

The Journey of Faith in RCIA

Keys to Discernment and Spiritual Growth

*“What we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord,
with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.” (2 Corinthians 4:5)*

The RCIA is an extended period for discernment and spiritual growth in the Catholic faith

- **Focus:** centered on the person of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior
- **Goal:** heaven—to become saints
- **Process:** God-initiated, gradual, wholistic, communal and difficult
 - God initiated: faith is our response to God’s invitation
 - Gradual: God is compassionate and patient, will work with us over our lifetime
 - Wholistic: God desires to transform and rule over every part of us: our intellect, emotions, interests, talents, struggles, weaknesses, bodies, all of us
 - Communal: God brings us into His family—communion with the Most Holy Trinity and communion with our brothers and sisters in Christ
 - Difficult: God demands our total and complete surrender to His will; for our good, of course, but we must be willing to surrender all to Him and to place God as the central priority of our entire existence

Tools and Suggestions:

Whatever amount of leisure time you spend on your growth in worldly ways (exercise, entertainment, media), spend at least that amount of time on your spiritual growth

- Make time for **prayer and spiritual reflection**—every day, throughout the day
- Read the **Bible** and other spiritual resources (or listen/watch online)
- Commit to attending **Holy Mass** each Sunday (Saturday vigil counts!) and to participate in the life of the Church by attending other events as well
- Find **people** to support your search—at RCIA, in your circle of family/friends, online
- Find ways to **step out in faith**—in concrete, specific ways (taking on a new prayer devotion, speaking up about your beliefs, serving the needy, giving more of your money to charity, etc.)

Attitudes to Cultivate:

Life with Christ is a marvelous adventure! He came to give us life, and life to the full (Jn 10:10). We were designed by the God who loves us beyond our imagining to be in an intimate relationship with Him—however much you desire to know and love God, you can be assured that He loves and desires you infinitely more.

- **Curiosity:** question, wonder, look at things you think you understand from a new perspective
- **Confidence:** God loves you. God wants you to know Him. God’s order, planning and love are discernible in creation, in each other, in you.
- **Humility:** Every other person is just as important to God as you are; no one (not even you!) understands God’s nature or plan fully; focus on God, not on yourself
- **Perseverance:** God often allows us to struggle through trials and suffering in order to purify and strengthen our desire for Him and Him alone. Do not give in to

discouragement, which is one of the devil's most effective tools. Rather, offer God an act of trust in humility and place your trust in God's power to bring good from all things

- **Reverence:** God is love, and God desires an intimate relationship with you. But God is GOD—He is not to be manipulated, controlled or minimized. Recognize the beauty of approaching God with “holy fear”—a reverence and attitude of worship rather than entitlement or presumption as if we were equals with Him.
- **Wonder and Joy:** The beauty, truth and goodness you will find in the Catholic faith reflects all that God designed you to be. You will discover your true worth, the real meaning of things, and the grand project you are part of—and God's love fills our hearts with wonder and joy as we realize the treasures we inherit by His grace.
- **Enthusiasm:** Think of the elite athlete, at the top of her game, preparing to enter into the competition. She can't wait to “suffer” through training and workouts—for she understands the necessity of hard work to achieve her goals. She submits to coaches, she strives after perfection, she disciplines her body, mind and will—all for the goal of victory! Cultivate the same attitude with respect to your faith: for God did design you to achieve the victory of heaven, but He won't put you there without your cooperation.

How to Approach this Time in RCIA

- **Attend meetings whenever you can**—and bring a sponsor or supportive friend with you; repeated absence makes all these other suggestions very difficult to follow
- **Prepare ahead of time if possible**—read the chapter in Love Unveiled, look up the Scripture passages; if you know a topic is a real issue or stumbling block to you, look for solid information on it from the suggested resources, or ask for additional materials
- **Participate actively**—this doesn't mean talking all the time: active listening and supporting others is just as important as offering your insights, experiences and questions; pay attention to who does most of the talking—if it's you, give others a chance, if it is rarely you, speak up!
- **Ask questions**—if you have a question related to the material, chances are someone else has the same or similar question but is afraid to ask it
- **Pray for and support each other**—the Holy Spirit has summoned you to this group, this year, in this place; He has put you with each other so that you can support each other as a faith community—get to know each other, pray daily for each other, reach out to each other
- **Seek connections**—be patient with yourself at first, as everything might seem so new and unrelated. Over time, you should begin to make connections between our beliefs, practices, morality and worship. Seek these connections so that you can begin to see the forest in addition to the trees.
- **Prepare for the Rites**—the special prayers and celebrations that make up the RCIA are a real avenue for God's graces and blessings; be open to God at work in them

Stuck? Need Guidance? We are here to help! Call the parish office and set up a meeting with:
Fr. Lewis (509-928-3210, ext. 101; jlewis@dioceseofspokane.org) or
Marie Bricher (509-928-3210, ext 111; mbricher@dioceseofspokane.org)