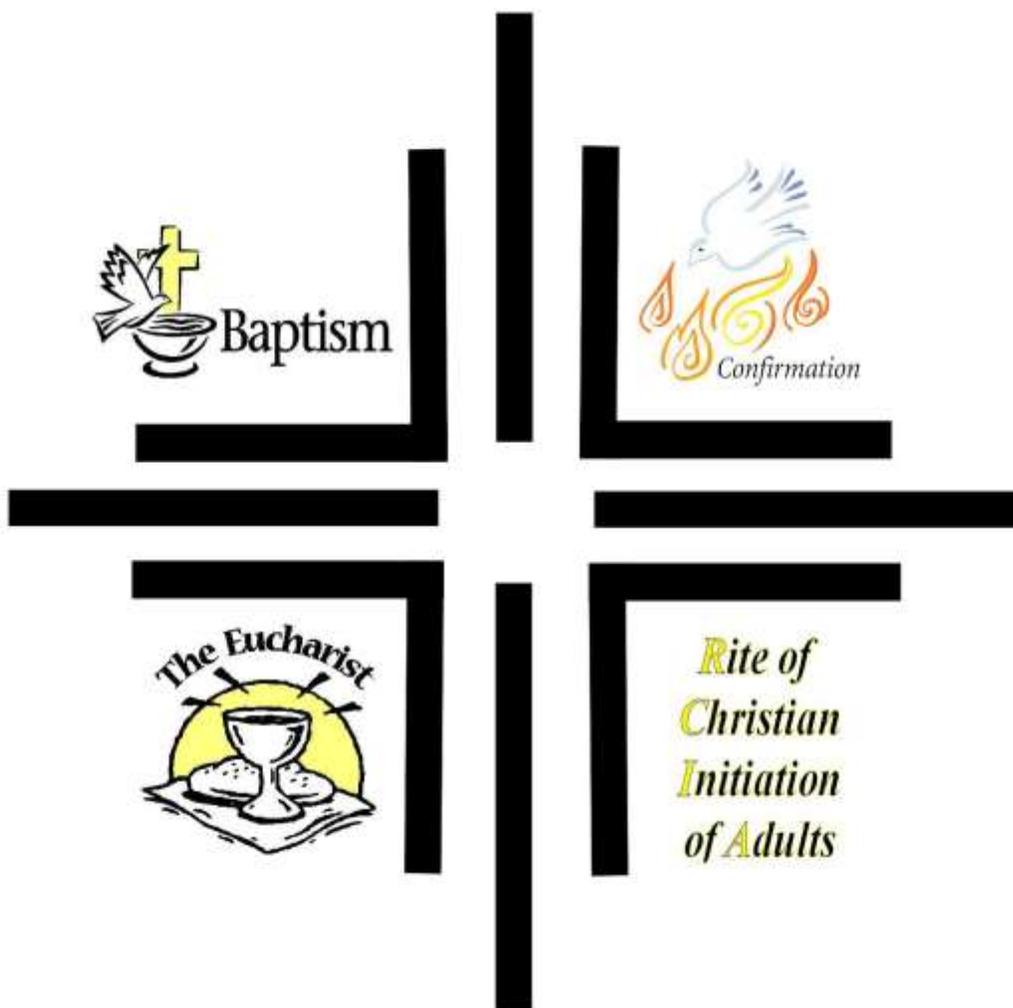


RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)

Information Guide



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The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a process that provides spiritual formation for those desiring to enter the Catholic Church through guided prayer (liturgy), study (catechesis), and fellowship (discipleship), it allows each person to learn more about their journey of faith and leads them to full participation in the Roman Catholic Church through the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation at Easter Vigil.

The RCIA Adult Formation of Our Lady of Grace Church is deeply rooted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), the Bible and building a community faith. The curriculum utilized are Alpha (Alphausa.org) and Symbolon (Formed.org).

The RCIA assists those who are exploring the possibility of full membership in the Church. There are several opportunities of discernment where one is asked to consider further formation in the faith. Because each person is at a different place in his or her journey of faith, at no time is anyone under any obligation to continue; you may always choose to delay or end the formation process or continue at a later time. While some may be ready to celebrate initiation at a particular point in their journey, others may not.

To provide adequate formation and instruction, those who are preparing for the Sacraments through the RCIA are expected:

- 1) Arrange meeting with RCIA Director, Marie Exberger, email or call directly at rcia@olgcv.org or 510-432-0623.
- 2) Attend formation sessions and rites. Realizing unforeseen circumstances and scheduling difficulties can arise; arrangements can be made for individual instruction for those who cannot attend a particular session.
- 3) Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation (Jan. 1st - Mary, Mother of God; Ascension Thursday - 40 days after Easter, this year May 29th; Aug. 15th - Assumption of Mary into Heaven; Nov. 1st - Feast of All Saints; Dec. 8th - Immaculate Conception; Dec. 25th - Christmas).

Baptism is the sacrament by which one becomes a member of the Church community. Through baptism we are cleansed of original sin, given faith, and made members of the Body of Christ that is the Church. The Roman Catholic Church recognizes baptisms performed according to the Trinitarian formula with a triple pouring or immersion. All those baptized in the Catholic Church and those who are baptized validly in another Christian Church are not re-baptized. Documentation (letter or certificate) of the baptism must be provided. Those who cannot provide documentation will be baptized conditionally. Eucharist is the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ in which the Church celebrates the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ. Confirmation is the Sacrament in which a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit is given to live the Catholic faith. It is administered by anointing with the sacred oil, Chrism.

Unpacking the RCIA Process

First Step: Initial Intake

For those interested in beginning the RCIA process, the first step is contacting Marie Exberger, Director of RCIA. A meeting time will be arranged to get to know you and your faith background as well as how the Lord has been working in your life to bring you to this point. Any questions you have will be answered and an overview of the process will be explained. An application form will be filled out to officially register you in the process at Our Lady of Grace.

Stage 1- Inquiry (ALPHA) & Precatechumenate

This first period of the RCIA process is ALPHA, a seven-week Inquiry session. This provides the inquirers (un-baptized or baptized) to hear the mystery of Christ proclaimed, ask questions, share experiences, and begin to feel at home in the faith community. Seeking the wisdom of Jesus in the Catholic Church together, we discover new-found meaning, hope, love, and faith. Formally named the “period of Evangelization and the Precatechumenate”, this is a period of indeterminate length that ends when it is decided that an inquirer is ready to participate in the celebration of the Rites of Acceptance and Welcoming.

ALPHA 2017	
DATE	TOPIC
Tuesday, September 26, 2017 @ 6pm	Is There More to Life than This?
Tuesday, October 3, 2017 @ 6pm	Who is Jesus?
Tuesday, October 10, 2017 @ 6pm	Why did Jesus Die?
Tuesday, October 17, 2017 @ 6pm	How Can I Have Faith?
Tuesday, October 24, 2017 @ 6pm	Why and How Do I Pray?
Tuesday, November 7, 2017 @ 6pm	Why and How Should I Read the Bible?
Tuesday, November 14, 2017 @ 6pm	Who is the Holy Spirit?

Rites of Acceptance and Welcoming

Reaching the point of initial conversion and wishing to become Christians, they are accepted as catechumens by the Church (RCIA 6.1)

The combined Rites of Acceptance (for those preparing for Baptism) and of Welcoming (for those who have already been baptized) mark the first gateway towards the Easter sacraments. These special rites are celebrated in the presence of our parish community here at Our Lady of Grace on Sunday, December 3rd 2017 at the 11:30am Mass. As they publicly declare their intention to continue toward full communion with the Catholic Church, inquirers and candidates are invited to more fully embrace the Gospel message with the help of God and are signed with the Cross to show that they belong to Christ. These Rites do not obligate anyone to become Catholic but allow the community to welcome and pray for those entering into the second phase of deeper formation in the catechumenate.

Stage 2 - Catechumenate

Having its root in the Greek "katechien" meaning "echoing down" this extended period of formation in the Christian life is devoted to passing on the deposit of faith given to the apostles by Jesus Christ and entrusted to His Church. It includes a thoroughly comprehensive catechesis on the truths of Catholic doctrine and moral life so that participants may come to understand and live faith as a disciple of Christ. RCIA Catechumenate sessions are held Tuesday evenings at 6:00pm – 8:00 PM.

Breaking Open the Word

Adults who have entered into a relationship with the Church through the Rite of Acceptance in preparation for baptism are "dismissed" at the end of the Liturgy of the Word during Sunday Mass each week. Breaking Open the Word gathers separately from the congregation during the Liturgy of the Eucharist to discuss the Gospel, this is Mother Church's way of feeding more richly the Word of God to those who cannot yet be fed by partaking of the Holy Eucharist. Dismissal provides catechumens an opportunity to discuss the Mass readings for that Sunday with a facilitator, and to experience more fully the impact of Sunday's Scriptures in their lives.

Rite of Sending

As the period of the catechumenate comes to an end, the Rite of Sending is celebrated at Sunday Mass to acknowledge the spiritual progress the catechumens and candidates have made, express approval of their election or recognition, and send them forth to the Bishop with assurance of our parish's care and support. To send a catechumen or candidate to the bishop means that we as a parish at Our Lady of Grace have discerned that the person is ready to enter the Catholic Church. In this Rite, those preparing for Baptism are invited to come forward and sign a book, which we call the "Book of the Elect," as a sign of their desire to be numbered among the chosen of God.

Rite of Election & Call to Continued Conversion

“Having progressed in faith and nearly completed the catechumenate, they are accepted into a more intense preparation for the sacraments of initiation.” (RCIA 6.2)

Across the entire world, Catholic bishops welcome those sent by the parish to gather together with their sponsors in what is known as the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion on the first Sunday of Lent. Celebrated at Christ the Light Cathedral in Oakland with all catechumens and candidates of the Diocese, these rites announce that seekers are ready to celebrate the Easter sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist and will enter into a 40-day period of purification and enlightenment in preparation.

Stage 3 – Purification and Enlightenment

During this period, we experience a shift in focus from instructional catechesis to interior reflection intended to enlighten the heart and mind with a deep knowledge of Christ the Savior. This time of solemn spiritual preparation is spent in reflection, spiritual reading, prayer, fasting, penance, and acts of charity.

Penitential Rite

The Penitential Rite is celebrated during Mass on the 2nd Sunday of Lent for those already baptized Christians who are seeking full communion with the Catholic Church. It calls candidates to a deeper repentance and total abandonment to the mercy of the Father who sent his only Son to die for our sins in preparation for the healing sacrament of Reconciliation. Our prayer for these candidates, and for ourselves, is that the presence among us of Jesus who is the sum of the Law and the Prophets will transfigure all our lives with his redeeming grace, bringing us to conversion – a genuine desire to be holy as he is holy.

Scrutinies

The Scrutinies are celebrated during Mass on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent for those who are preparing for the sacrament of Baptism. These Rites are celebrated to help deliver the elect from the power of sin and Satan, to protect them against temptation, and to give them strength in Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The universal Church hears the readings from Cycle A of the Lectionary of the Samaritan woman at the well, the healing of the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus. These readings were chosen to be the driving force of prayerful introspection, surrender and conversion.

Rite of Reception – Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

“Having completed their spiritual preparation, they receive the sacraments of initiation”. (RCIA 6.3) Finally, the great night arrives – the night of the Easter Vigil where the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are celebrated. The Elect are baptized into the Body of Christ and are joined by the candidates seeking full reception into the Catholic Church to be sealed with the Holy Spirit in Confirmation and welcomed at the Eucharistic Table of our Lord for the first time in Holy Communion!

Stage 4 - Mystagogy

Formation in the Catholic faith and life does not end with the Rite of Reception. Derived from the word mystery, mystagogy (literally a “deepening in the mysteries”) is a time of post-baptismal catechesis for continued spiritual growth, entering more fully into the life and unity of the Catholic community, and strengthening the Christian experience, especially in appreciation for the sacramental life. Although unwrapping the riches of the mysteries we proclaim is a lifelong journey for all of us, formal mystagogy as a part of the RCIA process continues weekly throughout the Easter season to Pentecost.

Stages and Rites of the RCIA for the Unbaptized

ALPHA - Period of Inquiry

provides an introduction to the Catholic faith and an opportunity to respond to God's call. Those participating in this period are called inquirers.

Sponsor

Each candidate must have a sponsor who is a baptized, confirmed, and active Catholic, and may be a spouse or fiancé. Sponsors must attend the various rites and rehearsals.

Rite of Acceptance into the Catechumenate

Those seeking initiation into the Catholic Church through Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist will assemble publicly for the first time and declare their intention to the Church. The Church, carrying out its apostolic mission, accepts them as those intending to become its members. This rite is an opportunity for the Our Lady of Grace Parish Community to support and pray for those preparing to enter the Church at Easter. It marks the formal beginning of the catechumenate. After the Rite of Acceptance, inquirers are called catechumens. Catechumen was used by the early Church for the unbaptized who were preparing to enter the Church. Today, it is still used to describe the unbaptized preparing to enter the Church through the RCIA.

Period of the Catechumenate

This is a time of supporting the growth of the catechumens in their faith, and continuing instruction.

Rite of Election

This liturgical rite will be celebrated with all the catechumens from the Oakland Diocese at Christ the Light Cathedral. This rite recognizes the readiness of the catechumens for the Sacraments of Initiation. After this rite, the catechumens are called the **Elect**.

Period of Enlightenment takes place during the Season of Lent. It is time of spiritual preparation for those who will enter the Church through Baptism at Easter. This preparation is celebrated with various rites on the Sundays of Lent. These rites continue conversion and deepen resolve to follow Christ with greater fidelity and provide an opportunity for the Our Lady of Grace Community to support and pray for the elect:

Presentation of the Creed

Presentation of the Lord's Prayer

The Creed and Lord's Prayer express the heart of the Church's faith and prayer. These presentations invite the elect to be enlightened by the light of faith and to come to a deeper understanding of the new spirit of adoption by which they will call God their Father.

Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, during the Great Vigil of Easter, Holy Saturday.

Mystagogy (Mystical Catechesis)

The newly initiated becomes fully part of the Church community by reflection and by participation with all the faithful in the Sunday Eucharistic Celebration. Mystagogy is a session that continues the faith journey from Easter to Pentecost.

Stages and Rites of the RCIA for those Baptized in other Denominations

Candidate is used for those in the RCIA who are baptized in another Christian community and now seek full membership in the Roman Catholic Church, and for baptized Roman Catholics preparing for the reception of the Eucharist and Confirmation.

Period of Inquiry provides an introduction to the Catholic faith and an opportunity to respond to God's call. Those participating in this period are called inquirers.

Sponsor

Each candidate must have a sponsor who is a baptized, confirmed, and active Catholic, and may be a spouse or fiancé. Sponsors must attend the various rites and rehearsals.

Rite of Election and Call to Ongoing Conversion

This liturgical rite will be celebrated with all the candidates from the Diocese of Oakland at Christ the Light Cathedral in Oakland during Lent. This rite recognizes the readiness of the candidates for the Sacraments of Initiation. After this rite, the candidates are called the **Elect**.

Sacrament of Penance

All those baptized in other Christian denominations must approach the Sacrament of Penance before reception into Full Communion with the Catholic Church and the reception of the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Confirmation.

Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

Profession of Faith and reception of the Eucharist during the Great Vigil of Easter.

Mystagogy (Mystical Catechesis)

The newly initiated becomes fully part of the Church community by reflection and by participation with all the faithful in the Sunday Eucharistic Celebration. Mystagogy is a session that continues the faith journey from Easter to Pentecost.

Stages and Rites of the RCIA for Catholics preparing for Eucharist and Confirmation

Candidate is used for those in the RCIA who are baptized in another Christian community and now seek full membership in the Roman Catholic Church, and for baptized Roman Catholics preparing for the reception of the Eucharist and Confirmation.

Period of Inquiry provides an introduction to the Catholic faith and an opportunity to respond to God's call. Those participating in this period are called inquirers.

Sponsor

Each candidate must have a sponsor who is a baptized, confirmed, and active Catholic, and may be a spouse or fiancé. Sponsors must attend the various rites and rehearsals.

Rite of Election and Call to Ongoing Conversion

This liturgical rite will be celebrated with all the candidates from the Diocese of Oakland at Christ the Light Cathedral in Oakland during Lent. This rite recognizes the readiness of the candidates for the Sacraments of Initiation. After this rite, the candidates are called the **Elect**.

Sacrament of Penance

All those baptized in other Christian denominations must approach the Sacrament of Penance before reception into Full Communion with the Catholic Church and the reception of the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Confirmation.

Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

Profession of Faith and reception of the Eucharist during the Great Vigil of Easter.

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