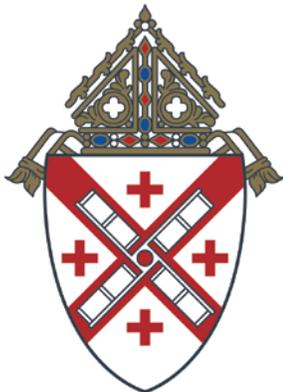


**Guidelines
For the
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
In the
Archdiocese of New York**



**ARCHDIOCESE
OF NEW YORK**

The Catechumenate Guidelines Committee

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PART ONE: LITURGICAL AND CANONICAL STATUTES

CHAPTER ONE: CHRISTIAN INITIATION - AN INTRODUCTION

1. Who Should Use These Liturgical and Canonical Statutes

These statutes have been written to provide catechumenate directors / coordinators and pastors in the Archdiocese of New York with information and guidance on practical questions about the Christian initiation of adults and children of catechetical age.

These statutes are not written for catechumens, candidates, or inquirers. Other resources better serve their needs. Although the responsibility for the Christian initiation of adults belongs to all the baptized (RCIA no. 9), pastors and catechumenate directors / coordinators are charged with a special responsibility to see to it that the liturgical, catechetical and pastoral norms of the catechumenate and the Church laws governing it are carried out. In order to do this with pastoral sensitivity, directors / coordinators and pastors must understand the spirit of the rite, be fully conversant with its particular directives, and attend to the particular needs of those seeking initiation. No directives can substitute for experience and pastoral training. But it is our hope that these norms will articulate a standard of practice for the catechumenate in the Archdiocese of New York. In this way, our practical decisions in various circumstances may be based on a firm and common foundation.

2. Initiation into the Christian Life: An Overview

Christian initiation is not only a matter of intellectual assent to the teachings of the Church, but is an incorporation into a living community of faith, represented by the local church. The process of initiation described in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults reflects this ecclesial reality, and should be followed in all parishes of the Archdiocese of New York.

Christian initiation prepares individuals to live a Christian life. Reception of the sacraments therefore must be accompanied by conversion that is moral, spiritual, intellectual, and affective. It is for this reason that the Code of Canon Law not only requires that before an adult is baptized he or she must be admitted to the catechumenate, led through its various stages (Canon 851.1) and sufficiently instructed (Canon 865.1), but also that he or she must be tested in the Christian life by means of the catechumenate (Canon 865.1), and exhorted to have sorrow for personal sins (Canon 865.1).

Cultivation of the practice of prayer, doing good works, and taking an active part in the community life and mission of the Church are not auxiliary but are essential elements of the formation offered by the catechumenate (RCIA no. 75). The catechumenate provides converts with catechesis, training in the Christian way of life, and companions and mentors who will help them on their journey of faith (sponsors, godparents, catechists, and other members of the community). The Code of Canon Law affirms that "Through instruction and an apprenticeship in the Christian life catechumens are suitably to be initiated into the mystery of salvation and introduced to the life of faith, liturgy, charity of the people of God, and the apostolate." (Canon 788.2)

The liturgical rites of the catechumenate are essential elements of Christian initiation. They gradually incorporate the candidates into the full sacramental life of the Church, and are the means of grace, which enable them to live as Christians in the world. The rites should be celebrated in the midst of the community, and according to the norms set forth in the RCIA.

Implementing the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* constitutes a substantial opportunity for ongoing catechetical and liturgical formation of clergy and parishioners alike. Serious and consistent effort should be made to implement it fully in all the parishes of the Archdiocese of New York.

3. Two Models of Christian Initiation

Within the life of the Church at present, the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* represents one of two alternative patterns for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation. These two patterns may be summarized as follows:

- A. Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist celebrated together, preceded by a catechumenate of considerable duration (at least twelve months, see National Statutes no. 6), which includes rites appropriate to each of its stages, and followed by a period of mystagogy.
- B. Infant Baptism, followed by Confirmation and Eucharist some time after the baptized child has reached the age of reason. (In this pattern, the sacrament of Penance, though not a sacrament of initiation is administered before the Eucharist.) Each of these sacraments is preceded by its own proper catechesis.

Each of these patterns—in whole or in part—is appropriate to different groups seeking initiation and is governed by distinct norms and directives.

- A. The first pattern is used for adults and children of catechetical age, and is described in detail by the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*.
- B. The second pattern is used for infants of Catholic parents, and is described in detail by the Rite of Baptism for Children, the Rite of Confirmation, and local norms concerning the reception of first Eucharist.

It is important to understand that each of these patterns has a different history and its own legitimate existence in the Church today. Much confusion can result if we try to collapse these two patterns into one, or to interpret one using the rules of the other. In both patterns of initiation, and indeed in all cases, the sacraments are integrally related to one another, and through them God brings about his work of salvation in the Church. Although there are many different categories of persons who seek initiation into the Church today, and several ways of initiating them, a basic unity underlies all these practices. "There is one Lord, one faith, and one Baptism; one God who is Father of all, who is over all, and works through all, and is in all." (Ephesians 4:5-6)

4. Unity and Order of the Sacraments

Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist were celebrated together in the early Church. After the Baptismal washing and anointing of the whole body (usually by deacons or presbyters), the bishop anointed the forehead with chrism. The new Christians were then welcomed into the assembly for participation in the Eucharist. This sequence has been preserved to the present day in the liturgy of the Eastern Churches. As recently as 2007, Pope Benedict XVI reaffirmed the importance of the unity of the three sacraments of Christian initiation. (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 17-19)

In the West, the sequence of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist remained almost entirely intact until the twentieth century. While the sacraments were separated in time, the sequence remained the same. Baptism was separated from both Confirmation and Eucharist by a period of about ten years. In 1910 Pope Pius X mandated that children be welcomed to the table by the age of seven, but no mention was made of when Confirmation should be celebrated. The result was that the order of the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist was inverted in many parts of the world. (One should note however that the practice of celebrating Confirmation before Communion was maintained in some places, such as parts of Latin America. The Code of Canon Law also has consistently referred to the sacraments of initiation in their traditional order.)

In 1971, the new *Rite of Confirmation* reiterated the traditional order: "The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and finally are sustained by the food of eternal life in the Eucharist." The whole process of initiation culminates in the celebration of the Eucharist. The ongoing life of faith is then continually nourished on the sacrament of the Eucharist.

The *Apostolic Constitution on Confirmation* stresses that:

. . . Confirmation is so closely linked with the holy Eucharist that the faithful, after being signed by holy Baptism and Confirmation, are incorporated fully into the body of Christ by participation in the Eucharist.

In 1972, the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, 206- 207, gave further support to this sequence, as did the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994, 1997), 1233, the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997), 91, and the revised *National Directory for Catechesis* (2005), 36.

The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* states the purpose of celebrating the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation together, in this way:

The conjunction of the two celebrations [Baptism and Confirmation] signifies the unity of the paschal mystery, the close link between the mission of the Son and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the connection between the two sacraments through which the Son and the Holy Spirit come with the Father to those who are baptized. (RCIA no. 215)

The celebration of the Eucharist that follows, then, is the event in which “. . . the newly baptized reach the culminating point in their Christian initiation.” (RCIA no. 216) This sequence—Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist—is followed both in the initiation of adults and in the initiation of children of catechetical age.

5. A Summary of How Various Groups are addressed by the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

These statutes are concerned with issues and questions pertaining to the initiatory pattern described in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The needs of several distinct groups of persons are addressed in this rite. The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* includes the norms and all the ritual celebrations of initiation for the following groups:

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 at once (RCIA Part II, chapter 3; see also the Pastoral Care of the Sick, chapter 8).

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 but Uncatechized Adults (Catholic or Non-Catholic) Preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist (RCIA Part II, chapter 4):

Baptized but uncatechized adults (Catholic or Non-Catholic) 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). Such candidates would not usually receive the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil, but at another time. Typically, this will take place on another Sunday during the Easter season.

- Baptized but uncatechized children of catechetical age are also in some cases addressed by this portion of the rite (see no. 19C of these Guidelines).
- 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).
- For information on the faculty of administering Confirmation to these candidates, see no. 16 of these Guidelines.

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

Baptized but catechized Christian (Non-Catholic) 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 a Sunday Eucharist

(NCCB Statutes no. 32), at which they make a profession of faith, are confirmed (with very few exceptions), and receive Communion.

6. Who Belongs in a Process Other Than the Catechumenate

The catechumenate is a process of initiation and conversion centered on the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Its steps and periods are designed for the welfare of catechumens and candidates proper, whose progress in faith it is meant to serve. Although its principles and structure may give inspiration to other processes and programs in the Church, the catechumenate itself must maintain a clear identity, and should not be asked to take on tasks for which it was not intended.

The implementation of the catechumenate comes at a time when the Church is increasingly aware of the pastoral and catechetical needs of many of its members. These needs are real and important, but should be addressed by other means.

- A. **Fully initiated Alienated Catholics** who are interested in exploring the possibility of a return to the Church and the practice of their faith do not belong in a catechumenate. Their experiences of the Church, their questions, and their pastoral needs are different from those of catechumens and candidates, and require a different pastoral response on the part of the Church.
- B. **Fully initiated Adult Catholics Seeking Updating** or a deeper knowledge of their faith belong in a parish adult faith formation program or a faith renewal process, not the catechumenate. Adult faith formation programs should be available through the local parish. If Catholics who want to deepen their faith are also interested in becoming involved in the catechumenate through a particular ministry, such as hospitality or sponsorship that is another matter and should be decided based on the person's gifts and desire to serve.
- C. **Adult Catholics Seeking Confirmation Only** belong, not in the catechumenate, but in a program of preparation for the reception of Confirmation. Although these adults may have received only a rudimentary catechesis during their Catholic upbringing, they are nonetheless different from the "Baptized but Uncatechized Adults" who have received no Christian formation, and typically have never participated in the Eucharist. Normally adults seeking Confirmation only should receive an appropriate catechesis and be confirmed by the bishop.

Because of the variety of ages at which the sacrament of Confirmation is administered in the Church at present, and because of the mobility of our society, an increasing number of young Catholics "fall through the cracks" of the sacramental system and reach adulthood without having been confirmed. Their lack of Confirmation frequently goes unnoticed until they prepare for marriage. When large numbers of unconfirmed Catholics seeking marriage are introduced into the catechumenate, they alter the focus of the process and create time pressures that are not appropriate for a conversion journey. Therefore it is especially important that the needs of such candidates be considered separately.

The norms outlined above describe the general expectations of the Archdiocese. Individual cases may arise in which a pastoral decision to include in a catechumenate someone who falls into one of these categories may be the best solution available at the time. Pastors and catechumenate directors should use their judgment in such special cases, keeping in mind the general concerns outlined above.

7. The Ritual Book

The revised Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults was first published in 1972 for the universal Church. The first approved English translation appeared in 1974. The edition published in 1988 for the dioceses of the United States is authoritative for our country, however, and replaces all previous editions. It contains explanatory material concerning each of the periods of the initiation process as well as all of the rites. It is an indispensable guide for every catechumenate director and pastor.

A Spanish translation of the 1988 version specifically for use in the dioceses of the United States is also available. In Spanish-speaking communities this edition should be used in preference to the one published by the Episcopal conference of Spain. The National Statutes for the Catechumenate are included as an appendix in both the English and the Spanish versions of the RCIA. They are binding in all the dioceses of the USA.

Communities in the dioceses of the United States that worship in languages other than English or Spanish are not thereby exempt from initiating adults according to the norms and rites contained in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. Pastors of such communities should obtain translations of the rite from their community's country of origin, and follow the NCCB national statutes contained in the English edition for use in the dioceses of the United States. In situations where the Episcopal conference of the country of origin has not translated the Rite, consult the Archdiocesan catechumenate director.

The ritual book has only one proper title in English: *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The process of initiation may be called by several different names however, such as adult Baptism, Christian initiation, the catechumenate, and the order or rite of Christian initiation of adults.

CHAPTER TWO: GENERAL PATTERNS FOR ADULTS

8. Nomenclature

During the precatechumenate, both the unbaptized and those who are baptized but uncatechized may be called inquirers. During the catechumenate period, the unbaptized are called catechumens and the baptized are called candidates. During the period of purification and enlightenment, the unbaptized are called the elect, and the baptized are called candidates. During the period of mystagogy, the newly baptized are called neophytes, which is a Greek word that means "the newly-planted." Those who have been received into the full communion of the Catholic Church may be called the newly received. Those who have completed their Christian initiation with the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist may be called the newly confirmed.

9. The Period of Evangelization or Precatechumenate

A. The Initial Interview (Conversation)

Someone on the catechumenate team should interview each inquirer. The person who conducts the initial interview need not be a priest, but should be thoroughly familiar with the initiation process and able to put the inquirer at ease. The initial interview should be warm and welcoming. It should take place early in the process but does not have to be the first introduction to the community.

The interviewer should have a basic knowledge of the Church's marriage laws, should questions about marriage arise. But the interviewer need not be versed in canon law, and should not make any evaluation of the marriage situation in the interview. If appropriate, the inquirer may be referred to the pastor or member of the pastoral staff who is qualified to pursue the resolution of marriage questions. The person conducting the interview should also attend the meetings of the precatechumenate, so that he or she can introduce the inquirer to others in the group.

The purpose of the initial interview (conversation) is three-fold:

- I. To welcome and put the inquirer at ease - Welcome will be conveyed by conducting the meeting in a comfortable setting, by the warmth of the interviewer, and by the interviewer's use of good listening skills.
- II. To find out the inquirer's background - The information needed will include:
 - a. Religious Background: To what religion, if any, does the inquirer belong? Has the inquirer ever been baptized? When and in what Church?
 - b. Catechetical Background: Has the inquirer received any religious education? What are the sources of his or her understanding of the Catholic faith?
 - c. Marital History: Is the inquirer presently married? Are there any previous marriages of either the inquirer or the inquirer's spouse?
 - d. Motivations and Expectations: Why has the inquirer come forward at this time? What is he or she hoping to find?

The Initiation Questionnaire (see Part III) can begin to be used at this time. The interviewer, not the inquirer, fills out the questionnaire. Based on the information gathered at the initial interview, several important questions can begin to be addressed by the catechumenate team, such as:

- What does the church need to provide for a full formation?
- Who might be an appropriate sponsor?
- What religious issues might be important here, given the inquirer's background?
- Will the inquirer need to speak to a qualified member of the parish staff about any marriage issues sometime during the precatechumenate?

- III. To provide information and answer questions - Information provided to the inquirer should include the time and place of the meetings of the precatechumenate, and a general description of the process. Any questions that can be answered on the spot should be answered. Long discussions should be deferred to the group meetings.

B. Group Meetings of the Precatechumenate

Group meetings are essential to the precatechumenate and should include some members of the parish as well as the inquirers themselves and a catechist. If the inquirer brings a sponsor, the sponsor should attend the meetings. Sponsors may also be found from among the parishioners who take part in the precatechumenate group meetings.

These meetings should be informal and flexible. Although their structure and the tools used to conduct them may vary, the meetings should always take place in a setting, which conveys hospitality, and in them the inquirers should be encouraged to share their stories and questions. This sharing is of the first importance. It not only establishes trust within the group but also uncovers the needs and faith questions of the inquirers.

The goal of the precatechumenate is evangelization. Inquirers should hear the good news proclaimed both in the central stories of scripture and in the witness of the faithful who take part in the process. The precatechumenate process also must invite those participating to discover, express, and cultivate the faith that is already present in their own hearts.

The time frame of the precatechumenate will vary from person to person and from year to year. It takes time to become acquainted with believers, to get to know what it means to be a Catholic, and to hear the good news in one's own life situation. A time limit should not be set in advance, and individuals should not be urged to make a hasty decision about whether or not to continue. Ideally, the precatechumenate group meets year-round, so that any time an inquirer comes forward there is a group to receive that person. A year-round precatechumenate also ensures that inquirers may pursue the inquiry at their own pace. If the group does not meet year-round, some definite provisions should be made for individuals who do not conform to the schedule.

C. Discernment for the Rite of Acceptance (and Welcome)

Several weeks before the parish celebrates the Rite of Acceptance (or the Rite of Welcome, for the baptized candidates), there should be another interview with each inquirer. The purpose of this interview is to discern whether the inquirer is ready to proceed to the next period of the process. The criteria for discernment are found in the rite (RCIA no. 42).

If the Initiation Questionnaire (see Part III, Chapter 4) has not yet been completed, it should be filled out at this time. The interviewer, not the inquirer, fills out the initiation questionnaire.

Inquirers with unresolved marriage cases may be admitted to the catechumenate, but their initiation cannot be completed until the marriage questions are resolved. To avoid any misunderstanding or disappointment later, the inquirer must be informed of this clearly before the Rite of Acceptance (or Welcome) is celebrated. The inquirer's sponsor should also be informed. At this point the question of who will sponsor each inquirer should be discussed. If no suitable sponsors have been found, the rite should be delayed until each candidate has a sponsor.

10. The Rite of Acceptance (and Welcome)

This transition may be celebrated at any time of the year. There is no basis for the popular misconception that the beginning of Advent is either the required or the most desirable time for celebrating the Rite of Acceptance.

The Rite of Acceptance (and/or Welcome) may be celebrated more than once during the liturgical year--perhaps as many as three times, as groups of inquirers in the precatechumenate become ready to celebrate it (RCIA no. 18). It may be celebrated in the context of Sunday Mass, or at some other time when the faithful gather. If it is not celebrated at Sunday Mass, every effort should be made to see that the people of the parish attend and give their support (see RCIA no. 45). The Rite of Acceptance is never celebrated privately (note RCIA no. 41).

If there are baptized as well as unbaptized inquirers who are ready to make this transition, the combined rite may be used (RCIA no. 505 ff). Clear distinctions should be maintained between the baptized and the unbaptized in the celebration of the combined rite. Alternatively, the Rite of Acceptance and the Rite of Welcome may be celebrated separately.

11. The Period of the Catechumenate

The catechumenate period is the lengthiest period of the whole initiation process. "The length of the catechumenate period will depend on the grace of God and on various circumstances . . . Nothing, therefore, can be settled a priori [that is, beforehand]. The time spent in the catechumenate should be long enough—several years if necessary—for the conversion and faith of the catechumens to become strong." (RCIA no. 76). In the dioceses of the United States the catechumenate period is to be at least one full liturgical year.

The USCCB National Statutes state that this period should extend from Easter to Easter (see National Statutes no. 6). Preferably it should begin before Lent in one year and extend until Easter of the following year.

A. Formation During the Period of the Catechumenate

The four ways in which the catechumenate period brings to maturity the initial faith that is manifested in the Rite of Acceptance and Welcome are: (1) catechesis, (2) liturgical rites, (3) community life, and (4) apostolic works (RCIA no. 75).

Experience has shown that the Word of God proclaimed in the Sunday assembly is the most effective basis for weekly catechesis in the catechumenate. The lectionary readings not only contain material for instruction, but they also foster prayer and formation in the common liturgical life of the faithful.

Participation in the liturgy of the Word at Sunday Mass is an integral part of the catechumenate. After the Liturgy of the Word at Sunday Mass, the catechumens are kindly dismissed, together with a catechist, to reflect on the Word they have just heard. After the dismissal catechesis, a longer catechetical session follows, either on Sunday or sometime during the week, in which particular issues are explored in depth and the Church's tradition may be presented more fully. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and other resources can be helpful to catechists in preparing for these sessions.

With the help of the sponsor, the catechumen or candidate should be introduced to other members of the parish community, and take part in parish activities to the extent that they are able. The development of the catechumens' and candidates' active participation in the mission of the Church should not be deferred until after their sacramental initiation, but should begin during the catechumenate period, under the guidance of the sponsor. Catechumens and candidates should be encouraged to share their newfound faith with others.

B. Rites Celebrated During the Period of the Catechumenate

Minor rites are available for use during the catechumenate period, and should be employed according to the directions in the ritual book. The Minor Rites are: Celebrations of the Word, Minor Exorcisms, Blessings, and Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens. The Presentations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer may also be anticipated during the period of the Catechumenate.

In addition to the Liturgy of the Word at Sunday Mass, special Celebrations of the Word of God should be held for the catechumens (RCIA no. 82) and candidates (RCIA no. 406). Celebrations of the Word should provide a context of prayer for catechetical meetings as well (RCIA no. 84).

Minor Exorcisms and Blessings are celebrated in order to purify and strengthen the catechumens day by day. The Blessings (RCIA no. 95 ff.) may not be celebrated at the end of the Liturgy of the Word at Sunday Mass (see the Book of Blessings, no. 28). The Celebrations of the Word at which the Minor Exorcisms and Blessings are to be celebrated are those held especially for catechumens (see RCIA no. 82, 84, 89). Only a priest or deacon may anoint with the oil of catechumens (RCIA no. 98, 103). Because of its close connection with Baptism, this anointing is reserved for catechumens, and may not be celebrated with the baptized candidates.

The Presentations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer may be anticipated during the catechumenate period, so that greater attention and prominence may be given to the handing on of these texts (RCIA no. 104). When they are anticipated, they may be accompanied by the Ephphetha rite, according to the provisions of the rite (see RCIA no. 105, including footnote 1).

C. Discernment for the Rite of Election (and Call to Continuing Conversion)

This final discernment of the progress of each catechumen and candidate should be deeper and broader in its consultation than the one that took place before the Rite of Acceptance. Those who by means of this discernment are admitted to the period of purification and enlightenment which will culminate with the reception of the sacraments of initiation.

"This deliberation is carried out by the priests, deacons, and catechists involved in the formation of the catechumens, and by the godparents and representatives of the local community." (RCIA no. 122) Groups of catechumens and candidates may even be consulted. The catechumenate team therefore should set aside sufficient time to undertake this deliberation seriously. The criteria for this discernment can be found in RCIA no. 120. These criteria may be supplemented by a careful review of RCIA no. 75, which indicates the ways in which conversion is expected to have occurred during the catechumenate period, and by RCIA no. 131, which summarizes the results of the discernment process.

The Archdiocese asks that a preliminary list of those who will receive the sacraments at Easter be sent in to the Catechumenate Director of the Archdiocese of New York in advance, to assist in planning for the Archdiocesan Rite of Election. It is understood that names may be deleted from this preliminary list as the actual discernment progresses, but no new names may be added. More specific instructions are sent to the parish catechumenate director and pastor in the information packet concerning the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

12. The Rite of Sending

This rite, which takes place in the parish, is the occasion for the parish community to express its approval of the elect, and for the godparents to offer more personal testimony about them. In it the parish offers support to the elect, and sends them to the archdiocesan celebration of election at which their names will be enrolled, and the bishop will formally admit them to the period of purification and enlightenment. The rite fulfills a similar function for the candidates, who will go to the archdiocesan celebration to be recognized by the bishop and receive their call to continuing conversion.

In the Archdiocese of New York, the catechumens sign the book of the elect in the Archdiocesan Rite of Election, not the Rite of Sending. Candidates do not sign the book of the elect. It should be explained to them that the book of the elect symbolizes the enrollment for Baptism. Although listed as an optional celebration, the Rite of Sending is highly recommended. It must be celebrated at some time prior to the archdiocesan celebration of election.

13. The Archdiocesan Rite of Election

This rite is presided over by the Archbishop or his delegate on the First Sunday of Lent. It is celebrated in the cathedral for those who will be baptized, confirmed and receive Eucharist at Easter. Godparents take part in this celebration along with the elect. To ensure the smooth functioning of this large liturgical event, parish catechumenate directors and pastors are asked to provide the Director of the Catechumenate of the Archdiocese of New York with registration information. Packets of information, with registration materials, are sent to each parish catechumenate director / coordinator and pastor.

If a catechumen is not able to attend the Archdiocesan Rite of Election, because of illness or some other grave reason, the Rite of Election must still be celebrated in the parish.

14. The Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion

In the Archdiocese of New York, this rite is celebrated at the parish by the pastor or priest delegate for all baptized RCIA Candidates that are ready to complete their sacraments of Christian initiation. It should be celebrated at an appropriate time in the beginning of Lent. A sponsor should accompany each candidate. (RCIA no. 448).

15. The Period of Purification and Enlightenment

This period coincides with Lent. It should have the character of a time of retreat for those preparing for Baptism, for the candidates who will complete their initiation or enter the full communion of the Catholic Church, and for the faithful who will commemorate their own Baptism at Easter.

The centerpiece of this period of prayerful preparation is the celebration of the Scrutinies. Although the candidates will not be the subjects of the Scrutinies, catechesis for both the elect and the candidates during this period should be related to the celebration of the Scrutinies.

A. The Scrutinies

Normally the Scrutinies are celebrated on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of the Lenten season. At the masses at which the Scrutinies are celebrated, the Year A readings must be used (RCIA no. 146). If the Scrutinies are celebrated at one of several parish masses, the other parish masses may also use the Year A readings for these Sundays (see the Sunday Lectionary).

Candidates are not the subjects of the Scrutinies, but they should participate in them with the assembly so as to pray for the elect, and should reflect with the elect on their meaning. In place of the Scrutinies, candidates celebrate a similar rite called a "Penitential Rite" (RCIA no. 459 ff.) on the second Sunday of Lent (RCIA no. 462) or at some other time when the community gathers.

B. The Presentations

The presentations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer may be celebrated at a Lenten weekday Mass during the week following the first Scrutiny and the third Scrutiny, respectively. The readings proper to these celebrations take precedence over the weekday readings. If the presentations are anticipated during the catechumenate period, the readings proper to them should be used. If the presentations have been anticipated during the catechumenate period, they are omitted during the period of purification and enlightenment.

C. The Preparation Rites

Those who will receive the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil are to be advised to refrain on Holy Saturday from their usual activities, engage in prayer and reflection, and if possible, to fast (RCIA no. 185). The preparation rites should assist this process of prayer and reflection. There are several rites to choose from (see RCIA no. 185 ff), and proper readings are provided for each choice.

16. The Sacraments of Initiation

The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist normally are conferred on the elect at the Easter Vigil. The Easter Vigil must be a worthy celebration in every way, especially in its full use of symbol, both in the celebration of the sacraments themselves, and in the preceding services of light and word. Baptism by immersion is preferred as "the fuller and more expressive sign of the sacrament" (National Statutes no. 17), and should be encouraged. The provision for partial immersion (i.e. immersion of the candidate's head), should be taken into account.

The elect do not carry lighted tapers as the baptized do during the service of light, because Christ in Baptism has not yet enlightened them. The candidates however do carry lighted tapers, because they are baptized.

After the elect are baptized, they may be clothed in a baptismal garment. Traditionally, this is a simple, white, flowing garment that clothes the whole person. The alb is a baptismal garment. Full-length, poncho-like garments are sometimes used. The baptismal garment should not be decorated with "symbols." It is itself the symbol, and anything added to it will detract from its effectiveness. Stoles are not baptismal garments.

Priests who exercise a pastoral office in the Archdiocese of New York are automatically granted faculties by the Archbishop to baptize adults and children of catechetical age, and they receive from the law the faculty to confirm them (Canon 883.2).

When the elect are baptized, the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist must be conferred immediately thereafter, unless a grave reason prevents it (Canon 866, cf. RCIA no. 215, NCCB Statutes no. 14). The absence of a bishop does not constitute a grave reason (cf. NCCB Statutes no. 13-14); nor does the personal preference of the celebrant or candidate for Baptism. A grave reason may arise in emergency situations or missionary situations where the minister of Baptism is a deacon, or the oil of chrism is not available.

It is not permissible at one celebration for one priest to baptize and another to confirm. The faculty to confirm is only granted to the one who baptizes. For the same reason, it is not permissible for a deacon to baptize and a priest to confirm. If there are a large number to be confirmed, the presiding minister may invite other priests to assist him in the anointing (RCIA no. 14). When an ordinary minister of Baptism is available, a layperson is not authorized to baptize. Nor is it appropriate for anyone except the baptizing minister to question the catechumen for the renunciation of sin and the profession of faith prior to Baptism.

Priests who exercise a pastoral office in the Archdiocese of New York are automatically granted faculties by the Archbishop to receive into the full communion of the Catholic Church adults and children of catechetical age, and they receive from the law the faculty to confirm them (Canon 883.2). Those who have the faculty to confirm are bound to exercise it (Canon 885.2; see also NCCB Statutes no. 35).

In the Archdiocese of New York, the faculty to confirm those candidates in the catechumenate who were baptized as Catholics and who have not celebrated Confirmation and Eucharist has been given to pastors, administrators, and to any priest that a pastor or administrator sub-delegates, under the following conditions:

- to be used only for baptized Catholics who have fully participated in the process and catechesis of the 1988 Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, or its equivalent,
- when the celebration of Confirmation takes place during a Eucharistic Liturgy either at the Easter Vigil, or at celebrations held during the Easter season, including Pentecost Sunday.

If any of these conditions are not met, then the faculty to confirm must be specifically requested from the Vicar General.

Since questions of validity may arise when the Sacrament of Confirmation is administered by a priest, (Canon 882), a notation should be made in the Parish Confirmation Register that the faculty to confirm under the above-listed conditions is expressly delegated, i.e., "*delegatus*."

The neophytes and the other newly initiated may take up the gifts at the preparation of the altar. It is desirable that the neophytes, together with their godparents, parents, spouses, and catechists, receive communion under both kinds (RCIA 243). Where the

occasion suggests, it is appropriate that all the faithful also be admitted to Holy Communion under both kinds (Missale Romanum, 65).

17. The Period of Post baptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy

The period of post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogy refers to the fifty days of the Easter season, concluding at Pentecost (RCIA no. 249), and also to the first year of the neophyte's life as a baptized Christian (NCCB Statutes no. 24), concluding on the anniversary of the neophyte's initiation (RCIA no. 250). The mystagogy that takes place during this first year is also called "extended mystagogy." Extended mystagogy includes monthly meetings (NCCB Statutes no. 24). Seasonal gatherings may also be appropriate. The neophytes and their godparents should participate as a group in the Sunday masses of the Easter season, and special places in the assembly should be reserved for them (RCIA no. 248). These "neophytes' masses," are the main setting of the mystagogy (RCIA no. 247). Candidates whose initiation was completed in the catechumenate participate in this period in the same way as the newly baptized. Their sponsors should support them and participate in the neophytes' masses with them.

In the Archdiocese of New York, customarily the Cardinal Archbishop gathers with the neophytes for a Neophyte Mass during the Easter season.

18. Notes about Teenagers

Although teenagers of the age of fourteen and older are to be initiated according to the norms for adults, it is an open pastoral question whether these young people should form their own group or be included with the adults. This decision should be based on the maturity and the pastoral needs of the teenagers involved. If a separate group is formed, it should follow the catechetical and ritual pattern set by the steps and periods of the rite and be linked with the adult group whenever possible.

Teenagers need adults to mentor them, as well as peer to support them. An adult should usually take the role of the sponsor, and the teenager's peers should be involved as a community of support and encouragement.

CHAPTER THREE: CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE

19. Who Are the Children?

Because children of catechetical age are considered, for purposes of Christian initiation, to be adults (canon no. 852.1), they are included in the norms set forth by the RCIA. Children of catechetical age are old enough to hear and understand the call of Christ, and to respond with faith at their own age level. Consequently, their initiation is not based, as is the Baptism of infants, entirely on the commitment of the parents and the faith of the Church, but requires a genuine faith response on the part of the child. At the same time, the child is still dependent on his or her parents, and will need continued nurturing in faith. Children of catechetical age are those who have reached the age of reason, which is generally considered to be age seven. The category of "children of catechetical age" extends up to the fourteenth year.

The initiation of young people fourteen years and older should follow the rite for adults in every respect (Part I for the unbaptized, and Part II, Chapters 2-5 for the baptized), rather than following the adaptations for children that are found in Part II, Chapter 1 of the RCIA.

A. Unbaptized Children of Catechetical Age

This is the primary group of children involved in the catechumenate. Part II, Chapter 1 of the rite, addresses their special concerns. They should without exception participate fully in the children's catechumenate, and celebrate all three of the sacraments of initiation together. (See RCIA no. 305, NCCB Statutes nos. 18–19, and canons 852.1 and 866.)

B. Baptized Non-Catholic Children Seeking Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church

This group is included in the norms set forth by the RCIA. Their situation is addressed in part by the description of the catechumenate for children found in Part II Chapter 1 of the rite. Their situation is also addressed in Part II, Chapter 5 of the rite, which concerns the reception of baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church. The priest who presides at the reception of these young candidates receives from the law the faculty to confirm them (canon 883.2), and must use it (canon 885.2; see also NCCB Statutes no. 13). Therefore, children who are received into the Church and who have not been validly confirmed must be confirmed at the time of their reception.

The process of formation for these baptized children may be carried on in the catechumenate, with the clear understanding that they are candidates, not catechumens. Just as the participation of baptized adults is allowed in the adult catechumenate for pastoral reasons, so the participation of baptized children is allowed in the children's catechumenate. If the parents of these children are also being baptized or received into the Church, their children should be received at the same time, depending on their readiness.

C. Baptized but Uncatechized Catholic Children of Catechetical Age

These children should be included in the catechumenate, if this is thought to be pastorally prudent and desirable, because their situation parallels the circumstances of baptized but uncatechized adults (RCIA Part II, Chapter 4). Alternatively, they may be catechized with their Catholic peers and celebrate the sacraments with them. The fact that they may be out of the grade level at which the sacraments are usually celebrated should not be seen as a barrier to receiving Confirmation and Eucharist with children of other ages, since the celebration of these sacraments should always be based on readiness as described in the rite, and not on chronological age or grade level.

Those children who have received their formation in a catechumenate are to be confirmed in the same liturgy in which they celebrate the Eucharist (RCIA no. 409). Permission for a priest to confirm baptized but uncatechized Catholic children of catechetical age who have taken part in a catechumenate follows the same regulations concerning baptized but uncatechized adults (see number 16 of these Guidelines, cf. also number 5).

D. Children Younger Than Catechetical Age

Unbaptized children younger than catechetical age are to be baptized according to the Rite of Baptism for Children, which is the rite used for infant Baptism. Their Confirmation and Eucharist are then deferred until a later age, according to parish and archdiocesan policy.

Baptized children younger than catechetical age whose parents are being received into the full communion of the Catholic Church do not participate in a catechumenate. They are received on the same date as their parents. Although no rite is required of them, these children should be warmly welcomed and may be recognized in various ways at the celebration of their parents' reception. Notation of their reception and record of the date and place of their Baptism should be made in the parish baptismal register at the time of their parents' reception. They then receive the remaining sacraments of initiation with their Catholic peers.

Baptized children younger than catechetical age who were baptized in a non-Catholic Church, and whose parents are Catholics, are considered to be received into the Church at the time of their reception of first communion, with no additional rites required of them. The date of their first reception of Eucharist should be noted in the parish baptismal register as their date of reception, and record of the date and place of their Baptism should also be entered. They should participate with their Catholic peers in catechesis and the sacraments, and should not take part in a catechumenate.

20. The Relationship of the Rite for Adults to the Rite for Children

The catechumenate as it is described for an adult is the model for the catechumenate for children. What is contained in the section devoted to children (RCIA Part II, Chapter 1) is a set of adaptations to render the adult catechumenate better suited to the pastoral needs of children. It does not constitute a different model. Whenever the introductory material in the chapter on children does not provide enough information or guidance concerning the periods or the rites, the reader should refer to the corresponding section of the rite for adults for more information.

From apostolic times, families have come to the grace of Baptism together. Families that are undergoing initiation should, as far as possible, celebrate the rites of the catechumenate and the sacraments of initiation together as a family, provided that each member is ready for the next stage of the process. When there is a mixed group of children and adults, the adult rite is followed, with appropriate adaptations made for the children who are participating.

The catechumenate for adults and children is a single reality. Adults and children may always participate in the rites together. When the children's parents are not part of the catechumenate for adults, however, the parish may celebrate the rites for them in gatherings separate from the adult catechumenate, where the fullest use of the adaptations for children may be exercised. This is a pastoral decision.

21. Special Needs of Children

The Christian initiation of children of catechetical age must therefore take special care to evaluate the following elements of the child's conversion, so that the child's special needs may be met:

- A. What is the attitude of the child's family? Is there a commitment on their part to help the child grow in faith and in the community of the Church? Can this commitment be developed?
- B. What is the child's relationship to the parish community and to Sunday worship? Is there an on-going relationship? Can such a relationship be developed?
- C. Has the child expressed faith in Christ? Does the child want to belong to the Church? Can a personal relationship to Christ and to the Church be developed?

22. Role of the Family

The catechumenate for children should incorporate ways for the family of the young catechumen to be involved in the process of initiation. The catechumenate director or pastor should meet with the family and enlist their active support from the beginning of the process. A commitment to bring the child to the catechumenate gatherings is essential. The director or pastor should make clear what the process involves for the child, and that the family is expected to participate with the child in the rites and the catechetical process.

Families today take a great many different forms, due to the prevalence of divorce and remarriage in our society. The family structure also varies according to culture. Families today are frequently subject to economic pressures, and experience time pressures due to both parents working outside the home. The Church should take these factors into account in determining reasonable expectations for family involvement.

For children to be initiated into the Church, it is always necessary to have the consent of their parents, or at least one of them, or those who lawfully take their place. Children who have the consent but not the active involvement of their parents in the process of initiation should not on that account alone be barred from the process. If these children have grandparents, responsible older siblings or other key family members who will support their conversion consistently; these factors should also be taken into account.

23. Role of Catholic Peers

The support of the child's community of peers and their families will strengthen the young catechumen's experience of the Church and of conversion, and should be sought whenever possible. The special role of a "peer companion" does not substitute for an adult sponsor, but can provide a helpful support for the catechumen and should be used judiciously.

If the child is enrolled in a Catholic school or catechetical program, the child's classmates should be made aware of the special journey of the child and invited to participate in liturgical celebrations of the catechumenate for their classmate whenever appropriate. This may take the form of participation in one of the major rites held in the parish Church, or one of the minor rites, which may be celebrated with a group of children in a school or catechetical center.

24. The Shape of the Catechumenate for Children

Initiation is a gradual process for children as well as for adults, and care should be taken to allow enough time for the children to grow secure in their new faith and develop bonds to the Church community. Frequently, the time needed by the children is longer than the time needed by adults.

The catechumenate begins with an inquiry period that leads up to the celebration of the Rite of Acceptance (or the combined Rite of Acceptance and Welcome). The inquiry period, or precatechumenate, should introduce the child to ingredients basic to our faith: who is God, who is Jesus, what is the Church.

After the Rite of Acceptance, the process continues with the catechumenate period, which is linked with the Sunday Liturgy of the Word. This period includes dismissals and minor rites, as does the catechumenate period for adults. The child's experience of worship is very important to this period. Special attention should be given to cultivating a sense of wonder at God's presence in the central symbols of our faith: light, water, oil, bread and wine, and the people gathered to worship. Catechesis about what it means to follow Jesus in our daily lives springs naturally from the lectionary readings Sunday by Sunday in the course of the liturgical year. At least one full year should be devoted to the catechumenate period. The pastor, catechumenate director, catechists, and other members of the team should carry out a discernment of the children's progress and readiness for the sacraments of initiation. Those who are truly prepared then pass into the Lenten period of purification and enlightenment.

The Rite of Election is considered an optional rite for children. That does not mean that each child may decide whether or not to attend. Rather, the pastor and catechumenate director, in consultation with the catechumenate team, should decide whether and how the children who will receive the sacraments at Easter should participate. Careful consideration should be given to this question as a matter of parish policy.

Children may participate in the archdiocesan Rite of Election. If the children do not participate with the adults at the archdiocesan celebration, another option is to hold a Rite of Election for children in the parish. A third option is to omit this rite altogether.

During the period of purification and enlightenment, one or two Scrutinies should be celebrated with the children. These celebrations may be linked with services for the reception of the sacrament of reconciliation for the children's Catholic peers. Those children taking part in the catechumenate who are already baptized should be prepared to receive the sacrament of penance during this time.

The sacraments of initiation are celebrated for the children at the Easter Vigil, unless some serious reason prevents it, such as inordinately large numbers. Children whose parents are being initiated at the Easter Vigil should be included with their family members, provided they are ready.

If, for pastoral reasons, any of the children are not initiated at the Easter Vigil, they should receive the three sacraments of initiation as soon as possible thereafter, at the Mass of Easter day or a Sunday Mass during the Easter season.

Children should share in the joy of the fifty days of the Easter season, and be visible to the community at Sunday Mass with their godparents and the other neophytes, in a special place reserved for them in the assembly. They may attend the neophytes' celebration with the bishop, and should have a special celebration to mark the end of the Easter season, at Pentecost. For children, extended mystagogical catechesis will be provided by their ongoing participation in the parish religious education (catechetical / faith formation) program, and ongoing mystagogia through the parish catechumenate.

25. Adapting the Rites for Children

When celebrating the rites for children, the ritual for children should be used and adapted to the needs of the particular children who will participate. Those who are involved in preparing the rites, especially catechists whose background in liturgy is not extensive, should take great care in adapting the rites. The following principles should be kept in mind:

- The adaptations for children offered by the rite should be read and understood in light of Part I of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*.
- It is the goal of any adaptation to preserve and highlight the central symbols of the rites.
- It is necessary to avoid adding additional layers of symbolism to the symbols that are already in the rite.
- It is necessary to understand the structures of the rites, and keep those structures intact.
- The rite as it appears in the ritual book is always our guide and reference point.

When children celebrate the rites together with adult catechumens, the adult rite is followed, with some adaptations for the children. In order to accomplish this successfully, the celebrant should prepare carefully, perhaps using a text prepared specially that combines the adult rite with the adaptations for children.

When combining adaptations for children with the adult rite, in celebrations where both adults and children will participate, the following guidance is offered:

- A. In the Rite of Acceptance, the opening dialogue with the children should ask the questions that appear in the rite for children, whereas the dialogue with the adults would ask the questions that appear in the adult rite.
- B. The Rite of Acceptance for children incorporates a special affirmation by the parents. This affirmation by the parents should be retained when the children celebrate with the adults.
- C. The Scrutinies for children, unlike those for adults, may be combined with an anointing with the oil of catechumens. If the Scrutinies for children are celebrated with the adults however, the anointing should be celebrated at another time.

Further assistance in adapting the rites may be obtained from the Archdiocesan Director of the Catechumenate.

CHAPTER FOUR: MINISTRIES

26. 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.

Efforts to enable parishioners to explore their faith in parish groups (such as RENEW or other programs, as well as materials related to the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Plan on Adult Faith Formation, "Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us"), and to evangelize (such as materials relating to the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Plan "Go and Make Disciples") can promote awareness of the crucial role of the faithful in giving witness and nurturing conversion.

With or without special programs, 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.

27. The Catechumenate 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.

28. 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.

The catechumenate catechist has a special responsibility to show forth the Church's respect for non-Christian religions, and to exemplify and foster an ecumenical spirit within the catechumenate group.

At the same time, the catechist should affirm and clearly explain the distinctive witness of Catholicism, and the unique gift of Christ, so that indifferentism or relativism--which is the enemy of true ecumenism and interfaith dialogue--may be avoided. A commitment to ongoing formation is essential for the catechist.

Special presentations, workshops and institutes sponsored by the Archdiocese and by surrounding dioceses can help the catechist to grow in this ministry. For information about what offerings are available, contact the Director of the Catechumenate of the Archdiocese of New York.

29. Sponsors and Godparents

A. For Adults

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 an adult catechumen. The sponsor's role is described in RCIA no. 10. The godparent of an adult 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.

- We highly recommend that new sponsors and godparents be sought for each new catechumen and candidate, so that more people of the parish will take part in this important ministry.
- 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.)

B. For Children of Catechetical Age

Parents normally present their children at the Rite of Acceptance. If they are unable to do so, a sponsor may take their place (RCIA no. 260). The godparents of unbaptized children in the catechumenate whose role is analogous to that of the godparents for adults (RCIA no. 11) must not be their parents. These godparents should be involved during the catechumenate process, and will accompany the child at the Rite of Election and at the Sacraments of Initiation. Parents normally present their baptized children at the Rite of Welcome, as they do at the Rite of Acceptance. If they are unable to do so, a sponsor may take their place. The sacramental sponsors of children who are baptized candidates in the catechumenate may not be their parents. These sponsors should take part in the entire catechumenate process and the appropriate liturgical rites.

Formation of Sponsors and Godparents

The catechumenate director or coordinator is responsible to see to it that sponsors and godparents receive adequate formation for these important ministries. When working with children of catechetical age, formation of parents is also important. To qualify for these the ministries of sponsor and godparent, adults should be willing to assist in the process of the child's initiation, be present at the rites, and be able to provide a good example and witness to the faith. They must be fully initiated adult Catholics in good standing.

30. Team Development

From year to year the catechumenate team will need to incorporate new members and provide ongoing education for those who continue to minister in the catechumenate process. Some of the orientation of new team members and ongoing education of experienced team members can be accomplished at the parish under the guidance of the catechumenate director and the pastor. Participation in workshops, seminars, and courses offered by the Archdiocese and by other organizations, will also provide valuable help to team members. The parish should encourage its team members to grow in their ministry and support their participation in outside events and workshops that will enrich their understanding of the RCIA.

Regular evaluation should be part of the work of the catechumenate team. All team members, including the director, should evaluate the process, their own work, and the functioning of the team. Evaluations are for the purpose of affirming those aspects of the ministry that have worked well, and discovering what improvements can be made in the future.

The catechumenate team may also become involved with assessing the needs of the parish in the area of Christian initiation, religious education, and liturgy. Because of their work with the Christian initiation of adults, their observations will be valuable to the pastor and the parish council in planning parish initiatives such as small communities, family catechesis, evangelization, and outreach to the alienated.

CHAPTER FIVE: SPECIAL CASES

31. Use of the Short Form of Adult Initiation

This adaptation may only be used by permission of the archbishop (RCIA no. 331). Permission will not be granted on the basis of change of residence from parish to parish or diocese to diocese (NCCB Statutes no. 20). The use of this form is to be on the most limited basis possible, and will be restricted to extraordinary cases (NCCB Statutes no. 20).

32. Christian Initiations of Persons in Danger of Death

Priests and chaplains should become familiar with the form of initiation to be used in the case of a person in danger of death. Information regarding this can be found in part II in chapter 3 of the RCIA and in chapter 8 of the Pastoral Care of the Sick. Once the sacraments are celebrated, the celebrant must take responsibility for (A) finding out whether or not the person recovered from the dangerous illness, and (B) if the person recovered, seeing that the person is placed in a functioning catechumenate.

When a person initiated in this way recovers, and is returned to complete the catechumenate under the direction of the parish catechumenate director, the norms for the formation of baptized but uncatechized adults should be followed (RCIA no. 371).

33. Persons with Disabilities

The community of the Church should warmly welcome persons with disabilities seeking initiation, and their participation in the catechumenate and in the sacraments of initiation encouraged to the fullest degree possible. Persons of the age of fourteen and older are to be treated as adults, regardless of their disability, and initiated according to the norms for adults, with appropriate adaptations.

Although the support and active involvement of the family is desirable, and should be sought, no one should be barred from the initiation process because of a perceived lack of faith or Church involvement on the part of their parents or guardians. The permission and basic cooperation of parents or guardians should be sufficient. Often the parents of persons with disabilities have experienced hurt and rejection in the Church, and will only be drawn back to the Church by a long and patient process. The first priority and responsibility of the minister of Christian initiation is to respond generously to the desire of the one who is seeking the sacraments of initiation. A resurgence of interest in Church involvement may very well develop in the family during the course of the initiation process.

Because one of the goals of the catechumenate is to integrate the person into the community of the Church, persons with disabilities should as much as possible take part in the catechumenate process with others, rather than as a separate group. If a separate group is deemed necessary however, participation in the common liturgical rites, and a common course of catechesis (adapted to the participants' abilities) will help to underline the fact that they journey together with the other catechumens and candidates. Contact with parishioners through sponsors and involvement in parish life should also be fostered, so that they will be fully accepted by the parish community.

Special efforts by the parish may be called forth to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities in the catechumenate. Since disabilities and individuals vary widely, what is needed will also vary. A special catechist may be needed to present the catechesis in simple form to adults with mental retardation. A sign language interpreter may be needed for deaf persons. Braille or media resources might be needed for those who are blind. Transportation to the catechetical sessions or the Sunday liturgy may be needed. A person who has difficulty speaking may need special help to participate fully in discussions, and so on. The catechumenate team should develop sensitivity to the needs of persons with disabilities, and creatively find ways to meet these needs from the resources of the parish. The Archdiocesan Director of the Catechumenate can provide guidance for catechumenate teams in such cases.

34. Illiteracy

The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* does not presume literacy of any participants but the ministers of the rite (note that even at the Rite of Election, a catechist may write the names as the elect call them out). Catechumenate directors and pastors should take

care to insure that adults who cannot read are nonetheless welcomed and included in the process of initiation. Media resources can help meet the needs of such individuals, but sensitivity on the part of catechists is especially important.

35. Schools and Institutions

A. Catholic Elementary and High Schools

After the initial period of inquiry, the catechumenate must always be closely connected to the Sunday worship of the Church. Enrollment in a Catholic school therefore is never sufficient in and of itself to fulfill the requirements of the catechumenate. While the religious education provided in a school is a source of valuable ongoing formation, catechesis for initiation normally is separate from regular, ongoing religious education and is specially suited to the particular goals of the initiation process.

Catholic school personnel nonetheless have an important role to play in facilitating the faith journey of the students who are catechumens and candidates enrolled in the parish catechumenate. They should understand and respect the special status of catechumens and candidates, who do not yet participate in the Eucharist, but who are the focus of the Church's special care and may receive blessings and other sacramentals. They should encourage the Catholic peers of the catechumens and candidates to support and affirm the faith journey of the young catechumens and candidates in their midst. Although the major rites (Acceptance, Election, Scrutiny, and Initiation Sacraments) always take place at parish liturgies, some of the minor rites (such as blessings, minor exorcisms, anointing, the presentation of the creed and the presentation of the Lord's prayer) may be celebrated with the catechumens' classmates in various settings where school prayer is conducted. These rites should be planned collaboratively with the catechumenate director, to assure continuity and avoid duplication. The Catholic school principal has a special responsibility to identify needs and encourage families to pursue the initiation process through the parish catechumenate.

B. Colleges and Universities

Catholic campus ministry personnel may conduct a catechumenate adapted to the needs of resident students and commuting students and faculty families who wish to participate regularly in the worship and community life of the campus ministry. Out of pastoral concern for the ongoing Church life of student catechumens and candidates, campus ministers should foster a connection with an appropriate community where the student will participate in Church life outside of the school year and after graduation.

None of the regular features of the catechumenate are to be abridged because of the institutional setting. The academic calendar however may impose a necessity for adapting the time frame of the catechumenate, and even the time of the celebration of the rites. The records of Baptisms, receptions, Confirmations and celebrations of first Eucharist are to be kept in the registers of the parish, which corresponds to the campus ministry where the sacraments were celebrated.

C. Nursing Homes, Residences, Correctional Facilities

Those charged with the pastoral care of people in nursing homes, residences, or correctional facilities should fully adapt the catechumenate to the needs of those who seek initiation in these settings. They should observe, however, the norms contained in these statutes for obtaining faculties and permissions required by the rite. Those catechumens and candidates who will only be in these institutions for a short period of time, or who begin their catechumenate near the end of their stay, should be helped to find a parish catechumenate in which to continue their formation after they are released.

CHAPTER SIX: PARTICULAR QUESTIONS

Section A: Marriages, Annulments, and Convalidations

36. Collaboration

Pastors and catechumenate directors or coordinators should work closely together to assure that the marriage situations arising in the catechumenate are addressed in a pastorally sensitive and expeditious manner.

Pastors should inform catechumenate directors or coordinators of the progress of annulment cases, and consult them concerning the needs and progress of those going through the process of initiation. Catechumenate directors should see to it that the need for a Church annulment is identified, and the process of seeking it begun, before the Rite of Acceptance and Welcome is celebrated. In planning for the marriage of catechumens or the convalidation of marriages for those who are in the catechumenate, the catechumenate director's advice and cooperation should be sought by the parish priests and deacons, so that the formation process can be integrated with these important events.

37. Rules Concerning the Marriage of Catechumens

Once a person has become a catechumen (the result of celebrating the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens), that person is a member of the household of faith and has certain rights in the Church. Among them is the right to be married according to the Catholic Rite of Marriage. When a catechumen is married, the language of the rite is adapted to reflect the fact that the catechumen is unbaptized. The marriage should take place outside Mass, following the order described in Chapter III of the Rite of Marriage. When a catechumen marries an unbaptized person, no dispensation is needed. When a catechumen marries a baptized person, a dispensation is needed for disparity of cult.

38. Divorced and Remarried Persons Seeking the Sacraments of Initiation

As people enter into the Christian initiation process, they begin examining many aspects of their lives, including their marriage relationship. In forming people for the Christian way of life, the Church is concerned about bringing all aspects of life into relationship with Christ, including marriage. The scriptures, including permanence and indissolubility, proclaim specific qualities of marriage. St. Paul proclaimed marriage a mystery that manifests the love of Christ for each of us (Ephesians 5:32). The Catechism of the Catholic Church refers to matrimony as a sacrament of the communion of the Church (CCC 1624). Those who minister to divorced persons seeking initiation should keep in mind these pastoral and theological concerns.

A person who is divorced but not remarried may celebrate the sacraments of initiation. That person should clearly understand however that the Church considers him or her bound by the bond of the previous marriage and that a future marriage would not be possible unless the previous marriage was dissolved by death or by a Church annulment. The time of preparation for initiation may be an appropriate time to present their case so they can know of their freedom to enter into a future marriage within the Church.

Anyone who was married and divorced, and is now remarried, must seek an annulment of the prior marriage or marriages. (N.B. If the ex-spouse has obtained a Church annulment, that annulment frees both parties.) Also, anyone who is married to someone who was previously married and divorced cannot be admitted to the sacraments unless the spouse obtains an annulment of the previous marriage.

An annulment is a declaration by the Church that the marriage in question was not binding in the eyes of the Church. It affirms that a required intention or capability was not present. An annulment (declaration of nullity) does not deny that a real relationship existed, or implies that the relationship was entered with ill will or moral fault. It is a statement, which says that the Church has judged that the relationship lacked at least one of the elements considered essential for a binding union. An annulment has absolutely no effect on the legitimacy of children.

The person seeking initiation should understand that the process of getting an annulment is not the same as getting a divorce. Civil

law views marriage as a contract that can be broken or dissolved. The Church understands marriage to be a covenant relationship that is indissoluble. A covenant relationship demands more than the establishment of a contract. Only when the parties involved bring certain intentions and capabilities to the relationship is the covenant real and genuine.

It is necessary to begin the annulment process as soon as the inquirer's intention to join the Church becomes clear, that is, some time before the Rite of Acceptance and Welcome. It is possible to receive someone into the catechumenate while their marriage case is pending, but it will not be possible for them to enter into the final period of purification and enlightenment, nor to receive the sacraments, nor to celebrate the rite of reception, until such time as the marriage situation is resolved.

Any questions about the annulment process (or anyone needing to begin the process) should be referred to the clergy or a qualified member of the pastoral staff of the parish, or to the Tribunal office.

39. Types of Annulment Cases

Those who minister to people in the process of Christian initiation should always refer annulment cases to those who are fully professionally competent to assess them. Initiation ministers should take care not to make promises or predictions concerning the time frame or outcome of the annulment process. It is helpful however to know some of the possible reasons for granting a Church annulment.

Some possible reasons for an annulment are:

1. lack of ability or intention to enter into a lifelong commitment
2. lack of ability or intention to be faithful to one's spouse
3. lack of freedom in entering into the marriage
4. intention against having children
5. lack of complete commitment (placing conditions or restrictions on the commitment)
6. lack of ability or intention to form a relationship based on love and respect for the good of one another
7. psychological, mental, or emotional illness or personality disorders

There are certain cases, in addition to those listed above, in which an annulment may be obtained.

A. Lack of form

This type of annulment can only be sought in cases where one or both of the parties are Catholic. It is based on the rule that in order for a Roman Catholic's marriage to be considered valid and binding in the Roman Catholic Church, that person must be married before a Roman Catholic priest or deacon and two witnesses, or who have obtained a dispensation from the form of marriage. If the person was married in any other way, such as a civil ceremony or a non-Catholic ceremony for which no dispensation was obtained, the marriage can be declared null and void.

B. Privilege cases

There are two types of privilege cases, both dealing with either one or two unbaptized people:

I. Pauline Privilege: The Pauline Privilege comes from an ecclesiastical interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:12-15, and applies to the marriage of two unbaptized persons, one of whom is later baptized. The first marriage of the now-baptized party can be dissolved with this privilege only when the baptized party enters into a new marriage. For example: A Catholic who wishes to marry a convert to the faith who was previously unbaptized and married to another unbaptized person could invoke the use of the Pauline Privilege. This can be handled at the local level (i.e. the diocesan level). It does not have to be sent to Rome.

II. Privilege of the Faith (Petrine Privilege): This is the dissolution of a legitimate marriage of a baptized party with an unbaptized party granted only by the Pope in favor of the faith. It pertains only to those cases in which one of the parties remained unbaptized during the entire marriage. For further information, contact the marriage tribunal.

40. Time Frame for the Annulment Process

Much depends on the cooperation of the parties involved, and how quickly testimony is given and collected, but twelve to eighteen months can be expected.

41. Convalidation of Marriages

Convalidation of an irregular marriage of a catechumen or a candidate should be completed before the sacraments of initiation are celebrated. One cannot enter into the full sacramental life of the Church unless one is completely free to receive the sacraments. It is pastorally advisable to convalidate the marriage as early in the process as possible.

If one party of the marriage does not want to be subjected to a convalidation ceremony, it is usually possible to obtain a radical sanation from the chancery, provided that both parties intend to remain faithful to the marriage bond. Ordinarily, the sanation involves a dispensation from any further public rite, and it effects a valid marriage between the parties (canons 1161-1165).

Section B: Funeral of a Catechumen

42. Funeral of a Catechumen

Once an unbaptized person has passed through the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, that person becomes "part of the household of Christ" (RCIA no. 47), and may receive blessings and sacramentals, and be married according to the Rite of Marriage. Catechumens may also be buried as Christians (RCIA no. 47). Within the funeral rites, catechumens are to be considered members of the Christian faithful (Canon 1183.1). The language of the Order of Christian Funerals, which refers to Baptism, is to be adapted.

Section C: Non-Catholic Baptisms, Conditional Baptism, Non-Catholic Confirmations

43. Criteria for Determining a Valid Non-Catholic Baptism

There are three criteria for determining that any Baptism is valid, whether Catholic or not. These are: the use of water, the use of the Trinitarian formula, and the intention to do what the Church does when it baptizes. If the ritual books of a non-Catholic Church or communion prescribe Baptism by water (either by immersion, or pouring, or sprinkling) and the Trinitarian formula, the only way that one can question the validity of a Baptism in such a Church or communion is to have reasonable proof that the minister did not use the proper matter or form or did not intend to baptize, or in the case of an adult recipient, that the proper intention was lacking in the one being baptized (Canon 869.2). Inability to obtain a baptismal certificate from the particular Church or communion in question does not in itself constitute reasonable proof that a Baptism was invalid. Ordinarily a certificate should be able to be obtained, but sometimes there are valid reasons why written records do not exist or have become unavailable. Each case should be considered individually, and the chancery should be consulted in doubtful cases. Preferably, the certificate of Baptism should be obtained before the Rite of Acceptance or Welcome. If, however, there is a doubt about the fact or validity of Baptism, and the doubt remains after serious investigation, Baptism may be conferred conditionally (Canon 869.1).

44. Conditional Baptism

Conditional Baptism must always be celebrated privately and with limited rites (NCCB Statutes no. 37). The doctrine of the sacrament of Baptism, and the reasons for the doubtful validity of the Baptism must be explained to the person before conditional Baptism is conferred (Canon 869.3).

45. Those Churches or Communions Whose Baptism Is Recognized as Valid by the Catholic Church

The Catholic Church regards as valid the Baptism of the following Churches or communions:

All Eastern Non-Catholic
Churches (see p. 35)
Adventist
African Methodist Episcopal
Amish
Assembly of God
Baptist
Evangelical United Brethren
Church of the Brethren
Church of God
Congregational Church
Disciples of Christ
Episcopal Church (Anglican)
Evangelical Churches
Liberal Catholic Church
Lutherans
Methodists
Old Catholics
Old Roman Catholics
Church of the Nazarene
Polish National Catholic Church
Presbyterian Church
Reformed Churches
United Church of Christ

46. Those Churches or Communions that Either Do Not Baptize or Do Not Have a Valid Baptism Recognized by the Catholic Church

Bohemian Free Thinkers
Christadelphians
Christian Science Church
Mormons*
Quakers
Salvation Army
Jehovah's Witnesses
Unitarians

For information about other Churches or communions, which are not listed here, contact the Chancery.

47. Non-Catholic Confirmations

The only non-Catholic Churches whose sacrament of Confirmation is accepted as valid by the Catholic Church are: the Eastern Non-Catholic Churches, the Polish National Catholic Church, and the Society of Pius X. All candidates from Christian Churches other than these must be confirmed when they are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

* Please note that Mormon baptism will, however, affect the disposition of marriage cases.

Section D. Eastern Non-Catholic Candidates

48. Definitions

A. Eastern Catholics

A Christian is a member, canonically, not of a rite but of a specific Church which follows in its worship a certain pattern of liturgy called a "rite." Thus in Catholicism there is a Latin Catholic Church, and Eastern Catholic Churches. They are all Catholic, but they follow different liturgical rites.

There are six families of liturgical rites in the Catholic Church. They are: Latin, Byzantine, Alexandrian, Antiochene, Chaldean, and Armenian.

At least twenty ritual Churches comprise the Catholic Church: Armenian, Bulgarian, Byelorussian, Chaldean, Coptic, Ethiopian, Greek-Melkite, Hellenic Byzantine Rite, Hungarian Greek Catholic, Italo-Greek and Albanian, Krizevsky (Yugoslavian, Croatian, Russine, Macedonian, Ukrainian), Latin, Malabar, Malankar, Maronite, Romanian, Russian, Ruthenian, Byzantine-Catholic USA, Slovak Greek Catholic, Syrian, and Ukrainian. Each of these Churches uses one of the rites that exist in the six families listed above.

Members of any of the Eastern Catholic Churches listed above who wish to become members of the Latin Church are not candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church, since they already belong to the Catholic Church. There are rules which govern the circumstances of their transfer of membership, however, which must be followed.

B. Eastern Non-Catholics

There are several groups of non-Catholic Eastern Churches. There are those Churches, which call themselves Orthodox (usually Byzantine Churches). There are other Churches, sometimes known as non-Chalcedonian Churches, which may or may not use the term Orthodox (such as the Coptic Church, the Syrian Jacobite Church, the Ethiopian Church and the Armenian Church). There is also the Church of the East, or Assyrian Church (which is Nestorian). None of these Churches is in union with Rome; they are non-Catholic Churches.

For information on the reception of candidates from Eastern non-Catholic Churches, see below: Rules Concerning Eastern Non-Catholics Becoming Catholic.

49. Rules Concerning Eastern Non-Catholics Becoming Catholic

Non-Catholic Christians, when they are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church, must become members of the ritual Church indicated by their Baptism. Thus, all Protestants must become members of the Latin Church. Someone who is Greek Orthodox must become a member of the Greek Catholic Church. A Syrian Orthodox person must become a member of the Syrian Catholic Church, etc. Exceptions constitute a transfer of rite, and require the permission of the Holy See. If such permission is necessary, it should be sought before any participation in the formation process of the catechumenate.

In the case of uncatechized Eastern non-Catholic candidates, if and when permission to join the Latin rite is granted, these candidates may participate in the formation process of the catechumenate, but not in its rites. Such candidates are received with a simple profession of faith, and no liturgical rite (RCIA no. 474). The simple profession of faith takes place before a priest, and the date should be recorded in the parish records as the date of their reception. For pastoral reasons, these candidates should be warmly welcomed by the parish community, and catechized in an appropriate way before their profession of faith. The Baptism and Confirmation of eastern non-Catholic Christians are considered valid by the Catholic Church and must not be repeated.

50. Notes Concerning Eastern Catholics Who Wish to Join the Latin Rite

These individuals are never a part of the catechumenate. They are already Catholic. Catholics, one and all, everywhere in the world should retain their own rite, cherish it and observe it. In special cases however, individuals, communities, and even regions have the right of recourse to the Holy See, which is the supreme arbiter of inter-ecclesial relations. The Holy See will itself or through other authorities provide for special needs in an ecumenical spirit by issuing timely norms, decrees, or rescripts (*Orientalium ecclesiarum* no. 4).

A transfer of rite normally requires permission of the Holy See, and should not be encouraged. Such a transfer is not to be treated under any circumstances as part of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. Information about this topic is included in these statutes for the orientation of the Catechumenate Director, who may be in the position of answering inquiries about this. Further information can be obtained by calling the chancery.

A child of parents who belong to the Latin Church becomes a member of the Latin Church by receiving Baptism in the Latin Church. If one of the parents does not belong to the Latin Church, and both parents agree that the child will be baptized in the Latin Church, the child may be baptized in the Latin Church and will belong to it because of being baptized in it. If the parents do not agree, the child is to be baptized in the ritual Church to which the father belongs (canon 111).

A similar provision is used in the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, (canon 29): "By virtue of baptism, a child who has not yet completed his fourteenth year of age is enrolled in the Church sui iuris of the Catholic father; or the Church sui iuris of the mother if only the mother is Catholic or if both parents by agreement freely request it, with due regard for particular law established by the Apostolic See." Anyone to be baptized who has completed the fourteenth year of age can freely choose to be baptized in any of the ritual Churches and in this case the person belongs to that Church which is chosen (canon 111).

After receiving Baptism, the following are enrolled in another ritual Church (canon 112):

- A. One who has obtained permission from the Holy See. (Anyone who does not fall into categories B or C below should contact the chancery to seek permission from the Holy See.)
- B. A spouse who declares at the time of marriage or during marriage that he or she is transferring to the ritual Church of the other spouse. When the marriage has ended, however, that person can freely return to the Church of their Baptism.
- C. Children under the age of fourteen, of parents who have legitimately transferred to another ritual Church. But when they reach the age of fourteen, they may return to the Church of their Baptism.

(From John Huels, *The Pastoral Companion to Canon Law* p. 28-29)

Section E: Record-Keeping

51. Initiation Questionnaire

In order to help the catechumenate director and the pastor to keep an orderly record of important facts about the catechumens and candidates throughout the initiation process, a model Initiation Questionnaire is provided in Part III. A minister of initiation, never by the catechumens or candidates themselves, should fill out the questionnaire.

52. Register of Catechumens

Since those unbaptized persons who are accepted into the order of catechumens have a standing in the Church, their names should be kept in a formal register, along with the names of their sponsors, the minister, the date, and the place of celebration (RCIA no. 46; see also Canon 788.1). The register of catechumens is not a ceremonial book. It is solely a record book. If for any reason someone who is enrolled in the catechumenate drops out and later returns for marriage, burial, or the resumption of their formation for Baptism, the register of catechumens provides a record of the person's status within the Church.

The names of the baptized candidates are not written in the register of catechumens, since they are not catechumens. Their status in the Church is determined by their Baptism, and the Church of their Baptism records this. For practical purposes, the catechumenate director's file of initiation questionnaires will keep a sufficient record of who is participating in the catechumenate as a candidate.

53. The Book of the Elect

The book of the elect is both a ceremonial book and a record book. It is used ceremonially when the catechumens sign it at the Rite of Election, and it is kept by the Archdiocese as a record of those who will approach the waters of Baptism at the Easter Vigil. The book also records the date of the celebration and the name of the Presider. The Presider does not sign the book during the rite. His name may be written in before or after the rite, by anyone, since it is not necessarily a signature, but simply a record of who presided at the rite.

If godparents are asked to sign the book of the elect along with the elect, it should be made clear which names are which. Both adults and children who are the elect may sign the book. A catechist or godparent may write the names of the elect if for any reason the elect cannot sign their names themselves. Candidates do not sign the book.

When for a serious reason, the proper delegation having been obtained from the bishop, the Rite of Election is celebrated in a parish (in addition to the cathedral celebration), the page which is signed by the elect in this additional celebration is transferred to the archdiocesan book of the elect afterwards.

PART TWO: CATECHETICAL GUIDELINES

CHAPTER ONE:

Catechetical Guidelines for the Period of the Precatechumenate

- Contents:
- 54. Introduction
 - 55. Pastoral Formation for the Precatechumenate
 - 56. Checklist for the Initiating Community
 - 57. Discernment – How do we know when the goals of this period have been accomplished?

54. Introduction

The catechetical guidelines for this period are organized according to the principles found in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. These principles are laid out in the first column. They are the guideposts for this period. The Precatechumenate period is normally year-round and ongoing. It is not keyed to the liturgical seasons. In the second column, **CORE CONTENT** has been identified in service to the goals listed in the first column. Paragraph numbers from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* have also been supplied as background for the core content. These paragraphs are to help the catechist understand the core content more completely. They are not for the inquirer. At this stage of the process, the emphasis is placed on evangelization and hospitality, not instruction.

Crucial biblical passages for this period, drawn from the Old and New Testaments, are given in the third column, entitled **SCRIPTURE**. Each is related to an element in the core content of the preceding column. By telling the “great stories” of the Christian tradition through these scripture passages, the community anchors its proclamation of the Good News in the narrative of salvation found in the Bible. When telling the stories contained in these sacred texts, the catechist also invites inquirers to make connections between their personal experience and our shared experience of life with God in Christ. At least one scripture passage under each of the twelve headings in the third column should be used at some point in the process. In instances where several passages have been offered, the catechist may make a selection. In the case of the parables, the use of several brief passages may be beneficial. Additional scripture texts may also be used, at the discretion of the catechist.

The **QUESTIONS** and searching of the individual inquirers gives shape to this period. The content that is needed and the questions that are to be explored therefore cannot all be charted in advance. The **ORDER** for best use of the content and scripture listed here will vary, and additional subjects and scripture passages may also be used. The catechist must remain flexible and responsive to the needs of inquirers. **PUBLISHED RESOURCES** can help the catechist design a process using these guidelines. The guidelines offer a minimum; they are not the sum total of what this period can be. They are a beginning and a starting point. A **CHECKLIST FOR THE INITIATING COMMUNITY** is provided next, to help the catechumenate team leaders keep in focus the many dimensions of pastoral care and outreach that are part of this period of the process, involving the whole community. A blank column for **NOTES** gives space to write down what has already been done in answer to each question on the checklist, and what needs further attention.

Finally, a quick summary of what to look for in the development of each inquirer is provided in the section called **DISCERNMENT**. This summary is based on the requirements found in the ritual text.

55. Pastoral Formation for the Precatechumenate

WHAT DOES THE RITE SAY?	CORE DOCTRINE	SCRIPTURE
<p>"It is a time of evangelization: faithfully and constantly the living God is proclaimed and Jesus Christ whom he has sent for the salvation of all"</p> <p><i>RCIA 36</i></p>	<p>Our God is a living God who holds in being the world he has created, and is present to us, his creatures. <i>40-41, 198, 290, 293, 295, 300-301</i></p> <p>God sent Jesus Christ for our salvation. Born of Mary, he is true God and true man. <i>422-423, 456-460, 463-464, 483, 519</i></p> <p>Jesus came proclaiming God's kingdom of justice, love, and peace. All people are called into that kingdom. <i>CCC 542-543, 546-547, 764</i></p> <p>Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Church continues the mission of Jesus. <i>CCC 142, 144, 153-155</i></p>	<p>Creation Genesis 1:1-2:3 Psalm 139:1-18 Psalm 148</p> <p>Mystery of the Incarnation John 1:1-5, 10-14, 16 Luke 1:26-38 1 John 4:9-12</p> <p>Parables of the Kingdom Matthew 13:31-32 Matthew 13:44-47 Luke 15:1-10</p> <p>Mystery of the Church Acts 2:43-47 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 2 Corinthians 5:17-20</p>
<p>"Thus, those who are not yet Christians, their hearts opened by the Holy Spirit, may believe and be freely converted to the Lord and commit themselves sincerely to him"</p> <p><i>RCIA 36</i></p>	<p>God calls a people. <i>CCC 30, 59-60, 220, 781</i></p> <p>God is ever faithful. <i>CCC 205-208, 211-214</i></p> <p>We are invited to share God's life and love by becoming followers of Jesus. <i>27, 158, 160, 733, 781</i></p> <p>God's invitation calls for a free response of faith and trust. <i>142, 144, 153-155</i></p>	<p>The Call of Abraham Genesis 12:1-4a</p> <p>The Burning Bush Exodus 3:1-8, 13-14</p> <p>The Call of the First Disciples Matthew 4:18-22 John 1:35-50</p> <p>The Storm at Sea Mark 4:35-41</p>
<p>"From evangelization, completed with the help of God, come the faith and initial conversion that cause a person to feel called away from sin and drawn into the mystery of God's love."</p> <p><i>RCIA 37</i></p>	<p>Our response to God's call entails conversion of heart and life. <i>CCC 545, 720, 1428, 2595, 2608</i></p> <p>Through prayer, we experience God's love for us, and draw closer to him. <i>CCC 2561-2564, 2567, 2591, 2613</i></p> <p>The power of God delivers us from evil and sin, and enables us to live a life that is holy and good. <i>CCC 1427, 1719, 1723, 1848, 2850</i></p> <p>Through his cross and resurrection, Jesus has overcome sin and death, and offers us life that never ends. <i>CCC 272, 420, 604-605, 654-655, 981, 2852</i></p>	<p>John the Baptist Luke 3:1-18</p> <p>Parables on Prayer Luke 11: 5-13 Luke 18: 1-8 Luke 18: 9-14</p> <p>The Crossing of Red Sea Exodus 14:15-31</p> <p>The Paschal Mystery John 11:25-27 Romans 6:3-5</p>

56. Checklist for the Initiating Community

WHAT DOES THE RITE SAY?	CHECKLIST	NOTES FOR PARISH IMPLEMENTATION
<p>"During this period, priests and deacons, catechists and other laypersons are to give the candidates a suitable explanation of the Gospel." RCIA 38</p>	<p>Has the content above been presented in such a way that the inquirers can understand what it means and why it is important?</p> <p>Have the inquirers been helped to make meaningful connections between the Good News and their everyday lives?</p> <p>Have the inquirers' questions about Catholic beliefs and practices been answered simply but adequately?</p>	
<p>"The candidates are to receive help and attention so that with a purified and clearer intention they may cooperate with God's grace." RCIA 38</p>	<p>Have the inquirers been invited to share their own personal stories with others during this period?</p> <p>Have the faithful listened to them attentively, and helped them to recognize the presence of God in their lives?</p>	
<p>"Opportunities should be provided for them to meet families and other groups of Christians." RCIA 38</p>	<p>Have the inquirers been invited to meet families and groups in the parish?</p>	
<p>"[The faithful] should show themselves ready to give the candidates evidence of the spirit of the Christian community and to welcome them into their homes, into personal conversation, and into community gatherings." RCIA 9</p>	<p>Does each inquirer have a suitable sponsor?</p> <p>Have the sponsors or prospective sponsors received an orientation to the process?</p> <p>Has the parish community as a whole been encouraged and equipped to assume their role in evangelization?</p>	

57. Discernment - How do we know when the goals of this period have been accomplished?

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults does not demand that an inquirer's faith and conversion be fully developed in order to pass into the next period. What is necessary is that "the beginnings of the spiritual life and the fundamentals of Christian teaching have taken root in the candidate." (RCIA 42).

Before the Rite of Acceptance can be celebrated therefore, **there must be evidence** of:

- first faith
- initial conversion
- the intention to change their lives
- the intention to enter into a relationship with God in Christ
- the first stirrings of repentance
- a start to the practice of calling on God in prayer
- a sense of the Church, and
- some experience of the company and spirit of Christians. (RCIA 42)

Pastors, with the help of sponsors, catechists, and deacons, "are responsible for judging the outward indications of such dispositions." (RCIA 43).

The catechumenate team should work together in the discernment process.

CHAPTER TWO

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58. Introduction

The **SCRIPTURE READINGS** of the Lectionary for Sunday Mass are the foundation for the catechumens' instruction week by week and should be fully integrated into the catechetical sessions. These readings are readily available in many printed resources such as hymnals, missalettes, and other books, and are not reproduced here.

Catechetical reflection on the Liturgy of the Word begins after the dismissal from Sunday Mass. This catechetical reflection is also called breaking open the Word or dismissal catechesis. There are a number of resources available to assist the catechist in carrying out dismissal catechesis. Here is a sample outline of what such a session might look like:

1. The catechumens go with their catechist to a room prepared for catechesis, keeping a prayerful atmosphere. Have chairs in a circle, with a focus table in the center, covered with a cloth of the liturgical color of the season. Reverently place a Lectionary or Bible on the table, along with a lighted candle, and say a brief prayer.
2. Gather the participants' first impressions of the Liturgy of the Word with questions such as: What did you notice? What stood out for you in today's celebration? Recall the season or feast being celebrated in the Liturgy on this day.
3. Re-read one of the readings proclaimed at the Liturgy.
4. Lead a discussion of the message of the reading, connecting the message to the entire Liturgy of the Word, and drawing insights from the homily as well. What is the meaning of today's Word for us as individuals, as a community? What is God saying to us and what is our response? The catechist helps the participants to understand the Word by providing Scripture background as needed.
5. Integrate the message, using questions such as: How are you affirmed and strengthened by today's celebration of the Word? What might be different in your everyday life if you take to heart what you have heard?
6. Conclude with prayer.

Catechesis does not end with the dismissal session, however. A longer catechetical session usually follows, either on the same day, or on a weekday. These longer sessions allow further exploration of Catholic doctrine and help catechumens to understand and embrace the Catholic way of life in its fullness.

The catechetical guidelines that follow pertain to this longer catechetical session. They are organized according to the **LITURGICAL SEASONS**. Because the rite directs that the catechumenate period should preferably extend from one entire liturgical year, beginning before Lent, the seasons are given here in the following order: Lent, Easter, Advent, Christmas, and Ordinary Time.

Catechumens are expected to experience at least one full cycle of the liturgical year, regardless of when they enter the process. Therefore these guidelines are cyclical, and can be used beginning in any season. If for a serious reason, (see RCIA 77), a shorter time frame than one year is followed, catechists are responsible nonetheless for conveying all the essential teachings listed in these guidelines.

Within each liturgical season, **CORE DOCTRINE** has been identified to help the catechist fulfill the mandate of the RCIA for a complete catechesis "accommodated to the liturgical year" (RCIA 78). The core content appears in the first column. The theological terms and proper names that appear in boldface type are part of the Catholic tradition and should be introduced to adult catechumens with appropriate explanations. Child catechumens do not need to master the theological terms, but should understand the concepts they name. The core doctrine represents a requirement that will provide basic understandings. The catechist may add more content, as circumstances suggest.

These guidelines also identify ways to foster the catechumen's experience of **COMMUNITY** (RCIA 75.2), prayer and participation in **LITURGICAL RITES** (RCIA 75.3), and engagement in **APOSTOLIC WORKS** (RCIA 75.4) during each season. Such participation and engagement will deepen and broaden the catechumens' understanding of the core content and provide the "full pastoral formation" (RCIA 75) required during the catechumenate period. The final three columns address these aspects of formation. The activities listed here may be expanded. They should also be adapted to suit specific circumstances and cultural realities.

Within each season, the catechist is responsible for planning how and in what **ORDER** the core doctrine will be taught. It is not necessary to reproduce exactly the order in which the material appears here.

The core doctrine for the longer liturgical seasons (Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Time) is presented in three-week **CLUSTERS**, with two major themes in each cluster. These themes can be used during *any year* of the Lectionary Cycle: A, B, or C. By assigning only two major themes to each three week cluster, the guidelines allow the catechist great flexibility to develop the material in a variety of ways, including further development of the themes which appear in the lectionary readings. They also allow the catechumenate team to integrate other aspects of formation into the process, for example by scheduling prayer experiences, community events, and apostolic activities as well as catechetical instruction.

The **METHOD** by which catechesis is carried out is of great importance. The catechesis is to be "filled with the spirit of the Gospel and enriched by local traditions" (RCIA 78). The culture and circumstances of the catechumens must always be taken into account. In order for the catechesis to be effective, adult-learning models must be used.

The Catechumenate Period begins with the celebration of the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens. The catechist should conduct a **MYSTAGOGICAL CATECHESIS** on this rite after it is celebrated, to assure that the catechumens gain the full benefit of the ritual and have an opportunity to deepen their grasp of its meaning. Such a catechesis might look like this:

1. Gather in prayer.
2. Recall what happened in the rite.
3. Invite the participants to name their experience: what touched them, impressed them, stayed with them from the celebration.
4. Identify the central signs and symbols of the rite (such as: cross, Word, threshold, community, promise, etc.)
5. Probe the theological meaning of the rite expressed through the signs: What was it saying about God, Christ, the Church, the catechumens?
6. Name the transition: we are in a new place because of having celebrated this rite. Inquirers have become catechumens. The community has taken responsibility and pledged its support to them. The Period of the Catechumenate has begun.

A number of **PUBLISHED RESOURCES** can assist the catechist in carrying out a plan of formation for the Catechumenate Period (see Part Three). When using published materials, the guidelines that follow can serve as a checklist.

59. Pastoral Formation for the Catechumenate Period

SEASON OF LENT: Lent 1 and 2

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
<p>God created humanity in a state of original justice. Because of the sin of our first parents however (original sin), human nature is wounded and inclined to commit personal sin. Yet God did not abandon us. Jesus, our Savior, was sent to redeem the human race from the tyranny of sin and the temptations of Satan. CCC 374–376, 384–421, 538–540, 1996–2002</p> <p>Each year the whole Church is called to renewal during the season of Lent—either in preparation for baptism or by the practice of penance. CCC 540, 1095, 1168–1169, 1229, 1232–33, 1248, 1434–1439, 2012–2016, 554–556</p>	<p>Invite the catechumens to share in experiences of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving with the parish during this season.</p> <p>Explain the fasting and abstinence regulations of the Catholic Church. (Consult the website of the USCCB for general information. For local questions, consult your pastor.)</p> <p>Have the sponsors share the spiritual practices they associate with Lenten renewal.</p>	<p>Have the catechumens participate in the Sunday liturgy of the Word, with dismissal, throughout this season.</p> <p>Introduce the catechumens to the practice of receiving ashes on Ash Wednesday. (Consult the Book of Blessings, chapter 52.)</p> <p>Reflect on the Penitential Rite at Sunday Mass.</p>	<p>Invite the catechumens to practice self-denial and sacrificial giving during this season. Participation in tangible efforts, such as Operation Rice Bowl, should be encouraged.</p> <p>Affirm the ways that the catechumens are already working to make the world a more just and loving place, and reflect on how the gospel calls forth our best efforts.</p>

SEASON OF LENT: Lent 3, 4, 5

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
<p>God, our loving Father, forgives us when we sin. He showed the depths of his love through Jesus, who gave his life on the cross, so that the human race could be reconciled to God. CCC 1846–1851, 601–605</p> <p>Our human response to God's merciful love is gratitude, joy, and showing mercy to others. We are also free to turn away from God's love however, to our</p>	<p>Introduce the catechumens to Lenten customs of the community.</p> <p>Pray the Stations of the Cross.</p>	<p>Attend a parish penance service.</p> <p>Celebrate a Minor Exorcism, using RCIA 94 C.</p>	<p>Encourage the catechumens to seek the forgiveness of someone they have offended.</p> <p>Invite the catechumens to work with others to actively promote reconciliation where it is needed in their local community.</p>

own detriment. CCC 1847, 2840, 2842– 2845, 1864, 2091			
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Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
Through his obedient suffering and death on the cross , Jesus gained for us an everlasting victory—the remission of our sins. CCC 559–560, 571–573, 595–623, 632–637	Invite the catechumens and sponsors to find ways to observe the spirit of Holy Week and keep the days of the Paschal Triduum sacred.	Participate in the procession with palms. Celebrate a Minor Exorcism, using RCIA 94, text G.	

EASTER SEASON: Easter 1, 2, 3

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
Jesus Christ is risen and is in our midst, bringing us peace. We believe in his resurrection . CCC 638–658, 272 The resurrection of Jesus gives us hope of our own bodily resurrection . His rising from the dead is our hope for eternal life, and resurrection on the last day. CCC 655–658, 988–1004	Share some ways that the community celebrates Easter in the home and in the parish. Invite the catechumens to learn about Catholic devotions to the saints.	Have catechumens participate in the Sunday liturgy of the Word, with dismissal, throughout this season. Celebrate a blessing of catechumens, using RCIA 97 D.	Discuss appropriate ways to share the joy of Easter with others, at home, in the workplace, and in one's social circle.

EASTER SEASON: Easter 4, 5, 6

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
The Church is a mystery of faith—the sign and instrument of our communion with God. There are four marks of the Church: it is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic . CCC 770–780, 811–870	Have the sponsors help the catechumens to locate the Creed in the parish hymnal or worship aide, and share how the Creed is a touchstone of unity for believers.	Reflect on the Rite of Sprinkling with blessed water at Sunday Mass (which may take place frequently during the Easter season).	Pray for Christian unity.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd , continually guides and cares for his Church. CCC 753–754, 874–879, 896, 900, 927, 938–939	Be sure the catechumens are acquainted with the pastor and members of the pastoral staff of the parish, and know the name of their bishop.		
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EASTER SEASON: Easter 7, Ascension, Pentecost

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
In the Ascension , Jesus returns to God's right hand, where he reigns forever. CCC 659–667 At Pentecost , Jesus sent us his Spirit, to unite and empower the Church for its mission. The Holy Spirit continues the work of Jesus. CCC 683–690, 731–747	Have the catechumens and their sponsors share the joy of the neophytes, for whom this is a day of special celebration.	Celebrate the Ascension by coming to the liturgy of the Word at the holy day Mass.	Encourage catechumens to invite others to pursue the journey of faith.

Trinity Sunday, The Body and Blood of Christ

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
There is one God in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Blessed Trinity is a central teaching of the Catholic faith. CCC 232, 234, 237, 262, 257–260, 2205 Christ is truly present in the Eucharist , under the forms of bread and wine. CCC 1373–1381, 1333–1336	Share some of the community's devotions to the Eucharist	Celebrate a Blessing (see RCIA 97), using the Trinitarian formula. Sing a hymn to the Trinity that is used at Sunday liturgy.	Encourage the catechumens to join in parish efforts to feed the hungry.

ADVENT SEASON

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
Out of love, God sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior . CCC 441–	Encourage sponsors to set an example of how to prepare for the Christmas	Have catechumens participate in the Liturgy of the Word and the Rite of	Invite catechumens to participate with their sponsors in parish efforts

<p>445, 456, 458–459, 517, 519</p> <p>The Advent season celebrates Christ’s coming in the flesh and his return in glory at the end of time. No one knows the day or the hour of his return, but we look forward to it in joyful hope. CCC 524, 681, 682</p> <p>The preaching of the prophets of the Old Testament filled God’s people with hope for salvation. Christians find the fulfillment of these prophecies in Jesus. CCC 522, 711, 712</p> <p>John the Baptist heralded the coming of Christ by preaching a baptism of repentance. CCC 523, 720</p> <p>The Virgin Mary was called in a special way to say “yes” to God and so became the mother of our Redeemer. CCC 494, 495, 496, 490, 489</p> <p>We are called to conversion, to reform our lives and turn our hearts to God, to prepare for the coming of Christ. CCC 457, 523, 1431-1432</p>	<p>feast at home.</p> <p>Share joyful customs of the season that are practiced in your community, such as Advent calendars, “Advent angels,” and celebrations of St. Nicholas day.</p> <p>Have sponsors pray the Hail Mary with the catechumens. Help them identify the origin of the prayer in Sacred Scripture.</p> <p>Pray the rosary. Highlight the joyful mysteries.</p> <p>Take part in Las Posadas or other community celebrations of the season.</p>	<p>Dismissal at Sunday Mass throughout this season.</p> <p>Introduce the catechumens to the practice of lighting the Advent wreath. (Consult the Book of Blessings, chapter 47, for more information.)</p> <p>Call attention to the purple vesture and church furnishings of the season. Explain that purple signifies penitence and joyful expectation.</p> <p>Include the catechumens in the parish observance of Immaculate Conception.</p> <p>Celebrate the rite of minor exorcism, using prayer text E. (RCIA 94)</p> <p>Participate in an Advent Penitential service.</p>	<p>of the season to help those in need, such as a “giving tree” or other charitable works.</p> <p>Identify concrete ways that catechumens can work for peace and justice with members of the parish or diocesan community.</p> <p>Encourage the catechumens to witness to their faith by making moral decisions in everyday life.</p>
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CHRISTMAS SEASON

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
<p>Through the birth of Jesus Christ, the Word became flesh. This is the mystery of the Incarnation. CCC 423, 461. 462, 463, 479, 483</p>	<p>Welcome catechumens into festive gatherings of the season, such as meals, Christmas concerts, and family activities.</p>	<p>Have catechumens participate in the Liturgy of the Word and the Rite of Dismissal.</p>	<p>Reflect on how the celebration of Christmas can be a witness to Christian faith, and put these insights into practice.</p>

<p>Jesus was born in a humble stable in Bethlehem, into a poor family. His “hidden life” was lived in community, obedient to Mary and Joseph, and to the Jewish law. CCC 531–533</p> <p>The Epiphany is the manifestation of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Savior of the world. CCC 528, 1171, 439</p> <p>Confident that the light of human reason may know God, the Church engages in dialogue with other religions, with philosophy and science, and with unbelievers and atheists. CCC 39, 47</p> <p>The baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist was the beginning of his public life. By his baptism, he accepts his mission as God’s suffering Servant. CCC 535, 536, 713</p>	<p>Introduce practices for living as the domestic church at home, such as engaging in daily prayer with family members.</p> <p>Share the cultural and devotional practices that surround this feast.</p> <p>Using the story of the Magi, invite the catechumens and parishioners to share personal stories of their faith journey and search for Christ.</p>	<p>Offer a blessing of homes (Book of Blessings, 1597 ff.)</p> <p>Participate in Evening Prayer for the feast of the Epiphany, if possible. (See Christian Prayer: The Liturgy of the Hours; the Propers of the Seasons, Epiphany.)</p> <p>Show the catechumens the baptismal font in your parish church, and point out its symbolism.</p> <p>Celebrate a Blessing of Catechumens, using prayer text B (RCIA 97).</p>	<p>Explore ways to strengthen family life through reconciliation, prayer, and good works.</p> <p>Reflect on the blessings and challenges of talking about faith with one’s family or in the workplace.</p>
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SEASON OF ORDINARY TIME: Ordinary Time 2, 3, 4

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
<p>Jesus came to call all people. He proclaimed and inaugurated the Reign of God. The human response to that call and invitation is faith. CCC 541–553, 2632, 153–165, 181-184</p> <p>Jesus showed the way to true happiness by his teaching on the Beatitudes of God’s</p>	<p>Share community stories of faith.</p> <p>Have sponsors identify and introduce members of the parish who are peace-makers, merciful, pure of heart, etc.</p>	<p>Participate in the Liturgy of the Word and Dismissal at Sunday Mass. Explain the importance of SUNDAY. (Consult <i>Dies domini</i>: On Keeping the Lord’s Day Holy (1998); also CCC 1166–1167)</p> <p>Celebrate a Minor Exorcism, using RCIA text 94 D.</p>	<p>Reflect on the structures of society that support the Reign of God, and commit to strengthen them.</p> <p>Encourage the catechumens to take one of the Beatitudes and live it during the week.</p>

<p>Kingdom. At the heart of Jesus' preaching, the Beatitudes confront us with decisive choices and call us to love God above all things.</p> <p>CCC 1700, 1703, 1711, 1716–1728, 1818, 2444, 2548</p>			
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SEASON OF ORDINARY TIME: Ordinary Time 5, 6, 7

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
<p>During his earthly ministry, Jesus preached the Good News, healed the sick, and cast out demons. By word and example, he showed us what it means to become his disciple, and a member of his Body, the Church. CCC 541–550, 561–562, 565, 567, 753–757, 763–766</p> <p>As followers of Jesus, we are called to live a moral life. Christian morality is based on the Law of Love that Jesus taught. The Word of God in scripture and the teachings of the Church help us to discern right from wrong and to choose good over evil. CCC 1749, 1755–1756, 1776, 1783–1785, 1950–1953, 1965, 1972, 2032–2033, 2044, 2046</p>	<p>Introduce the catechumens to the various ministries, societies, and service groups within the parish.</p> <p>Have sponsors and catechumens discuss some moral choices we make every day, and give examples of how the community helps an individual discern what is right and good.</p>	<p>Celebrate an Anointing of the Catechumens (RCIA 98 ff.).</p> <p>Celebrate a Blessing, using the text of RCIA 97 C.</p>	<p>Reflect on how we live our discipleship through our daily work.</p> <p>Practice the Golden Rule.</p>

SEASON OF ORDINARY TIME: Ordinary Time 8, 9, 10

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
<p>God, who created us, knows us intimately, loves us, and promises eternal life to those who believe in him.</p>	<p>Share the parish mission statement and describe the parish's experience of "ongoing conversion" in its own history.</p>	<p>Celebrate an Anointing of Catechumens, RCIA 98 ff, using the Exorcism prayer provided in 102 A.</p>	<p>Explore ways to give a joyful witness to God's love.</p>

CCC 295, 356–358, 219–220, 410–412, 2002			
Our discipleship is shown by the way we live and respond to God's initiative in Jesus Christ. CCC 520, 546, 562, 654, 1533, 908)			

SEASON OF ORDINARY TIME: Ordinary Time 11, 12, 13

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
<p>The story of God's relationship with humanity has developed over time. By making a covenant with the people Israel, God revealed his special love for his Chosen People, and prepared the way for the fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ. CCC 218–219, 702–716, 761–762</p> <p>The story of God's relationship with humanity is also a story of sin and grace. Human sin is a refusal of friendship with God. Grace is God's free gift of Himself, offered again and again, despite human infidelity and failure to respond. CCC 1846–1869, 1996–2003</p>	Share stories of grace in the lives of the faithful.	<p>Hold a Celebration of the Word for catechumens, highlighting the unity of the Old and New Testaments and the reverence of the faith community toward the full witness of Scripture.</p> <p>If the catechumens are ready, you may choose to anticipate the giving of the Creed. (See RCIA 104–105, and 157–162.)</p>	If the parish is actively involved in interfaith dialogue and cooperation, invite the catechumens to observe and take part to the degree that is appropriate.

SEASON OF ORDINARY TIME: Ordinary Time 14, 15, 16

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
The Church serves the mission of Christ in various ways, by spreading the gospel, and by doing the works of charity. The corporal works of mercy and the spiritual works of	Introduce the catechumens to groups in the parish or diocese that are devoted to the Church's mission in specific ways, such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society.	Celebrate a Minor Exorcism, using RCIA text 94 F.	<p>Put into practice one or more of the corporal works of mercy.</p> <p>Put into practice one or more of the spiritual works of cy.</p>

<p>mercy are traditional ways of answering the call to love our neighbor. CCC 730, 737–738, 1966, 1970, 2443–2449</p> <p>The God's holy Word sustains the Church. The witness of Sacred Scripture is inspired and true. Written by human authors, it is nonetheless the Word of God. CCC 101–114, 120–133</p>	<p>Through the example of the community, encourage the catechumens to practice Bible-reading at home, and to treat the scriptures with respect.</p>	<p>Hold a special Celebration of the Word of God for catechumens (RCIA 82, 85 ff.). Invite family and friends as well as the catechumens and sponsors.</p>	
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SEASON OF ORDINARY TIME: Ordinary Time 17, 18, 19

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
<p>The Seven Sacraments are signs of God's coming Kingdom. They are: the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist; the Sacraments of Healing: Penance and Anointing of the Sick; and Sacraments in Service to Communion: Holy Orders and Matrimony. CCC 1113, 1114, 1122–1124, 1127, 1129, 1131, 1210–1211; 1213, 1285, 1322–1323, 1422, 1499, 1536, 1601</p> <p>The Bread of Life, Jesus himself, feeds us in the Eucharist. CCC 1373–1381, 1382, 1385, 1387, 1389, 1390, 1405, 1406–1407</p>	<p>Have the sponsors share basic information about when and how the seven sacraments are celebrated in the parish and/or the Archdiocese.</p> <p>Have the sponsors explain and give witness to the central importance of Sunday Mass, and also share the place of daily Mass, adoration, and Eucharistic devotions in the life of the parish.</p>	<p>Celebrate an Anointing of catechumens (RCIA 98–103). If there are baptized candidates, pray also for them, using the blessings of catechumens as a model.</p> <p>Teach the catechumens how Catholics show reverence for the Blessed Sacrament (e.g. genuflection or a profound bow).</p> <p>Visit the place where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved.</p>	<p>Outreach to the marginal, the poor, and those who are weak in faith is often part of the preparation for and celebration of the sacraments. Have a representative of the parish explain how the ministry of the Church is active on such occasions.</p>

SEASON OF ORDINARY TIME: Ordinary Time 20, 21, 22

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
<p>The practice of prayer is essential on the way of faith. Christian prayer is offered from the heart, and is always to be undertaken with humility. CCC 2559, 2562–2565, 2566–2567, 2590–2597, 2607–2616, 2683–2684, 2697, 2699</p> <p>Jesus Christ is true God and true man. The Church confesses him to be Lord, Savior, and Messiah. CCC 464–469, 446–451, 436–440</p>	<p>Pray the Jesus Prayer. Share prayer practices that are prevalent among the sponsors and in the parish.</p> <p>Share examples of how faith in Jesus is expressed through art and music, and treasured by the faith community.</p>	<p>If the catechumens are judged ready, you may choose to anticipate the Presentation of the Lord's Prayer at this time (RCIA 104–105, and 178–183).</p>	<p>Practice intercessory prayer as a part of apostolic works.</p> <p>Introduce the catechumens to the work of the missions.</p>

SEASON OF ORDINARY TIME: Ordinary Time 23, 24, 25

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
<p>The Ten Commandments, recorded in the Old Testament, are honored and obeyed by Christians as the moral prescriptions of God's first stage of revelation. The New Law, or Law of the Gospel, fulfills and completes the Old Law. It is summed up in the New Commandment of Jesus: "Love one another as I have loved you." CCC 1962–1970, 2052–2082, 1971–1974</p> <p>The social teaching of the Catholic Church states our obligations to our neighbor and to society. The call to solidarity and to the practice of social justice is an urgent imperative of the Gospel.</p>	<p>If there is a Pax Christi group in the parish, or an organization devoted to a particular aspect of social justice or peace, invite a representative to share their story with the catechumens.</p>	<p>Point out that the Penitential Act at Sunday Mass calls us to acknowledge our need for God's mercy.</p>	<p>Living the Commandments requires ethical behavior. Have the catechumens identify ethical challenges they face in their workplace and neighborhood, and support them in the work of living according to God's commands.</p> <p>Take part in one or more of the Church's efforts to alleviate the causes of poverty and injustice.</p>

CCC 1877–1885, 1897–1904, 1905–1912, 1913–1917, 1928–1933, 1939–1942			
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SEASON OF ORDINARY TIME: Ordinary Time 26, 27, 28

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
<p>Christians are called to live the Law of Love in many ways – in marriage, family life, and society. Respect for all human life, from conception to natural death, is a fundamental response to the goodness of God, the creator.</p> <p>CCC 1952, 1956, 1959, 2201–2203, 2204–2206, 2207–2210, 2258–2283, 2284–2317</p> <p>Growth in virtue is a lifelong process. God’s just judgments call us to conversion. His grace enables us to grow in holiness.</p> <p>CCC 1803–1829, 1810–1811, 2012–2016</p>	<p>Name and describe some of the ways that the parish and Archdiocese supports marriages and families.</p> <p>Share stories of how the faith community shows respect for and cares for the elderly, the sick, and the dying.</p>	<p>Celebrate a blessing for families. (Consult the Book of Blessings, chapter 1, section I).</p> <p>Participate in a Penitential Service (see Rite of Penance, Appendix II).</p>	<p>Encourage the catechumens to do something specific to promote respect for life.</p>

SEASON OF ORDINARY TIME: Ordinary Time 29, 30, 31

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
<p>God is unique and without equal. God’s majesty and greatness, his faithfulness and mercy, inspire us to love and serve him above all things. To God alone is due all honor, praise and worship, and “the obedience of faith.”</p> <p>CCC 199–227, 1807, 2095–2096, 2135, 143, 144–149</p>	<p>Share specific examples of service to one another within the parish, informally or by representatives of service organizations</p>	<p>Point out the prayer of praise, which is present in many of the Church’s liturgical celebrations (e.g. the Gloria, hymns of praise, etc.).</p>	<p>Acquaint the catechumens with Catholic organizations and individuals who support ecology and the integrity of creation, guided by a faith perspective.</p>

<p>Jesus, through his example and teaching, showed us that we must become servants to one another. The Gospel calls us to remain steadfast in faith and constant in prayer. CCC 786, 852, 162, 2742–2745</p>			<p>Elicit examples of service that the catechumens have experienced in their families, workplace, and through volunteer activities.</p>
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SEASON OF ORDINARY TIME: Ordinary Time 32, 33, 34 (Christ the King)

CORE DOCTRINE (RCIA 75.1)	COMMUNITY (75.2)	LITURGICAL RITES (75.3)	APOSTOLIC WORKS (75.4)
<p>The Church believes and proclaims that Jesus Christ is Lord of all. He reigns eternally, and at the final judgment will decide the fate of all the living and the dead. CCC 668–682, 1023, 1038–1041, 1042–1050</p>	<p>Share local Catholic practices with regard to death, funerals, and honoring the dead, with sensitivity to the variety of experiences catechumens may bring with them.</p>	<p>Participate in All Saints and All Souls celebrations in the parish.</p>	

60. DISCERNMENT: How do we know when the goals of the Catechumenate Period have been accomplished?

Before celebrating the Rite of Election, after having spent a year or more of formation in the Catechumenate Period, the catechumens are expected:

- to have undergone a *conversion in mind and action*
- to have developed a *sufficient acquaintance with Christian teaching*
- to have developed a *spirit of faith and charity*. (RCIA 120)

The discernment which takes place before the Rite of Election is concerned with all three aspects of the catechumen's readiness: (a) reorienting their life according to the Gospel, (b) understanding Christian teaching, and (c) appropriate spiritual development. "With deliberate will and enlightened faith they must have the intention to receive the sacraments of the Church" the rite explains in summary form (RCIA 120). The discernment before Election, like the one carried out before the Rite of Acceptance, looks for outward indications that these interior changes have taken place (conversion, adequate understanding, spiritual development). The Affirmation by the Godparents in the Rite of Election itself summarizes these outward signs of readiness:

- they have *faithfully listened to God's word proclaimed by the Church;*
- they have *responded to that word and begun to walk in God's presence;* and
- they have *shared the company of their Christian brothers and sisters and joined with them in prayer* (RCIA 131B).

"The deliberation may take various forms, depending on local conditions and pastoral needs," the rite tells us (RCIA 122). Interviews, retreats, and discussions including the catechumens themselves are all helpful means of arriving at this discernment. Admission to Election belongs to the bishop (RCIA 121). The discernment, which is the basis for the bishop's admission, however, is carried out in the parish. The following people are involved in this discernment, each in a way that is proper to them:

- priests
- deacons
- catechists
- godparents
- the entire community
- the catechumens themselves. (RCIA 121, 122)

By participating in this discernment, the whole local community takes responsibility for those who are coming to the Easter sacraments. They "surround the elect with prayer, so that the entire Church will accompany and lead them to encounter Christ" (RCIA 121). For the Baptized Candidates, the criteria for discernment are stated differently. The Affirmation by the Sponsors in the Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion summarizes the candidates' signs of readiness as follows:

- they have *faithfully listened to the apostles' instruction proclaimed by the Church*
- they have *come to a deeper appreciation of their baptism; and*
- they have *reflected sufficiently on the tradition of the Church, which is their heritage, and joined their brothers and sisters in prayer* (RCIA 452B).

The fundamental issues of conversion and Christian living that were part of the catechumens' discernment also need to be discerned for candidates. The additional concerns of coming to appreciate their own baptism and reflecting on Church tradition as their own heritage, however, give the discernment for candidates its particular character.

CHAPTER THREE

Catechetical Guidelines for the Period of Purification and Enlightenment

Contents:	61. Introduction
	62. Synopsis of the Liturgical Rites and Themes for Spiritual Reflection
	63. Sample Outline of a Spiritual Preparation for the Scrutiny Rite
	64. Sample Outline of a Reflection After the Scrutiny Rite

61. Introduction

The third period of the initiation process, immediately prior to the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation, normally coincides with Lent (RCIA 138). The ritual text tells us that the Period of Purification and Enlightenment “is a period of more intense spiritual preparation, consisting more in interior reflection than in catechetical instruction” (RCIA 139).

- The centerpiece of the Period of Purification and Enlightenment is the celebration of the **SCRUTINIES** (RCIA 141–146). Children of catechetical age also celebrate Scrutinies (see RCIA 291ff.). The Scrutiny rites utilize the scriptures from the Lectionary for Year A. The Gospel readings for the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent in Year A have been associated with the Scrutinies since ancient times and are an essential part of the content of this period.
- The baptized candidates do not take part in a Scrutiny but they may celebrate a **PENITENTIAL RITE** on the Second Sunday of Lent, or at another time during this season (see RCIA 459 ff.). There are no combined rites during this period.
- During this period, the baptized candidates are also prepared to celebrate the **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION** (National Statutes 27, 36), and invited to do so according to their conscience. Participation in a parish Penance service with their sponsors can be of great benefit, and should be encouraged.
- The **PRESENTATIONS**, if they have not been anticipated in the Period of the Catechumenate, are also celebrated at this time (RCIA 147–149). The baptized candidates may also participate in the Presentations if they entered the process with no Christian upbringing or formation (RCIA 407). Those baptized candidates who have already lived as Christians, however, would not be presented with the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer (see National Statutes 31).
- Finally, the **PREPARATION RITES** on Holy Saturday (RCIA 185 ff.) also belong to this period. The catechist is frequently responsible for scheduling and convening the elect and their godparents for this celebration, and helping to determine which rites will be used.

Because the nature of the Period of Purification and Enlightenment is different from the Period of the Catechumenate, the role of the catechist is also different. The formation provided during this period is primarily liturgical. The catechist is responsible for guiding the elect and the candidates in spiritual **PREPARATION** for the Scrutinies, the Presentations, and the Penitential Rite. They also lead the elect and candidates in spiritual reflection or **MYSTAGOGY** on these rites after they are celebrated.

The chart below shows the order in which the celebrations take place, the Scripture passages associated with them, and the spiritual themes that the catechist may draw on when preparing the elect and candidates for these rites and reflecting on them afterwards.

62. Synopsis of the Liturgical Rites and Themes for spiritual reflection during the Period of Purification and Enlightenment

When	What	Who	Scripture	Themes
First Sunday of Lent	Archdiocesan Rite of Election & the parish celebration of the Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion	The Elect & the Candidates	The Temptations in the Desert (Lectionary Years A, B, C)	The decisive call to be God's chosen people; testing; sin; grace
Second Sunday of Lent (or weekday)	Penitential Rite	Baptized Candidates	The Transfiguration (Lectionary Years A, B, C)	Baptismal themes; purification
Any time during Lent	Sacrament of Reconciliation	Baptized Candidates	Any readings from the Rite of Penance	Repentance, forgiveness, Penance as "second Baptism"
Third Sunday of Lent	First Scrutiny	The Elect	The Samaritan Woman (Lectionary Year A)	Water; thirst; encountering Jesus Christ as the Messiah
Third Week of Lent (weekday Mass)	Presentation of the Creed	The Elect (and baptized candidates if appropriate)	readings found in RCIA 158, and in Lectionary 748	Profession of faith as integral to baptism and upheld through life
Fourth Sunday of Lent	Second Scrutiny	The Elect	The Man Born Blind (Lectionary Year A)	Sight; blindness; Jesus Christ as the Light of the World
Fifth Sunday of Lent	Third Scrutiny	The Elect	The Raising of Lazarus (Lectionary Year A)	Life; death, the tomb; Jesus Christ as the Resurrection and the Life
Fifth Week of Lent (weekday Mass)	Presentation of the Lord's Prayer	The Elect (and baptized candidates if appropriate)	readings found in RCIA 179 and in Lectionary 749 (N.B. Matt 6:9-13 is the Presentation and must be read)	The summary of the whole gospel (CCC 2761 ff.); the prayer of Jesus (CCC 2765 ff.); the prayer of the Church (CCC 2767 ff.)

63. Sample Outline of a Spiritual Preparation for the Scrutiny Rite

- a. Prepare the meeting space by placing chairs in a circle. On a small table, covered with a purple cloth, place a lighted candle and a Bible open to the passage you will read in this session.
- b. Welcome everyone warmly and allow a few moments for the participants to greet one another. When everyone is ready, call attention to the purpose of this gathering: to prepare for the Scrutiny that will be celebrated this coming Sunday. Establish a retreat-like atmosphere by singing a prayerful song, then allow some silence to settle.
- c. Read either the first or the second reading from the Liturgy of the Word for the Scrutiny that will be celebrated. Offer a brief reflection on how this reading calls us to an awareness of sin and grace. (Do not read the gospel. Their first hearing of the Scrutiny gospel should be in the Liturgy itself. Reserve reflection on the gospel for after the Rite of Scrutiny.)

- d. Invite the participants to reflect on the mystery of sin as it afflicts our world: Where do you find there is (thirst [First Scrutiny] / blindness [Second Scrutiny] / death [Third Scrutiny]) around us, in the world? What are the sins or evils that cause people to become (dry / sightless / lifeless)? Allow for some sharing in small groups. When enough time has passed, sing a short refrain from the prayerful song with which you began the session.
- e. Invite the participants to go deeper into *personal* reflection on the mystery of sin: In what ways do you find yourself (thirsty / in darkness / entombed)? Allow some time for quiet reflection, journaling, or sharing with a sponsor. After several minutes, sing the short refrain again to conclude this reflection time.
- f. Invite the participants to reflect on the power of God to deliver us from evil: What graces of God have we seen and known to overcome evil? Have the participants name them aloud. What grace do you especially wish to pray for at this time, in your own struggle against evil? (Take a moment to identify these, either aloud or silently.)
- g. Conclude with prayer, including a final refrain of the song.

64. Sample Outline of a Reflection After the Scrutiny Rite

- a. Prepare the space as you did for the Preparation for the Scrutiny. Welcome everyone. Explain that this is a time to reflect on the celebration of the Scrutiny and deepen our awareness of God's presence and action.
- b. First, invite the participants to recall the Liturgy of the Word and the Scrutiny Rite. (You may do this in a meditative fashion, using music from the rite, describing what took place, and recalling words and phrases from the liturgy.)
- c. Next, ask the participants to name aloud something which impressed them in their experience of the rite: What part of the rite stood out for you, and what did it seem to be saying? Allow time for everyone to share their experiences.
- d. Invite the participants to consider their experience of the rite as a whole. Ask the following questions, allowing time for responses after each question: What was this rite saying about sin? About grace? What sense of Jesus' identity did you take away from this experience?
- e. Drawing on the words and imagery of the gospel passage, discuss how Jesus reveals who he is to the key figures in today's gospel (the Samaritan woman / the Man Born Blind / Mary, Martha, and Lazarus). Underscore the key aspect of Jesus' identity that emerges on this Sunday (living water / light of the world / resurrection and life). Allow time for dialogue and questions.
- f. Conclude with prayer.

CHAPTER FOUR

Catechetical Guidelines for the Period of Mystagogy

Contents:	65. Introduction
	66. The Fifty Days of Easter
	67. Extended Mystagogy
	68. What Happens During This Period
	69. Catechesis During the Period of Mystagogy
	70. Suggested Approach for the Fifty Days of Easter
	71. Suggested Approach for the Year of Extended Mystagogy

65. Introduction

The fourth period of the initiation process, immediately following the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation, is the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy. The period is described in the ritual text as “a time for deepening the Christian experience, for spiritual growth, and for entering more fully into the life and unity of the community” (RCIA 7.4). It extends throughout the Easter season, from the celebration of the sacraments at the Easter Vigil to the celebration of Pentecost.

66. The Fifty Days of Easter

The main setting for this period is “the so-called Masses for neophytes, that is, the Sunday Masses of the Easter season” (RCIA 247).

- a. At such Masses, special places in the congregation are reserved for the neophytes and their godparents (RCIA 248).
- b. The homily and the general intercessions take into account their presence and their needs (RCIA 248).
- c. The Year A readings of the Lectionary are especially appropriate for mystagogy (RCIA 247), but the readings for Year B or C may be used.
- d. The diocesan bishop, especially if he could not celebrate the sacraments of initiation with them, meets with the neophytes at least once during their first year after baptism, and presides at a celebration of the Eucharist with them (RCIA 251). (In the Archdiocese of New York, a neophytes’ Mass with the archbishop is usually celebrated during the Easter season.)
- e. To close the period of mystagogy, a festive celebration should be held in the parish on or close to Pentecost (RCIA 249).

67. What Happens During This Period

The period of mystagogy is “a time for the community and the neophytes to grow together in deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery and in making it part of their lives through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the eucharist, and doing the works of charity” (RCIA 244). The neophytes “should experience a full and joyful welcome into the community and enter into closer ties with the other faithful. The faithful, in turn, should derive from it a renewal of inspiration and of outlook” (RCIA 246).

68. Catechesis During the Period of Mystagogy

Mystagogical catechesis is different from the catechesis of the preceding periods because in mystagogy the neophytes' new experience of the sacraments is engaged and deepened. This period is centered on the sacraments and on living a sacramental life. The role of the catechist during this time is exercised under four headings (cf. RCIA 244):

- a. **meditation on the Gospel**
The catechist helps the neophytes to explore the meaning of the Easter lectionary, especially the Gospel readings, to discover how the Sunday Word illuminates the new life of baptism.
- b. **the experience of the sacraments**
The catechist guides the neophytes in reflecting on their actual experience of the sacraments they have received, and leads them to gain insight into their meaning.
- c. **the works of charity**
The catechist encourages the neophytes to join the community in its works of charity, and to connect these experiences with the Eucharist.
- d. **the role of the community**
The catechist works with the community, preparing them to receive the neophytes in a spirit of joyful welcome and to establish ongoing relationships with them.

The catechumenate team and the whole community of faith have an important role to play in this stage of the process. The catechist works together with them, and with the clergy who preside and preach at the Masses for neophytes.

69. Suggested Approach for the Fifty Days of Easter

First Week of Easter

Depending on circumstances, the neophytes may wish to gather on Easter Sunday either for Sunday Mass or for Easter Vespers. This is optional.

Second Week of Easter

Have the neophytes attend Sunday Mass together. The preaching and general intercessions should take into account their presence.

Gather after Sunday Mass with the neophytes, their godparents and sponsors, and any members of the parish who wish to participate. Recall the highlights of the Easter Vigil in a prayerful atmosphere. Invite the neophytes to share their thoughts, feelings, and impressions of that holy night. Then invite godparents, sponsors and parishioners to do the same. Highlight the sacraments of initiation. Conclude with prayers of praise and thanksgiving.

Third Week of Easter

Have the neophytes attend Sunday Mass together. The preaching and general intercessions should take into account their presence.

Option 1

Gather on a weeknight with the neophytes, their godparents and sponsors, and any members of the parish who wish to participate, to share a meal. After the meal, read the Easter gospel reading in which the risen Lord appears on the road to Emmaus. Invite the neophytes and all present to reflect on the Eucharist as a banquet of love at which Jesus is present. How do we experience the fruit of Eucharist throughout the week?

Option 2

Gather after Sunday Mass with the neophytes, their godparents and sponsors. Teach them more about the Liturgy of the Eucharist, in which they now participate fully. Guide them in reflecting on the Eucharistic Prayer and its acclamations, and what it means to pray these in faith. What does it mean to be a Eucharistic people?

Fourth Week of Easter

Have the neophytes attend Sunday Mass together. The preaching and general intercessions should take into account their presence.

Option 1

Assemble after Mass for a catechesis on the Good Shepherd. Focus on Jesus as Shepherd of the sheep, and our relationship to him. Invite sharing of their experience of new life, and their new experience of Jesus since the celebration of the sacraments. Allow some time for questions about the Liturgy of the Eucharist, in which the neophytes are now participating fully.

Option 2

Assemble after Mass for a mystagogical reflection on the Communion Rite, and the Dismissal, which concludes the Mass., Encourage them to explore the connections between the various prayers of the Communion Rite and the act of receiving Holy Communion. How is the dismissal at the end of Mass the same or different from the dismissal they experienced while catechumens? What does it mean to be "sent"?

Fifth Week of Easter

Have the neophytes attend Sunday Mass together. The preaching and general intercessions should take into account their presence.

Gather the neophytes, godparents, sponsors, and some parishioners who are active in the parish's works of charity, either after Mass or during the week to reflect on the gospel of the Fifth Sunday of Easter. Focus on "doing the works of Jesus" (Year A), "bearing much fruit" (Year B), or the new commandment: "love one another" (Year C), depending on the Year of the Lectionary cycle that was read at Sunday Mass. Reflect on how we live the Paschal Mystery by doing the works of charity.

Sixth Week of Easter

Have the neophytes attend Sunday Mass together. The preaching and general intercessions should take into account their presence.

Assemble after Mass for a catechesis on the Acts of the Apostles, read throughout the Easter season. What does the experience of the early Christians tell us about community, about controversy, about the presence and action of the Holy Spirit? Encourage some open-ended sharing about the neophytes' experience of the parish community since celebrating the sacraments. What new insights or questions are emerging for them?

Have the neophytes participate in the Eucharist for the Ascension of the Lord.

Seventh Week of Easter

Have the neophytes attend Sunday Mass together. The preaching and general intercessions should take into account their presence.

Work with the neophytes to prepare a brief personal witness that they will share with the parish on Pentecost Sunday, either orally or in writing, about their experience of conversion, new life, and the sacraments.

Pentecost

Have the neophytes deliver their witnesses to the gathered community at Sunday Mass or immediately afterwards. Hold a festive celebration to close the immediate period of mystagogy.

70. Extended Mystagogy

In the dioceses of the United States, the bishops have asked that the period of mystagogy be extended to include meetings, at least monthly, from Pentecost up to the first anniversary of baptism (NS 24). At the end of the year, the ritual text directs, "the neophytes should be brought together in order to give thanks to God, to share with one another their spiritual experiences and to renew their commitment" (RCIA 250).

71. Suggested Approaches for the Year of Extended Mystagogy

Two different models are offered here, always to be adapted to actual circumstances. The catechumenate director / coordinator, in consultation with the team and the neophytes, will determine the best approach depending on (a) the gifts and inclinations of the neophytes, (b) the resources available in the parish, and (c) the number of people involved. Both of the models described here envision considerable numbers of neophytes and/or newly-received. In the case of a parish with only one or two, a simplified form of Model 2 (a, b, and e) would be appropriate.

Because extended mystagogy goes on at the same time as other phases of the catechumenate, it is advisable to have team members who are responsible ONLY for this phase of the process.

Because baptized candidates may be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church at any time of the year, it is also possible that newly-received members will be added to the neophytes' number during the year. It is important, therefore, to cultivate an atmosphere of openness and welcome that will extend year round.

Model 1

- a. Meet with the neophytes and their godparents to plan the extended mystagogy. Be prepared as a resource person to provide concrete ideas and suggestions, but allow the neophytes themselves to take the lead.
- b. Help them to decide: (A) When, where, and how often the group will meet, and (B) what themes or topics they would like to explore. Be sure to include at least one opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation in your plan for the year.
- c. After the neophytes have brainstormed a list of themes or topics, and selected those of greatest interest, either (A) have the participants, working in pairs or groups of three, work on the preparations for these sessions, or (B) take the input of the neophytes and give it to designated members of the catechumenate team to prepare and implement.
- d. The format and style of these meetings may vary (talks, films, retreats, spiritual exercises, study, discussion, "hot topics," etc.), but they should always include: (A) time for sharing experiences and faith, and (B) time for prayer. The purpose of these gatherings is to nurture the neophytes during the first year after their initiation. Therefore it is important that godparents and sponsors or at least some members of the parish community continue to walk with them at this time.
- e. Because the first anniversary of their initiation normally will coincide with the Easter solemnity in the parish, it is necessary to plan carefully how they will gather with the parish to give thanks at the end of this time. Some possibilities are: attending the Easter Vigil and serving as hosts for the parish reception afterwards; attending Easter Sunday Mass or Easter Vespers and being publicly recognized (with a blessing or at the announcements); or gathering at a daily Mass during the Octave of Easter, followed by a meal.

Model 2

- a. Mainstream the neophytes into existing groups in the parish, such as small faith communities, choir, Saint Vincent de Paul society, a bible study group, Rosary Altar society, or other ongoing groups within the parish. For children and youth, the

groups would include, but not be limited to, ongoing parish programs of religious education (catechesis / faith formation) and/or youth ministry.

b. Charge the godparents with maintaining contact with the neophytes in an intentional way during this year. Provide the godparents with helps for their ministry, such as a list of suggestions for keeping the connection alive, and information about common challenges that arise during the first year after initiation.

c. Designate a godparent coordinator, who can serve as a resource person and check in with the godparents periodically. This person would also contact the leaders of the parish groups to assure a warm welcome for the neophytes.

d. Toward the end of the year, gather the neophytes for a day of recollection. Include sharing stories and giving thanks for the year that has passed since their initiation. Include an opportunity for (or preparation for) the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

e. Because the first anniversary of their initiation normally will coincide with the Easter solemnity in the parish, it is necessary to plan carefully how they will gather with the parish to give thanks at the end of this time. Some possibilities are: attending the Easter Vigil and serving as hosts for the parish reception afterwards; attending Easter Sunday Mass or Easter Vespers and being publicly recognized (with a blessing or at the announcements); or gathering at a daily Mass during the Octave of Easter, followed by a meal.

PART THREE: RESOURCES AND FORMS

CHAPTER ONE: PRIMARY SOURCES

72. Primary Sources for Christian Initiation

- *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, US edition, 1988.
This edition contains the full text, National Statutes, and documentation.
Available also in Spanish.
- *Lectionary for Mass*, Second Typical Edition, NCCB, 1998.
Available also in Spanish.
N.B. If child catechumens participate in Masses that use the *Lectionary for Masses with Children* this Lectionary is also a necessary reference book.
- *New American Bible*, with Revised Book of Psalms and Revised New Testament, 1991.
This is the edition of the Bible used in the current Lectionary for Mass. Other Catholic editions of the Bible may be used in catechesis, preferably recent translations. Paraphrased editions are to be avoided.
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second Edition, 1997.
Available in English and in Spanish. The second edition includes a glossary of terms. See also the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, USCCB, 2006; and the *Compendium of the Catholic Church*, USCCB, 2006 (available in English and in Spanish).
- *General Directory for Catechesis*, 1997.
Available in English and in Spanish. See also the *National Directory for Catechesis*, USCCB, 2005 (available in English and in Spanish).

CHAPTER TWO: GENERAL RESOURCES

73. Resources on Specific Topics

One at the Table: The Reception of Baptized Christian, by Ronald A. Oakham (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1995).

Apprenticed to Christ by Jerry Galipeau (World Library Publications, 2007).

A Child's Journey: The Christian Initiation of Children, by Rita Burns Senseman (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1997).

When Your Child Becomes Catholic, by Rita Burns Senseman (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2000).

The Catechumenate and the Law: A Pastoral and Canonical Commentary for the Church in the United States, by John M. Huels (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1994).

A Harvest for God: Christian Initiation in the Rural and Small-Town Parish, by Michael Clay (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2003).

Year-Round Catechumenate, by Mary Birmingham (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2003).

Discerning Disciples: Listening for God's Voice in Christian Initiation, by Donna Steffen (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2004).

Enter the Rose: Retreats for Unfolding the Mysteries of Faith with Catechumens, Candidates, and All Believers, by Miriam Malone (Franklin Park: World Library Publications, 2004).

Guide for Sponsors, 4th Edition, by Ronald Lewinski (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2008. available also in Spanish).

74. Resources for General Overview of the RCIA

- *The Way of Faith: A Field Guide for the RCIA Process*, by Nick Wagner (New London: Twenty-Third Publications, 2008).
- *The RCIA: Transforming the Church, A Resource for Pastoral Implementation*, revised and updated, by Thomas H. Morris (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1997).
- *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: A Pastoral-Liturgical Commentary, revised edition*, by J. Michael McMahon (FDLC Publishing, 2001, 2007).

CHAPTER THREE: CATECHETICAL RESOURCES

75. Introduction

There is an abundance of resources published for Christian Initiation today. The following list is by no means exhaustive. It is provided to highlight some of the better resources, which reflect the vision of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. It will be updated on the Catechetical Office website periodically. It is arranged according to subject.

76. Resources for Catechesis

Foundations in Faith, Resources for Christian Living, Allen Texas, 1998–2001.

Authors: Bob Duggan, Carol Gura, Rita Ferrone, Gael Gensler, Steve Lanza, Donna Steffen, and Maureen A. Kelly.

- *Precatechumenate Manual*: An introduction and twenty-eight session plans for use during the first period of initiation: the Period of the Precatechumenate. Set up to be used flexibly for the year-round process, the sessions can be taken in any order. It also includes an appendix of FAQs about Catholicism. This book is for the catechist, and includes reproducible handouts for participants.
- *Catechist Manual, Year A, B, or C*: Three volumes, following the liturgical cycle, for use during the second period of initiation: the Catechumenate Period. For each Sunday and feast, two background pages are provided on the liturgy, Catholic doctrine, and Catholic culture relating to that celebration, followed by two pages of session plans for dismissal catechesis and extended catechesis. This book is for the catechist. There is also a companion volume for each year, with work sheets and take home materials, called the *Participant Book*.
- *Resource Book: Purification and Enlightenment, Year A, B, C*: One volume, which includes an explanation of the Period of Purification and Enlightenment, pastoral strategies, session plans for the Sundays of Lent, preparation and liturgical catechesis for the rites of this period, retreats, and reproducible handouts for participants. This book is for the catechist.
- *Resource Book: Mystagogia, Year A, B, C*: One volume, including an explanation of the period; resources to prepare for it, including handouts; a variety of session and activity plans, including mystagogy on Eucharist; and resources for ongoing mystagogy. This book is for the catechist.
- *Handbook for Inquirers, Handbook for Sponsors*: The Foundations series includes handbooks for the various participants in the initiation process. The most popular of them are these two. They explain the process and the qualities needed to get the most out of the experience. Reflection questions are included for each

section, that may be used for personal reflection, team training, or one-on-one sharing between inquirers and their sponsors.

Word and Worship Workbook for Year A, B, and C, by Mary Birmingham (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1998–2000). This three-volume resource offers in-depth explorations of the Sunday scripture readings. It also provides guidance and samples for connecting doctrine to the Sunday Word in catechumenal catechesis.

Formed in Faith, by Mary Birmingham (WLP, 2012). This catechetical resource offers sessions for Inquiry, Catechumenate and Ongoing Faith Formation. All sessions are reproducible from the included CD-ROM which contains handouts, discussion /reflection questions and other materials.

Seeking Christ: First Steps Toward Catholic Faith, Frank DeSiano, CSP (PNCEA, 2010). This precatechumenate resource provides eight sessions that explore basic faith questions. It includes scripture, discussion questions, DVDs, take-home reflections, and suggestions for prayer and journaling

Catholic Faith, Life, and Creed, an on-line catechetical resource by Mary Birmingham, available through Twenty-Third Publications, 2010. Building on her earlier work, this resource includes session plans, links to doctrinal subjects, liturgical content, and stories from human experience which relate to the topics being explored. The content is full-color, and features art reproductions.

Apprentices in Faith, an on-line catechetical resource by Steve Lanza and Gael Gensler, available through Resources for Christian Living, 2010. This compact doctrine-oriented resource includes liturgically based sessions and stand-alone session plans on doctrinal topics. A participant handout summarizing the content is available for each session, along with a one-page guide for the catechist.

Journey of Faith, Ligouri Publications. These forty-four four-page session handouts in full color are the simplest in their approach to catechumenal catechesis, geared to conveying basic Catholic teaching in elementary language and popular style. They are not liturgically-based, but organized by topic. Available also in Spanish.

Friends on the Way, Children's Catechumenate Resource by TeamRCIA.com. This online resource provides dismissal sessions, catechetical sessions, and family take home sessions for every Sunday of the Liturgical year for each Cycle, A, B and C.

Children's Catechumenate, by Thomas Long and Emily Filippi (Orlando: Harcourt Religion Publishers, 1999). Includes Director's Guide, Catechist's Guide, and booklets for primary, intermediate, and upper level children.

CHAPTER FOUR: LITURGICAL RESOURCES

77. Resources for Liturgy

Celebrating Initiation: A Guide for Priests, by Paul Turner (Franklin Park: World Library Publications, 2007). This book is written specifically for priests. It is a detailed commentary on how to celebrate the rites, organized according to the paragraph numbers in the ritual book. This book offers solutions to common problems and pastoral challenges, and shows how the rites can be integrated into the liturgical cycle of parish life without losing their strong and specific focus.

We Send You Forth, by Jerry Galipeau (Franklin Park: World Library Publications, 2005). This book is a collection of brief texts to be spoken at the dismissal rite at Sunday Mass, for years A, B, and C.

Chosen in Christ / Elegidos en Cristo, by Jerry Galipeau (Franklin Park: World Library Publications, 2001). This is a collected resource, by various composers, of music for the rites of the RCIA for English, Spanish, and bi-lingual parish communities.

Glory in the Cross: Holy Week in the Third Edition of the Roman Missal, by Paul Turner (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011). The principal liturgies of Holy Week underwent a series of revisions between 1951 and 2011. In this book, noted liturgist Paul Turner charts the rubrics and prayers of the current rites paragraph by paragraph, explaining the historical development of individual components, how and why the post Vatican II liturgical reform made its revisions, and where the Roman Missal, Third

Edition has added nuances. This book will help ministers, liturgists, catechists and all the faithful enter more deeply into the mystery of the cross of Christ, their glory and their hope.

CHAPTER FIVE: FORM PROVIDED BY ARCHDIOCESE

78. Initiation Questionnaire

INITIATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Page 1 and 2 of this Initiation Questionnaire are to be completed prior to the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens or the Rite of Welcoming the Candidates.

Date Form Completed: _____

Parish Name: _____ **Town** _____

1. Inquirer's Name _____ Telephone _____

2. Address _____

E-mail _____

3. Date of Birth _____ Place _____

4. Father's Name _____ Religion _____

5. Mother's Name _____ Religion _____
(maiden name)

6. Were you baptized? _____ If yes:

Name of Church _____

Address of Church _____

Denomination of Church _____

Date of Baptism _____ Officiant _____

7. Have you ever been confirmed? _____ Received communion? _____

Church _____ Church _____

Denomination _____ Denomination _____

Date _____ Date _____

8. Have you ever been accepted as a catechumen or a candidate in the Catholic Church? _____

If yes, when? _____ Where? _____

9. Are you currently married? _____ Yes (complete A below) _____ No (complete B below)

A. If yes, to whom are you currently married? _____

Date and place of marriage _____

Officiant _____

(name)

(title)

Prior to this marriage, have you ever been married before to another person in church, civilly or in common law? _____ If yes, continue with #1 on page 2.

Prior to this marriage, has your spouse ever been married before to another person in church, civilly or in common law? _____ If yes, continue with #2 on page 2.

B. If no, have you ever been married before to another person in a church, civilly, or in common law? _____ If yes, continue with #1 on page 2.

#1) PREVIOUS MARRIAGE OF INQUIRER

a. How many times were you married? _____

b. To whom? _____

Date _____

Officiant _____

Place _____

c. If former spouse is deceased:

Date of death _____ Certificate number _____

d. If former marriage was dissolved or declared null by the Church, give

Diocese and Protocol Number _____

Date of Decree _____

#2) PREVIOUS MARRIAGE OF CURRENT SPOUSE

a. How many times was he or she married? _____

b. To whom? _____

Date _____

Officiant _____

Place _____

c. If former spouse is deceased:

Date of death _____ Certificate number _____

d. If former marriage was dissolved or declared null by the Church, give

Diocese and Protocol Number _____

Date of Decree _____

WORKSHEET *This worksheet is to be filled in as the information becomes available.*

- If the person is unbaptized, answer questions 10 to 16.
- If the person was baptized in a non-Catholic church, answer questions 17 to 21.
- If the person was baptized in a Catholic church, answer questions 22 to 26.

These questions are for unbaptized persons.

10. Sponsor _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

11. Godparent _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

Enter the following dates:

12. Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens _____

13. Discernment for admission to Election _____

14. Rite of Election _____

15. First Scrutiny _____ Second Scrutiny _____ Third Scrutiny _____

16. Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist _____

Upon celebration of the sacraments, the information is to be entered into the Baptismal register
and the Confirmation register in the usual manner.

These questions are for already-baptized non-Catholics.

17. Sponsor _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

Enter the following dates:

18. Rite of Welcoming the Candidates _____

19. Discernment for the Call to Continuing Conversion _____

20. Call to Continuing Conversion _____

21. Rite of Reception, Confirmation, and Eucharist _____

Upon reception, an entry is to be made in the Baptismal register with the date of full communion noted. Confirmation information is to be noted in the Confirmation register.

These questions are for already-baptized but uncatechized Catholics.

22. Sponsor _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

Enter the following dates:

23. Rite of Welcoming the Candidates _____

24. Discernment for the Call to Continuing Conversion _____

25. Call to Continuing Conversion _____

26. Confirmation and Eucharist _____

Please Note: Upon reception of Confirmation and Eucharist, information is to be entered in the Confirmation register.