

Journey of Faith



The RCIA Process and Rites

Lisa and Tanya were very excited to go to their next RCIA meeting.

"I feel like I belong to a special club," said Tanya.

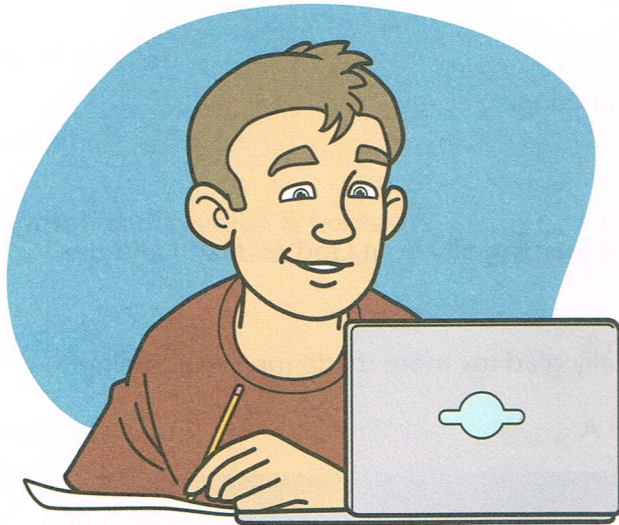
Lisa nodded. "I don't want to miss any meetings. I really like learning all about God and faith and the Church."

"Me, too! I can't wait to be a member of the Church. I'm really glad my mom made me start coming to these meetings."



When you **commit** to something, you promise to stick with it no matter what. That takes a lot of determination and perseverance. That means committing isn't always easy. Sometimes our commitment means we can do the things our friends are doing. Sometimes our commitment isn't fun all the time.

Like when you commit to getting an "A" in a class. You have to give up time with your friends to do your homework and study. You have to work really hard in class. Getting the "A" feels good. Working toward the "A" is hard.



Becoming a Catholic is like that, too. You've decided being Catholic is something you want to do. You're excited about it. You want to learn even more about the Catholic faith. But that won't always be easy. You have to attend every session. You have to talk in discussions. You have to do work and complete activities. Becoming Catholic can be hard work. But it's worth it!



Why do you want to be Catholic?

What helps you commit to important goals?

Rites, Rites, and More Rites!

Rite of Acceptance or Rite of Welcoming

If you have never been baptized, your journey to becoming Catholic starts with the **rite of acceptance**. People in your parish will hear about how you want to be Catholic. Then, at the Easter Vigil, you will receive the three **sacraments of initiation**: baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist.

If you have already been baptized in a Christian church, your journey starts with the **rite of welcoming**. Your parish will hear about how you want to be Catholic. Then you receive the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist.

Here is what will happen:

1. The priest will introduce each person by name and ask what he or she wants from the Church.
2. The priest will make the Sign of the Cross on each person's forehead.
3. Catechumens and candidates will stay in the church for the readings and then leave with their teachers or catechists for their own lesson.



Which rite will you be a part of?

Rite of Election

You'll keep learning about the Catholic faith. Then you'll be asked again if you want to be Catholic. This is called the **rite of election**. The rite of election usually happens on the first Sunday of Lent. In this election, the whole parish elects, or agrees, that you're ready to be Catholic.

Here is what will happen:

1. Your sponsor will talk about you and tell the Church you're ready to be Catholic.
2. The priest or bishop will ask you if you're ready to be Catholic. If you say "yes," your name is written in a special book. This book is called the **Book of the Elect**.

3. The priest or bishop announces that you, and anyone else becoming Catholic with you, are now “members of the **elect**.”
4. The rite will end with prayers and a blessing.



How do you feel about becoming Catholic (nervous, excited, scared...)? Why?

Scrutinies (for those who've not been baptized)

When you scrutinize something, you examine it very carefully. During the **scrutinies**, you will be asked questions that help you think very carefully about yourself and your friendship with God. You will examine times where you did bad things and hurt God. Then you'll be able to say you're sorry for those things and promise to try and do better. You'll also thank God for all the good things that bring you closer to God. Finally, the priest will pray that you'll be freed from all sins.

Only those who haven't been baptized yet will get to be part of the official scrutinies. But we can always scrutinize our lives and look for ways to grow closer to God!



What's one way you can grow closer to God this week?

Presentation of the Creed

The **Creed** is the summary of major Catholic beliefs. The Creed we say at Mass is called the **Nicene Creed**, and on one of the Sundays during Lent, you will receive a copy of the Creed. This is a very important prayer for Catholics, so it's a good thing to memorize!

Presentation of the Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer is also known as the Our Father. We say the Our Father during Mass (and a lot of other times!). On a Sunday during Lent, you'll receive a copy of the Lord's Prayer. Please learn this prayer by heart, too.

The Big Day

The **rite of initiation** is held on the night before Easter Sunday, called the Easter Vigil. It's a very special night. The church is in total darkness when Mass starts and then slowly lights up. This Mass is when you'll receive the sacraments for the first time. You will then be a **neophyte**, or new Catholic. The Easter Vigil is a very happy Mass because the Church is celebrating Jesus' resurrection and your new life as a Catholic!

Here is what will happen:

1. A fire is lit, and that fire lights the large paschal (Easter) candle. As the candle is carried down the aisle, people light smaller candles with its flame.
2. Special hymns are sung. Bells ring out to announce that Jesus is risen.
3. After the Gospel, where we hear about Jesus' resurrection, the priest gives a homily. Then he will call forward those who will be baptized.
4. The priest blesses the water for baptism, then pours it over each catechumen's head.
5. Those just baptized wear a white garment to show that they are a new creation.
6. They will also receive baptismal candles, lit from the paschal candle.
7. Then the candidates will be called to join the newly baptized.
8. Catechumens and candidates will say aloud that they believe in the Catholic Church.
9. They all receive the sacrament of confirmation.
10. Then the newest Catholics lead the parish in going to Communion and take part in their first Eucharist!



MATCHING

Match the words on the left with their meanings on the right.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| A. Candidate | _____ Sacraments received at the Easter Vigil |
| B. Rite of acceptance | _____ A sign of purity, being a "new creation" |
| C. Scrutinize | _____ Ceremony when an unbaptized person is introduced to people in the church |
| D. Rite of welcoming | _____ To follow through with something no matter what |
| E. Rite of election | _____ Ceremony when a person is elected to become Catholic |
| F. Commit | _____ A new Catholic |
| G. Baptism, confirmation & Eucharist | _____ Ceremony when a baptized non-Catholic is introduced to the people in the church |
| H. White garment | _____ To look at something very carefully |
| I. Neophyte | _____ A baptized person who wants to be Catholic |

In Short

- The RCIA includes multiple rites for catechumens and candidates.
- Some rites are required, others optional.
- Each rite brings you closer to God and to the Church.



Journey of Faith for Children, Catechumenate, C1 (826344)

Imprimi Potest: Stephen T. Rehrauer, CSsR, Provincial, Denver Province, the Redemptorists.

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Editors of the 2017 *Journey of Faith for Children*: Theresa Nienaber-Panuski and Pat Fosarelli, MD, DMin.

Design and production: Wendy Barnes, Lorena Mitre Jimenez, John Krus, and Bill Townsend. Illustration: Jeff Albrecht.

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