

# **FAITH FORMATION PROCESS**

## **Rite of Christian Initiation**

### **Stage I: The Inquiry Process**

During the Inquiry process the person is helped to discern if his or her desire to become Catholic is a genuine call from God and has an opportunity to ask questions about what it means to be Catholic. During this process the person learns how to listen to the Word of God and apply it to his or her life. Inquirers meet once a week with other Inquirers and with a team of catechists. Generally, people discern within six to eight weeks whether or not they are ready to move to the next stage. If Inquirers are called to take the next step, they are welcomed by the entire community into the Church and become Catechumens. The word Catechumen is an ancient Christian word that means a person who is seeking to discover how the Word of God and Catholic practices can change their lives.

### **Stage II: The Catechumenate**

The Catechumenate has two complimentary parts: the Dismissal Process and the Catechesis. Each Sunday throughout the year the catechumens attend the 8:30am Mass, and after they have heard the Word of God proclaimed in the Scriptures and the sermon, they then are called forth (called The Dismissal) into a private group session. With the guidance of a catechist, they spend 20-30 minutes reflecting on what they heard during the Mass and what God is saying to them personally, and how their lives may be different because of what they heard.

### **Catechesis**

In the catechesis process, the catechumens have an opportunity to learn about the whole range of Catholic beliefs, customs, and practices in a way that also helps them to grow in their faith and be reshaped and transformed. This process is led by a different catechist each week and takes place each Sunday (except during July and August) after the dismissal process. The session lasts for about one hour. The catechumens will have sponsors to help them along. Generally, catechumens spend about one to one and a half years in the process. When the catechumens are ready to become full members of the Catholic community, they go through a special period of preparation during the forty days of Lent. At the Easter Vigil they are welcomed fully into the Church through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist.

### **State III: The Neophyte Year**

During this stage, the newly formed Catholics (neophytes) meet monthly to develop a deeper understanding of the Sacraments and God's Word. The meeting is held outside of the church, generally one of the Neophyte's residences, and often followed by a pot-luck dinner. The Neophyte Year is brought to a close by a special Rite at the next Easter Vigil.