

RCIA Adapted for Children and Teens Church of the Holy Spirit

What is RCIA? The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) is the way that children in second grade and older and adults are prepared for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. RCIA is how the Catholic Church welcomes or initiates new members.

RCIA Adapted for Children and Teens is the same process that adults go through, but the sessions and material are specially adapted for younger minds.

Who participates in RCIA for Children and Teens? Children and youth in 2nd grade and above who have never been baptized or were baptized in another Christian denomination AND teens in 6th grade and above who were baptized Catholic but are uncatechized.

What will my child learn in the RCIA process? Your child will learn about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the sacraments, and other fundamental teachings of the Catholic Church. Our hope is that he or she will not only learn about God and the Church but will develop a relationship with Jesus and feel at home in the Catholic Church.

What is involved in the RCIA journey?

Year 1. Your child will participate in regular Faith Formation sessions from September through May. In addition, there are Family Gatherings once a month during class time.

Year 2. Sessions in English are held on Sundays from 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. in conjunction with 10:00 a.m. Mass. Full initiation into the Catholic Church takes place at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday. All three initiation sacraments will be celebrated – Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

How long does it take? The answer is different for each child, but we require a minimum of two years of preparation. We want you and your child to take as much time as you need. Readiness is determined by willingness of the family and child to fully participate in the process (Mass, rites, sessions, retreat, etc.).

What does a parent do during the process? This is an important journey of faith and the Church wants you to accompany your child on the journey. You will participate in weekly catechetical sessions and the rites in church. The rites are ritual celebrations that mark progress toward full initiation. Parents present their children to the community and act as witnesses about their children's intention.

Why do parents need to be involved? The Church feels strongly that you are the primary catechists of your children - the first and most important teachers of the faith. You have a key role to play in the process. Remember that this is the beginning of a lifelong faith journey for your child. They are being formed as disciples of Jesus Christ and learning a new way of life. How can they possibly experience such a great change without you – their parents?

What do godparents do? Godparents are Christian role models who support and encourage the child in his/her Catholic faith. They become a partner with you in your child's spiritual formation. You should make this choice carefully.

What are the requirements for godparents? The godparent must be 16 years of age or older, be a Catholic who has received all three Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation), and lead a life in harmony with the faith and the responsibility to be undertaken. If married, the requirement is that the couple has been married in the Catholic Church.

Do we need to go to church every Sunday? Yes, participating in Mass is one of the best ways for you and your family to get to know God and our Catholic community. Your child will be able to pray and listen to the Word of God and get to know other members of the parish.

Will my child really be confirmed at such a young age? Yes, your child will benefit from the gifts of the Holy Spirit at a very early age!

The Church teaches that if someone has "attained the use of reason and is of catechetical age," Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist should be celebrated together (RCIA, 252). This means that they are old enough to develop a personal faith in God and, therefore, old enough to be fully initiated. When they are presented for receiving the sacraments, they do so on their own faith and desire, not their parent's faith and desire as in infant baptism.

What happens after my child has celebrated the sacraments and becomes Catholic? He or she will participate in the Faith Formation program along with other children in the parish. Our belief is that the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation is one important milestone in a lifelong journey of conversion to Jesus Christ. It is very important for the spiritual development of your child to continue faith formation even though your child will have received all three sacraments.

We will keep your family in prayer and look forward to sharing the journey of faith!

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