

Questions from the Open Forum

1. What do you share during each period of the RCIA?

Each period of the RCIA has a specific purpose:

Inquiry- This is a time for pre-evangelization. The focus of this period is *their* questions and broader issues of faith, prayer life and faith journey.

Catechumenate- The text for the Catechumenate is the lectionary. The Catechumenate period, intended for Catechumens, is meant to be a full lectionary year which sets forth the life, ministry, death, and Resurrection of Jesus. As you explore church teachings during the Catechumenate period, it is important to link topics presented to the lectionary. (See the answer to Question 4 for resources to help you correlate.) The format for Catechumenate sessions should allow ample opportunities for questions and discussion. Lecture format is typically the least engaging and should be avoided

Period of Purification and Enlightenment- This is a time for reflection and conversion. It should look very different from sessions of the catechumenate and should more closely resemble a spiritual retreat than a catechetical session.

Mystagogy- This is a time following initiation when the newly initiated reflect on their time of preparation and consider how they will fully become a part of the church community. It is tempting to recruit the newly initiated to become the leaders or sponsors for the next group of RCIA. They will be anxious to help and because they know you and your team. It is important, however, to give them time to explore other options or to simply continue their own formation through adult faith formation sessions.

There are a few articles posted on the Archdiocesan Forum for the RCIA blog that may help.

<https://rciaatlanta.org/category/stages>

Resource: USCCB website <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/who-we-teach/rite-of-christian-initiation-of-adults/index.cfm>

2. What is the difference between Catechumens and Candidates?

Catechumens are unbaptized and Candidates have a valid baptism. [*The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults*](#) is written for the unbaptized (Catechumens). Adaptations for candidates are in part II of the book (in the back of the book). Some elements of the rite such as scrutinies are meant only for the unbaptized catechumens

3. What does year-round RCIA look like?

The year round RCIA process does not begin in the fall and end at the Easter Vigil. It is constantly ongoing and allows people to join at any point.

How is this accomplished? The RCIA tells us that it is responsibility of the parish – not just the RCIA team to catechize. Recruit and train enough parishioners to establish separate teams for Inquiry and Catechumenate so that both can operate simultaneously and continuously. An Inquiry team only needs two or three people who gather once or twice each month throughout the year. For the Catechumenate, a core team of six to eight people can support year round sessions. If summer meetings are a concern, consider gathering twice in June, July and August.

Another article from the blog to help you with year round <https://rciaatlanta.org/?s=year+round>

4. How do we synchronize teachings with the Sunday Readings?

Consult a resource about the Sunday readings and let it be your guide. There are a few options below. Look at the scripture background or a list of catechetical topics

[*Breaking Open the Lectionary*](#)- Published by Paulist Press

[The Living Word](#)- Published by Liturgy Training Publications (the Extended Catechesis section gives relevant topics for catechesis)

5. What is the minimum age to include with adults in RCIA?

First make sure you consider the needs of the individual. A teen would not feel welcome in a room full of adults who have very different life and faith experiences. If you have only one teen, find a way to include the teen in an already existing group of teens. Meet with the group and give them and their catechist the task of helping prepare the teen catechumen or candidate. Provide the catechist and teens with an overview of the RCIA process and give them continued support to effectively walk with this young person. They will all benefit from this experience.

6. How do we explain to the pastor the importance of the RCIA process?

This article, [Six Ways to Involve Your Pastor in Your RCIA Process](#) from Team RCIA is a good resource for this concern.

7. How do we show the RCIA presenters how to transform RCIA gatherings from “classes” to interactive sessions? And help them understand why this is so important?

Training your RCIA team is critical. Remind the presenters that this is not a class but rather the beginning of a journey of faith. Never invite someone to prepare a “lecture” and give anyone presenting clear guidelines that include the following information:

- Give presenters limits and structure.
 - Provide the time limit for their presentation (half of time available or less).
 - How much time should be available for faith sharing and discussion?
- Remind them that long, comprehensive presentations people can only take in so much at one time.

Remind presenters that candidates and catechumens do not need to learn everything at once, you are initiating them into a life of learning about the Catholic faith.

Finally, watch your own language. If you use words like class, teach, and other “school” terms, you are already setting the expectation.

8. Sponsors vs. Padrinos, and incorporating them?

Having a sponsor who is not a family member but rather a member of the parish community gives the candidate another faith companion. If the Godparent wants to serve as sponsor, he or she should also attend all sponsor training sessions and be present at all catechumenate sessions.

9. How much should you push or encourage candidates?

The key here is discernment. Here is a series of articles from our blog about [“Sorting Fish”](#) that helps you lead candidates in the discernment process. Let the candidate or catechumen lead the way and support them as needed.