviewer

Date Signed

****Original kept by candidate; copy kept in the parish RCIA file.***

Addendum C: Children – Page One

SUGGESTED INITIAL INTERVIEW FORM FOR/WITH UNBAPTIZED CHILDREN

(For use with unbaptized children 7 years of age or older and *for children coming from another faith tradition.)

Child's Full Name: _____

Child's Date of Birth: _____

Certificate of Birth Verification

The below has seen and verifies seeing an official copy of the Birth Certificate for:

_____	_____	_____
Child's Name	Verification Date	Interviewer's Name

Child's Address: _____
Street Address
City
Zip Code

Name(s) of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) with whom child lives:

Phone Number(s) of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) with whom child lives: _____

E-Mail Address(es) of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) with whom child lives: _____

Relationship of Guardian(s) if not Parent(s): _____

Birth Mother's Name: _____

Birth Mother's Address: _____

Birth Mother's Phone Number and E-Mail Address: _____

Birth Father's Name: _____

Birth Father's Address: _____

Birth Father's Phone Number and E-Mail Address: _____

Names and Ages of Siblings (optional):

Child's School: _____ Grade in School: _____

Addendum C: Children – Page Two

Child's history of church participation and faith formation:

Describe the child's and family's s history of church participation, patterns of church attendance, religious formation, etc., including the different churches the child has attended:

Questions for the child:

Tell me what you know of God: _____

Tell me what you know about Jesus: _____

Why do you want to be baptized (or become Catholic)? _____

Do you know anyone who is Catholic? Anyone who goes to this church? Who? _____

What questions do you have about God, Jesus, or the Church?

Questions for the parent(s)/guardian(s):

Why do you want your child to be baptized and become Catholic?

What can you tell be about your child wanting to be baptized?

How do you plan to raise your child in the faith/continue your child's faith formation?

Family history:

Home Mailing Address (*If different that where live.*):

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Home E-Mail _____

Are the child's parents married?	_____	Yes	_____	No
Married in the Catholic Church?	_____	Yes	_____	No
Separated or Divorced?	_____	Yes	_____	No

Addendum C: Children – Page Three

Are the child’s siblings, if any, living in the same home? Yes No

Are they baptized? Yes No

Also preparing for baptism? Yes No

Do other children have a desire for baptism/initiation? Yes No Maybe

If yes, please explain. _____

Mother's history:

Baptized? Yes No

If yes, baptized in what religious tradition? _____

If no, desire to be baptized? Yes No

Present religious affiliation: _____

Religious history and/or experience of church _____

Father's history:

Baptized? Yes No

If yes, baptized in what religious tradition? _____

If no, desire to be baptized? Yes No

Present religious affiliation: _____

Religious history and/or experience of church _____

Stepparent History (If a stepparent.):

Baptized? Yes No

If yes, baptized in what religious tradition? _____

If no, desire to be baptized? Yes No

Present religious affiliation: _____

Religious history and/or experience of church _____

Any parent/guardian questions or concerns at this time?

Addendum C: Children – Page Four

(*For children coming from a different faith tradition.)

Religious History

Has child been baptized? ___ Yes ___ No

If yes, date of Baptism: _____ Church of Baptism _____

City/State of Baptism: _____

Name of Godparents: _____

Certificate of Baptism Verification

The below has seen and verifies seeing an official copy of the Baptism Certificate for:

_____	_____	_____
Child's Name	Date of Baptism	Place of Baptism
_____	_____	
Interviewer's Name	Verification Date	

Note: Because not all faith traditions view or celebrate infant or children's baptism in the same way that is recognized by the Catholic Church we ask the parent or guardian to give a description of the baptismal ceremony, and also to respond to this question: Was water used (either by pouring or immersion) while the words "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." were said?

Suggestion: If parents or guardians do not bring in a baptismal certificate for verification within one month of the beginning of religious formation sessions, consider setting up this interview to determine if it is appropriate to place their child in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults adapted for children.

Has the child been confirmed in another faith tradition? ___Yes ___No

Church of Confirmation: _____

Has the child participated in and/or received Communion in another faith tradition? ___Yes ___No

Church of Communion: _____

POINTS TO DISCUSS WITH ALL PARENTS/GUARDIANS

**The RCIA is not a one year program but a process of faith formation leading to initiation.
The process is family-centered with the parents/guardians and a sponsoring family.
The families will be asked to participate in the periods and rites of the process.
All three initiation sacraments of baptism, confirmation and eucharist
will be celebrated together - if the child is unbaptized - when the child is ready.**

Addendum D – Page One***VALIDITY OF BAPTISM OF NON-CATHOLIC CHURCHES AND COMMUNITIES***

According to the traditional doctrine of the Catholic Church there are four requirements for the valid administration of the sacrament of baptism: the matter, the form, the intention of the minister and the right disposition of the recipient.

Note: Many Protestant religions have a dedication ceremony or other ceremony which is not baptism. If the church has a dedication ceremony, baptism is generally not conferred until the age of reason or until the approximate age of 13.

Non-Catholic Churches Which Have Valid Baptism

All Eastern non-Catholics, Adventist: Baptism is by immersion with the Trinitarian formula. Baptism is given at the age of reason.

African Methodist Episcopal: Baptism with water but understands the implications.

Baptists: Valid baptism at about 13 years of age. No infant baptism. Ceremony of dedication. **Evangelical United Brethren:** Baptism by water seems valid and is generally done by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling. The Trinitarian form is used. Dedication ceremony.

Church of the Brethren: Baptism is made by triple immersion using the formula in Matthew is not mentioned. The dedication ceremony is not baptism.

Church of God: Valid baptism. Baptism is conferred by immersion and with a Trinitarian formula when the individual asks for it. There is a public baby dedication with no sacramental significance.

Congregational Church: Valid baptism.

Disciples of Christ, Disciples and Christians: Valid baptism. Trinitarian formula used in baptism by immersion at an older age. Dedication service, no infant baptism.

Episcopalians: Valid baptism. Apparently valid baptism. Old Catholics.

Presbyterian Church; Polish National Church; Reformed Churches: Apparently valid baptism.

United Church of Christ (Congregationalists, Evangelists, and Reformed Church).

Baptism is ordinarily proved by means of a baptismal certificate or a letter from the minister of the church where baptism was celebrated. When it is impossible to obtain documentary evidence, the testimony of one reliable witness suffices. If the person was at least seven years old and had the use of reason when baptized, the oath of the baptized person suffices as proof as long as there is no conflict of interest.

Addendum D – Page Two

Some Churches Without Valid Baptism

(According to Appendix I of *Canon Law of the Sacraments for Parish Ministry*, 2007)

Amana Church Society
American Ethical Union
Apostolic Church (Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God)
Apostolic Faith Mission
Baha'i
Bohemian Free Thinkers
Children of God (“The Family”)
Christadelphians
Christian and Missionary Alliance
Christian Community (disciples of Rudolf Steiner)
Christians of the Universalist Brotherhood
Church of Christ, Scientist (Christian Scientists)
Church of Divine Science
Church of Daniel’s Band
Church of Illumination
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons)
Church of Revelation
Erieside Church
General Assembly of Spiritualists
Hephzibah Faith Missionary Association
House of David Church
Iglesia ni Kristo (Philippines)
Independent Church of Filipino Christians
Jehovah Witnesses
Masons (Freemasonry)
Mennonites
Metropolitan Church Association
Moravians
National David Spiritual Temple of Christ Church Union
National Spiritualist Association
Pentecostal Churches
People’s Church of Chicago
Plymouth Brethern
Quakers (Society of Friends)
Reunification Church (“Moonies”)
Salvation Army
Spiritualist Church
Swedenborg Church (New Jerusalem or “New Age Church”)
Unitarians
United Society of Believers (Shakers)
Universal Emancipation Church