

Period of the Catechumenate

Part I

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Session #4

The Catechumenate Period

“The Period of the Catechumenate, beginning at the Rite of Acceptance and including the Period of Purification & Enlightenment ... should extend for at least one year of formation ...”

National Statutes for the Catechumenate, USCCB, Nov. 11 1986, Confirmed by the Congregation for Divine Worship, June 26, 1988; no. 6.

The Catechumenate Period

Do you have a number of catechumens who have had little exposure to religion?

- ▶ Include topics like the Trinity, who Jesus is, Sin and Grace, Revelation, Sacred Scripture, and similar topics.

Do you have a number of candidates who were baptized in and perhaps raised in another Christian faith?

- ▶ They will know who Jesus is, but you will want to include topics like the Church, the Communion of Saints, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Mass

The Catechumenate Period

Always Include:

- ❑ Articles of the Creed (12) especially the articles you may not already have discussed - the Creed is a summary our Faith
- ❑ The Sacraments, perhaps grouped as the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist), the Sacraments of Healing (Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick), and the Sacraments at the Service of Communion (Matrimony, Holy Orders)
- ❑ Catholic morality (What do the Commandments and Beatitudes mean for us today?)
- ❑ Living an authentic, active, spiritual and sacramental life.

Content Material for Catechumenate Period

Some examples ... (pamphlet form)

Liguori
Journey of Faith



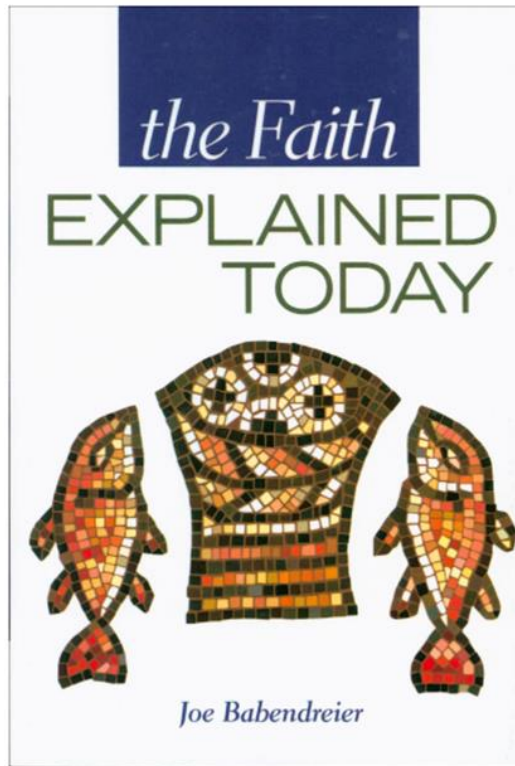
Liguori
Catholic Update



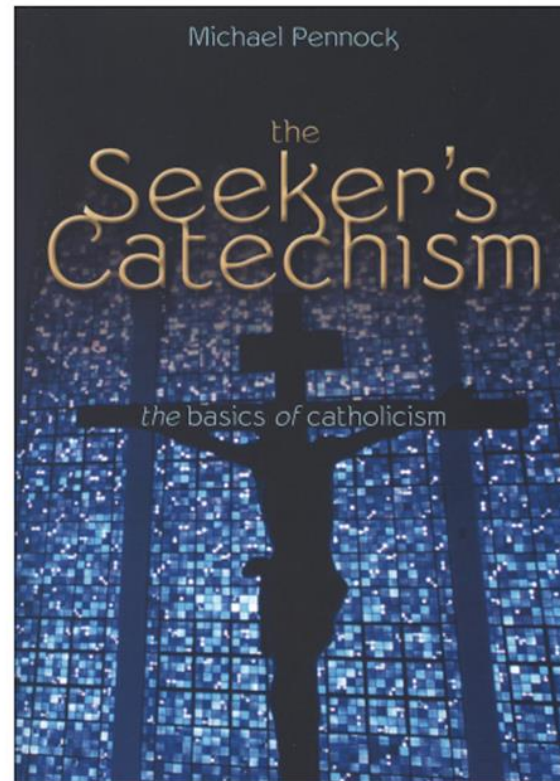
Content Material for Catechumenate Period

Some examples ... (short catechism form)

Scepter Publishers
The Faith Explained Today



Ave Maria Press
Seekers Catechism



The Liturgical Year and Planning for the Catechumenate

A suitable catechesis is ... accommodated to the liturgical year - 75.1

- ▶ **Advent/Christmas** - Incarnation, Salvation, Grace, etc.
- ▶ **Lent** - catechesis on prayer, fasting, almsgiving, devotions; Stations of the Cross, etc.
- ▶ **All Saints & All Souls** - catechesis on 4 last things
- ▶ **Saint Feast Days, Parish Patron Saint, Name Saints of Catechumens**, catechesis on their lives; virtues; teaching
- ▶ **Blessed Virgin Mary** - On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception; Annunciation; other Marian feasts

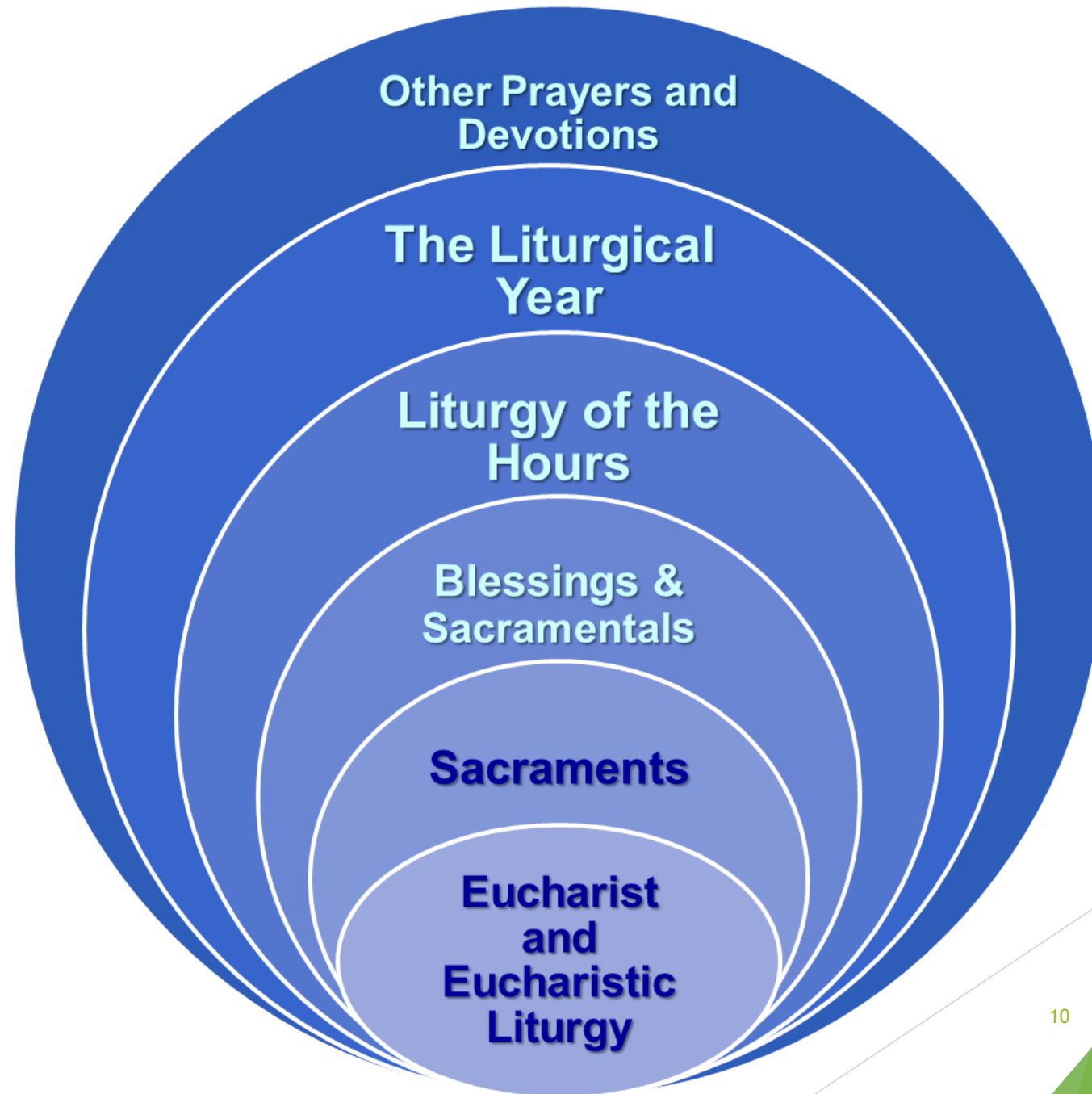
A Sacred Space in the RCIA reflects and *forms* participants in the Liturgical Year



It is important that the Sacred Space is attractive and not haphazard or untidy.

- ▶ Small table in front of the room covered in an attractive cloth in the color of the liturgical season
- ▶ An attractive copy of Scripture enthroned and set to the reading of the day or an upcoming reading.
- ▶ A standing crucifix and/or attractive statue of Mary or a saint as appropriate for the day
- ▶ A candle to be lit at the beginning of the catechetical session to represent Christ's presence as we are gathered in his name
- ▶ Optional: an image of sacred art depicting some aspect of the catechetical topic of the day

Elements of Liturgy



Why do the Dismissal in the RCIA?

- ▶ The Dismissal is important because it has a critical role in preparing catechumens, over time, for their eventual role and responsibilities in the order of the faithful. RCIA #75.3 and #82.4 spell out this concept: “at Mass they may also take part with the faithful in the liturgy of the Word, thus better preparing themselves for their eventual participation in the liturgy of the Eucharist.”
- ▶ “Ordinarily, however, when they are present in the assembly of the faithful they should be kindly dismissed before the liturgy of the Eucharist begins . . . for they must await their baptism . . . to participate in Christ’s new worship.” (RCIA #75.3)
- ▶ And again: “celebrations of the word of God arranged for the benefit of the catechumens have as their main purpose: . . . to prepare them gradually to enter the worship assembly of the entire community” (RCIA #82.4). RCIA # 83.2 is also specific on the matter of dismissal: “After the liturgy of the Word they should, if possible, be dismissed, but an intention for them is included in the general intercessions”.

Two important liturgical roles for catechumens after Rite of Acceptance

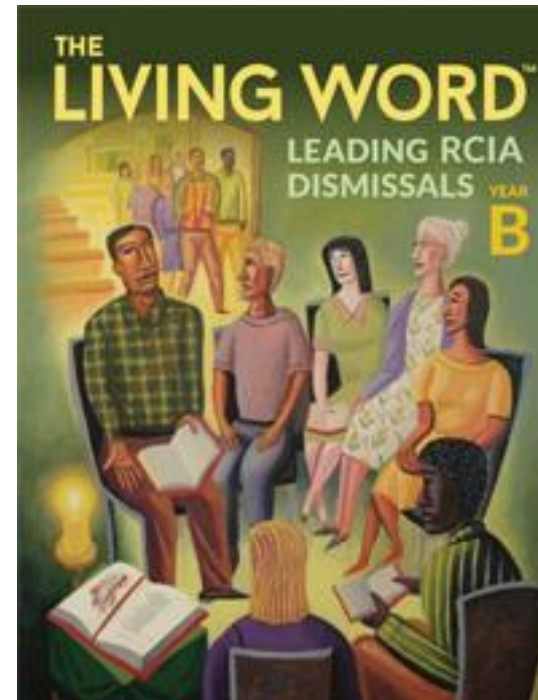
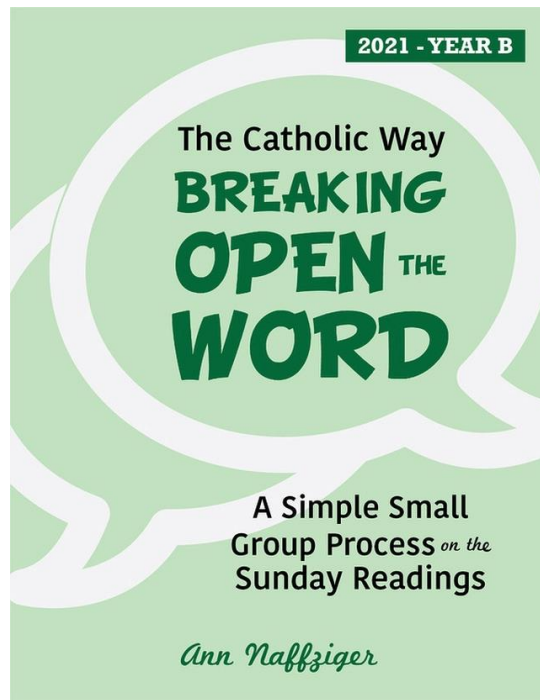


- ▶ First, they participate in the liturgy of the word to hear the Word and be fed by Christ present in that Word and assembly.
- ▶ Second, they “share their joy and spiritual experiences” (RCIA 67A) that they received from Christ in that Word. Their dismissal after the homily is similar, then, to the dismissal the baptized receive at the end of Mass: “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.”

Some resources for leading RCIA Dismissals and Reflection on the Word Proclaimed

The Pastoral Center - <https://pastoral.center>

Liturgy Training Publications - ltp.org



Dismissal/Reflection on the Word is separate from a Catechetical Session during the Period of the Catechumenate

- ▶ RCIA #7.2, 47, 67, 75, 82 -84 make clear that the Rite sees the Dismissal/Reflection and Catechesis as two separate actions with different people involved. For example:
- ▶ The Dismissal/Reflection involves - “Some of the faithful (67A) and Catechesis involves - “the whole community (clergy, catechists and faithful)” (75.1).
- ▶ It is therefore clear from the Rite and instructions it gives us that we should not be confusing what takes place in a Dismissal/Reflection session with what happens in a Catechetical session during the Period of the Catechumenate.

Group Processing Questions

1. What are some topics to include for a group of catechumens and candidates who already know who Jesus is and what he came to do?
2. Why do you think the Liturgical Year an important element in the RCIA?
3. What is the difference between a Dismissal/Reflection Session and a Catechetical Session?