

Who Ministers in the Catechumenate (RCIA)?

1. The Community

The community is the primary minister of the catechumenate. RCIA no. 9 describes this ministry in detail. Consistent effort should be made to enable the parish community to be aware of and undertake their responsibility for the new life that God is giving the Church through its converts. The people of the parish should pray for the catechumens and candidates, socialize with them, and give them good example of the Christian life. The ongoing ministry of preaching and catechesis in the parish should build up the sense of the faithful that it is important and necessary for the community to care for catechumens and candidates in the process of initiation.

2. The Catechumenate (RCIA) Director or Coordinator

It is expected that in addition to the pastor there is one person who is responsible for overseeing the work of the catechumenate in the parish. This person may be called the Catechumenate Director, or the Catechumenate Coordinator. A person in this position should have experience working in the catechumenate, as well as appropriate educational preparation for this ministry. The director or coordinator is responsible for working with the pastor and the catechumenate team to see that the ministries of the catechumenate are carried out, and that the norms and directives of the rite are observed. The director or coordinator also insures that the archdiocesan norms and directives are carried out. The director or coordinator arranges for the team's training and ongoing development, and serves as contact person for the Archdiocese.

3. Catechists

The catechist in the catechumenate must have a thorough knowledge of and love for the teachings of the Church, as well as the practical skills necessary to work effectively with adults and/or children. Catechists who work with adults should understand the principles of adult learning, and those who work with children should apply pedagogical skills that are appropriate to the age group of the children. Because the catechumenate is intimately bound up with the liturgical life of the Church, and draws substantially on the scriptures proclaimed in the Sunday assembly, catechists in the catechumenate need to be solidly grounded in good principles of liturgy and scriptural interpretation, as well as theology, morality, spirituality, and so on.

4. Sponsors and Godparents

Any fully initiated and practicing adult Catholic who is willing to assist in the process of initiation and is able to set a good example of the life of faith may be a sponsor for a catechumen. The sponsor's role is described in RCIA no. 10. The godparent of a catechumen should also assist in the initiation process and set a good example. The godparent's role is described in RCIA no. 11. The godparent must be a fully initiated Catholic in good standing. The same person usually fills the roles of sponsor and godparent, although two different people may fill them.

- Having a spouse or fiancé serve as a sponsor, though permissible, is not generally recommended. It is better to recruit a member of the parish who will enlarge the circle of support for the catechumen or candidate, rather than to rely on a spouse or fiancé who by nature of their relationship already has a central but different role in the person's life.

The sponsor of a candidate accompanies the candidate through the entire process of initiation, and assists in all the liturgical rites with the candidate. (No "new" or additional godparents are permitted, since the candidates are already baptized.)

Core Ministries in the **Parish Catechumenate (RCIA) Team:**

- Director / Coordinator of the Catechumenate (RCIA)
- Catechist / Facilitator
- Sponsor / Godparent
- Liturgy / Music
- Hospitality
- Spiritual Director
- Priest Celebrant