

WHO BELONGS IN THE CATECHUMENATE?

1) List of various groups that are addressed by the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults:

THEY BELONG IN THE CATECHUMENATE:

A. Unbaptized Adult Converts (RCIA Part I):

Unbaptized adults are normally led through the full catechumenate described in Part I of the rite. The combined duration of the catechumenate period and the period of purification and enlightenment is expected to be twelve months or more (NCCB Statutes no. 6). Although a shorter period of time may be pastorally acceptable for certain individuals, parishes should set a standard of twelve months or more, and take care not to create the expectation that a shorter period of preparation will usually be sufficient. In exceptional cases, an abbreviated catechumenate (RCIA Part II, chapter 2) may be used with the bishop's permission (RCIA no. 331, NCCB Statutes no. 20). In danger of death, the sacraments can be celebrated immediately (RCIA Part II, chapter 3; see also the Pastoral Care of the Sick, chapter 8). These adults receive the three sacraments of initiation together at one time, normally at the Easter Vigil celebration.

B. Unbaptized Children of Catechetical Age (RCIA Part II, chapter 1):

Unbaptized children of catechetical age are normally accepted into a catechumenate for children, catechized in a way that is appropriate for their age level, celebrate a penitential rite (scrutiny) or rites, and receive the three sacraments of initiation together at one time (RCIA Part II, chapter 1). In exceptional cases and in danger of death, the same options outlined above for adults apply also to children of catechetical age.

C. Baptized Catholic but Uncatechized Adults Preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist (RCIA Part II, chapter 4):

Baptized but uncatechized (Catholic) adults preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist are so similar to the unbaptized in their catechetical status that the rite permits them to participate in most of the full process of formation outlined in RCIA Part I (see RCIA Part II, chapter 4). They are called candidates, not catechumens (NCCB Statutes no. 2). They are never referred to as converts (NCCB Statutes no. 2). Clear distinctions between catechumens and candidates must always be kept in the celebration of the rites (NCCB Statutes no. 31). In the Archdiocese of New York, it is highly recommended that they are confirmed and given first Communion at any Mass during the Easter Season. For pastoral reasons such candidates may complete their sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil (RCIA no. 409).

- The sacrament of Penance is celebrated with baptized candidates at a time prior to and distinct from the celebration of Confirmation and Eucharist (NCCB Statutes no. 27).

D. Baptized Christian (Non-Catholic) Candidates for Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church (RCIA Part II, chapter 5):

Baptized Christian (Non-Catholic) adults and children candidates for Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church who are not described in item C above, are normally received into the Catholic Church at any Sunday Eucharist throughout the liturgical year (NCCB Statutes no. 32), at which they make their profession of faith, are confirmed and receive Communion. For pastoral reasons such candidates may have their reception, Confirmation and Eucharist take place at the Easter Vigil (NCCB Statutes no. 35).

- The sacrament of Penance is celebrated with baptized candidates at a time prior to and distinct from the celebration of Confirmation and Eucharist (NCCB Statutes no. 36).