

*AN ADAPTED RITE OF ACCEPTANCE
INTO THE ORDER OF CATECHUMENS:
DURING COVID-19*

CONTEXT

This adapted Rite [based on RCIA 41-67] is for *Unbaptized Catechumens* only. It is required of an unbaptized adult and an unbaptized child of catechetical age. It is *recommended* for a baptized, un-catechized Catholic; a baptized un-catechized Christian; and, if helpful, a baptized catechized Christian.

Instead of doing all the Rite during Sunday Mass, this adaptation is envisioned into two parts, Rite One and Rite Two.

RITE ONE could be celebrated in this order:

- Greeting of the Catechumen and Sponsor at the Church door. [RCIA 48- 49]
- Opening Dialogue: [RCIA 50-52 ABC]
- Liturgy of the Word [RCIA 62] could include readings such as:
 - Genesis 12: 1-4a
 - Psalm 33: 4-5, 12-13, 18-19, 20 and 22
 - John 1: 35-42Brief homily. [RCIA 63]
- Catechumens Presentation of *Bible* or *Lectionary* [OR leave this to during Rite Two at the Sunday Mass] [RCIA 64]
- Sponsor would take part in Signing of the Candidates:[RCIA 54, 55A, 56 leaving last singing to be done during Rite Two at the Sunday Rite] only team/ sponsors would do signing –without touching, all would be masked.
- Intercessions For the Catechumens [RCIA 65]
- Concluding Prayer [RCIA 66]
- Dismissal of Catechumens [RCIA 67A]

Rite One is done with the Priest or Deacon presiding, team and sponsor present only. Rite One could be done in Church, without an Assembly, or in the RCIA team meeting room or classroom.

RECEIVING THE UNBAPTIZED

The Unbaptized, their sponsor gather outside the Church or inside at the entrance of the Church or elsewhere or at some other site suitable for this rite.

A priest or deacon, wearing an Alb or surplice, a stole and if desired a copy of festive color goes to meet them. There may be a song.

GREETING

The presider greets the unbaptized in a friendly manner. He speaks to them, their sponsors, pointing out the joys and happiness of the Church. HE may also recall for all the particular experience and religious responses by which eh unbaptized following their own spiritual path have come to his first step. He invites the sponsors and unbaptized to come forward to take their place before the presider, while an appropriate song or Psalm 63: 1-8 is done.

OPENING DIALOGUE

Unless the unbaptized are already known to all present, the Presider asks their given names. The unbaptized answer one by one, even if, because of a large number the questions are asked only once. One of the following or something similar can be used:

Presider: What is your name?

Unbaptized: N.

The Presider continues with the following questions for the individual unbaptized. He may use other words than those provide in asking the unbaptized about their intentions and may let them answer in their own words [cf. RCIA 50] The presider phrases his next question according to eh answer received.

A sung acclamation may be done after each Dialogue [e.g., Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ]

Presider: What do you ask of God's Church?

Unbaptized : Faith

Presider: What does faith offer you?

Unbaptized: Eternal life.

AFFIRMATION BY THE SPONSORS AND THE ASSEMBLY:

The presider turns to the sponsor and the assembly and asks them in these or similar words.

Presider:

Sponsors and Assembly, you now present these unbaptized persons to us; are you, and all gathered here with us, ready to help these unbaptized persons find and follow Christ?

All: We are

Presider:

Let us pray: Father of mercy, we thank you for these your servants. You have sought and summoned them in many ways and they have turned to seek you. You have called them today and they have answered in our presence: And so we pray:
We praise you, Lord, and we bless you.

ALL: *We praise you and we bless you.*

The Presider would then invite all to enter and be seated to hear GOD's Word proclaimed in the Scriptures.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD:

Genesis 12: 1-4a

Psalm 33: 4-5,12-13,18-19, 20, 22

John 1: 35-42

Brief Homily

PRESENTATION OF A BIBLE OR LECTIONARY [OR THIS CAN BE MOVED TO RITE TWO]

A book containing the gospels may be given to the unbaptized by the presider. The presider may use these words or similar words:

Presider:

Receive the Word, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the Son of God.

as the book is given. These or similar words can also be sung. The end in mind is not just the “book” but the contents of what is being passed on to the unbaptized person by the Church. The sponsor, socially distanced, offers support to the unbaptized person. THE sponsor would now guide the unbaptized person to stand in the appropriate place for the signings that follow. The sponsor would stand before the unbaptized person, socially distanced, and all masked.

SIGNING OF THE UNBAPTIZED WITH THE CROSS

Next the cross is to be traced on the forehead of the unbaptized person, [or during COVID in front of the forehead and in front of the other senses]. The Presider alone says the formularies accompanying each signing. At the discretion of the presider the signing of one, several or all of the senses may follow. [DURING COVID it is recommended that all but the final signing over the whole body be done in **RITE ONE**]

SIGNING OF THE FOREHEAD

Presider:

Dear Unbaptized: you wish to share our life and hope in Christ. To admit you as catechumens I know mark you with the sign of Christ’s cross and call upon your catechists and sponsors to do the same. Our whole community welcomes you with love and stands ready to help you.

Receive the cross on your forehead. It is Christ himself who now strengthens you with this sign of his love.
Learn to know and follow him.

All: Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

SIGNING OF THE OTHER SENSES:

The signing is carried out by the sponsors or catechists, socially distanced. The signing of each sense may be followed by an acclamation in praise of Christ, such as “*Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*”

While the ears are being signed:

Presider:

Receive the sign of the cross on your ears,
that you may hear the voice of the Lord.

While the eyes are being signed:

Receive the sign of the cross on your eyes,
that you may see the glory of God.

While the lips are being signed:

Receive the sign of the cross on your lips,
that you may respond to the word of God.

While the breast is being signed:

Receive the sign of the cross over your heart,
that Christ may dwell there by faith.

While the shoulders are being signed:

Receive the sign of the cross on your shoulders,
that you may bear the gentle yoke of Christ.

While the hands are being signed:

Receive the sign of the cross on your hands
that Christ may be known in the work which you do.

While the feet are being signed:

Receive the sign of the cross on your feet,
that you may walk in the way of Christ.

[The final signing would be done in **RITE TWO**]

INTERCESSIONS FOR THE CATECHUMENS:

You may use these or similar intercessions.

Presider:

These catechumens, who are our brothers and sisters, have already traveled a long road. We rejoice with them in the gentle guidance of GOID who has brought them to this da. let us pray that they may press onwards, until they come to share fully in our way of life;

Minister: That God our Father may reveal his Christ to them more and more with every passing day, we pray to the Lord..... Lord hear our prayer.

Minister: That they may undertake with generous hearts and souls whatever GOD may ask of them, we pray to the Lord...

Minister: That they may have our sincere and unfailing support every step of the way, we pray to the Lord....

Minister: that they may find in our community compelling signs of unity and generous love, we pray to the Lord...

Minister: That their hearts and ours may become more responsive to the needs of others, we pray to the Lord...

Minister: That in due time, they may be found worthy to receive the baptism of new birth and renewal in the Holy Spirit, we pray to the Lord...

PRAYER OVER THE CATCHUMENS

[With hands outstretched]

Presider: Almighty God, source of all creation,
you have made us in your image.
Welcome with love those who come before you today.
They have listened among us to the word of Christ;
by its power renew them
and by your grace fashion them,
so that in due time they may assume the full likeness of Christ
Who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen

DISMISSAL

These or similar words can be used:

Presider:

Catechumens, go in peace, and may the Lord remain with you always.

All:

Thanks be to God.

OR

Presider:

My dear friends, this community now sends you forth to reflect more deeply upon the word of GOD which you have shared with us. Be assured of our loving support and prayers for you. We look forward to the day when you will share fully in the Lord's Table.