



St. Joseph's RCIA

Welcome!

Welcome to St. Joseph Church's RCIA! RCIA is always a fun and spiritually rewarding experience, and we look forward to making this journey with you. This journey is a true pilgrimage, a movement towards God. The goal of RCIA is to bring people closer to Jesus Christ and to prepare them to enter the Roman Catholic Church.

Who is RCIA for?

RCIA is for any adult who wants to enter into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church. It is for the unbaptized who are just beginning to know Jesus Christ, as well as Protestants who desire to enter more fully into the Body of Christ. It is also for people who were baptized as Catholics but who never received the sacrament of Confirmation. RCIA is tailored to adults, and there is a separate program for children who wish to enter the Church.

RCIA serves both those who are certain that they want to become Catholic, as well as those who are just considering it. The RCIA program will both teach what the Catholic Church believes and help people to know and love Jesus Christ more deeply in their lives. Beginning the RCIA program does not oblige one to become Catholic.

What is RCIA?

RCIA stands for the 'Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults.' It is a series of classes and religious rites that prepare one for full communion in the Church. The whole process of initiation is divided into various stages:

❖Pre-catechumenate—The beginning of the program teaches the basics of Catholic belief and helps people grow closer to Christ.

❖Catechumenate—After the Rite of Acceptance in December the unbaptized become 'catechumens' and the baptized become 'candidates.' As they become more familiar with Catholic beliefs they also begin a more intense discernment of God's call in their lives.

❖Rite of Election—At this stage the catechumens' names are enrolled at the Rite of Election, which the Bishop presides over.

❖Scrutinies—During the Sundays in Lent there is a period of purification and Enlightenment when catechumens prepare for baptism and candidates prepare for Confirmation.

❖Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation—At the Easter Vigil the catechumens are baptized and the candidates enter into full communion with the Catholic Church. All receive the sacrament of Confirmation. At this point they are Catholics.

❖Mystagogy—After reception into the Catholic Church there are some final meetings that explore how God is working in their lives after having received the sacraments.

What do RCIA members do?

Throughout RCIA there are weekly meetings on Sunday. These meetings are mandatory: they are the heart of the program. Through these meetings those in RCIA learn the faith and come to know Jesus Christ more and more in their lives. Attached to this letter is a schedule of the meetings for this RCIA season.

Additionally, all members should attend Mass every Sunday and on holy days of obligation. Members should also start to live a life of prayer and seek holiness. We will help you do that!

What else is needed?

All members need a sponsor who is a Catholic practicing the faith. If someone cannot find a sponsor, we will help match that person with a sponsor. For sponsors who are not parishioners at St. Joseph's, we require a letter from the sponsor's parish stating that the sponsor is a practicing Catholic. There is a separate letter that outlines the responsibilities of sponsors.

Additionally, those who are already baptized need to obtain their baptismal certificate. Catholics accept the validity of Protestant baptisms, but we need a baptismal certificate. If you cannot obtain the certificate we will help you.

Finally, everyone needs to discern a Confirmation name. The name needs to be a Catholic saint, and that saint will be one of your patrons, interceding for you in heaven. Please pray about what saint to select, for often we don't pick them, but they choose us!

Special circumstances can also arise that complicate entering the Catholic Church. I will help you to navigate those situations if they arise.

May God Bless you abundantly on your journey,

Fr. Boniface Endorf OP • Fr. Pier Giorgio Dengler OP

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