

# **PRAYER**

Let us start with a prayer

Would any parent like to lead us in  
prayer?

# Welcome!

Bringing your child to the Church for Baptism and Christian initiation is one of the most important and potentially life-changing steps you have ever taken as a parent. **We rejoice!** that you have brought your child to the Church to learn more about God and Christian initiation. We believe this step is just one of the many steps you and your child will take together in your journey of faith. And, we strongly believe that God's Holy Spirit is guiding you throughout this beautiful journey.

# Alleluia!

We rejoice with you as you begin this wondrous journey and we will do all we can to support you and your child along the way.

# The Journey

The Church's name for this journey that leads to Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist (the three Sacraments of Initiation) is the **RCIA**. RCIA stands for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The RCIA is the Church's way of preparing your child for full initiation into the Church. **We call it a journey of faith because it's not just some classes where we teach your child about the Catholic Church. Instead, we walk with you and your child together as you deepen your relationship with God and learn about the Scriptures, traditions, and teachings of the Catholic Church.**

Here are a few helpful things to know about this journey of faith that we call RCIA.

# Parents Accompany the Child

Imagine sending your child on a magnificent journey where she or he learned amazing truths, and grew and developed and changed. You would want to be a part of it, wouldn't you?

# Parent being part of the journey

Well, that's exactly why we ask you to accompany your child on this journey of faith. On this pathway, called RCIA, your child will grow in his or her understanding of God, the Scriptures, and the Church. She or he will develop a deeper relationship with Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. This spiritual growth and development is a type of "conversion," albeit a conversion that is appropriate for a child. The conversion is to the person of Jesus Christ. And **we ask that you, the parent, be a part of that conversion journey.**

**Our hope is that your child will "fall in love with Jesus"** and want to become his disciple. We also hope that the RCIA will be a positive, faith-enriching experience for you. Becoming a follower of Jesus is a main goal of the RCIA process, and it is important that you accompany your child as he or she learns what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and a member of his Church

# What is the RCIA Process?

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, promulgated by the Second Vatican Council, is the normative process for initiating adults in the Roman Catholic Church. The Code of Canon Law states: “What is prescribed in the canons on the baptism of an adult is applicable to all who are no longer infants but have attained the use of reason.”

# What does this mean?

**First and foremost**, it means that children who have reached catechetical age are no longer baptized using the Rite of Infant Baptism. Such children are to be treated as adults using the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults as it has been adapted for them.

Children of catechetical age (7 or older) are described in RCIA252 as those children who are

**“capable of receiving and nurturing a personal faith and of recognizing an obligation in conscience”.**

**Thus they are able to develop and grow in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (faith) and to know right from wrong.**

# What does this mean?

**Second**, such children are to celebrate **all of the Rites belonging to the initiation process for adults**:

Rite of Acceptance, Rite of Election, three Scrutinies, Minor Blessings, Exorcisms, Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens,

Rite of Sending, Presentation of the Creed and the Our Father, and the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist (all three) at the Easter Vigil.

# It's a Gradual Process

- Learning how to be a follower of Jesus takes time. The RCIA is a gradual process that varies according to the needs and religious history of your child. Some children and their families may have a well-developed relationship with God and an in-depth understanding of the Scriptures.
- Others may need more time to learn the stories of the Bible and the traditions of the Church. Whatever your story, we are eager to get to know you and your child.

# **RCIA – VARIOUS STAGES**

The RCIA process has various stages that your child will move through as her or his faith grows and develops.

The following are the four stages or periods in the journey and a bit about each.

# The First Period: Evangelization and Precatechumenate (Inquiry)

**The first period**, or stage, is an informal time of inquiry. This is a time for your child to get to know the Good News of Jesus Christ. It's a time to get to know God, the Bible, and the Church. It's a time to get to know the parish community. It's a time to begin to understand what it means to be a young disciple of Jesus Christ. This initial period lasts as long as you need for it to last. Once your child has begun to deepen her or his relationship with Jesus Christ and has a sincere desire for Baptism and full initiation, he or she will move on to the second period.

# The Second Period: The Catechumenate

**The second period** of formation in the RCIA is called the **catechumenate period**. A catechumen is a person who is preparing for Baptism. If your child is unbaptized and ready to learn about the Christian way of life, then he or she enters the period of the catechumenate. During this period of Christian formation, your child will be asked to come to Mass every Sunday in order to be in the midst of the parish community and hear the Word of God proclaimed. The formation of a catechumen is based on the Word of God that we hear every Sunday. Also during this period, through our actions as a Christian community, we will show your child how to live, work, pray, and worship as a Catholic Christian.

Once your child has developed her or his relationship with Jesus Christ and the Christian community, then she or he is ready to move onto the final period of preparation for Baptism.

# The Third Period: Purification and Enlightenment

The third period of the RCIA process is the final preparation for Baptism. This period coincides with the six weeks of Lent, and is a time of spiritual preparation for Baptism and the Sacraments of Initiation. During this Lenten period of spiritual reflection, there are special rituals that your child will celebrate in the weeks prior to Baptism. These Lenten rituals lead up to the most important of all rituals: the Easter Vigil. It is at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night that your child will be fully initiated into the Catholic Church by celebrating the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. Through these three Sacraments your child is united with Christ and with his Church

# The Fourth Period: Postbaptismal Catechesis (Mystagogy)

Through the Sacraments of Initiation your child is united with Christ and becomes a full member of the Catholic Church. That is a pretty amazing reality! In fact, it is such an amazing reality that Church spends the Fifty Days of the Easter season reflecting upon this great mystery. This fourth period where we reflect upon the Sacraments received at Easter is called the Period of Mystagogy. Mystagogy means “reflection upon the mysteries.”

# Finding Sponsors

The children need to have a sponsor that meets the following requirements:

- At least 16 years of age
- Have been confirmed
- Practicing Catholic, attends Mass
- Goes to reconciliation at least once a year
- If married, the marriage was inside the Catholic Church

If you cannot find someone that meets the above requirements, the parish can assist you, please contact Nora Paine via email: [nora@papercrown.org](mailto:nora@papercrown.org)

# The Rites Along the Way

The Church marks your child's journey to Christ with special liturgical rituals. These rituals celebrate your child's passage from one period of formation to the next. They mark his or her progress on the pathway to Christ. These special rituals also offer the parish community an opportunity to pray with and for your child and you.

As the child's parent and first teacher of the faith, you will present her or him to the parish community during these rituals. You stand as a witness to your child's growth in faith. You are not only a witness to your child's faith, but your presence at the rituals is a testament to your role as a continuing support and guide along the way.

In addition to presenting your child at the various rituals, the Church asks you to be involved in your child's initiation journey in other ways, too. Let's look more closely at the role of the parent in the RCIA process.

# **RITE OF WELCOMING FEBRUARY 8<sup>TH</sup> 10:30AM Mass**



**RITE OF ELECTION**  
**February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10:30am Mass**  
**and at the Cathedral at 4pm.**



# Your Role as Parent

As you know, the main role of the parent is to accompany or “walk with” the child on the journey to Baptism and Christian initiation. And, we described how you present your child at the liturgical rites that are along the way, too.

Now, we would like to give specific examples of your role as the parent of a child who is asking for Baptism and/or reception into the Catholic Church.

## **Pray With Your Child**

First and foremost, children learn to pray from their parents. It’s never too late to start praying together as a family! Even if you have not been comfortable with prayer before now, you can start by saying traditional Catholic prayers together at bedtime or mealtime.

(I have some books containing traditional Catholic prayers).

# Formation Sessions

Every parish is different,. These formation sessions may be weekly or they may be monthly, but it is important for you to attend for several reasons:

- a) Your child's formation depends upon your involvement. **“The children's progress in the formation they receive depends on . . .the influence of their parents”** (RCIA 254).
- b) You will enrich and enliven your own faith and your relationship with God and the Church. On the other hand, even if you are not interested in developing your own faith or making a commitment (or re-commitment) to the Church, you will be aware of what your child is learning.
- c) Take this opportunity to share faith and to pray together. Walking the faith journey together will give your family not only a special bond with Christ and the Church, but it will give your family members a special bond with each other, too.

## RESOURCE ARTICLE

Walking the Journey with Your Child

# Know where your child is in the process

You will know where your child is in the initiation process. Being involved in the process will allow you to understand where your child is in her or his faith development. Your involvement will help you to know if your child is ready to move on to the next period of the formation process.

# Discern Your Child's Readiness for the Sacraments

On more than one occasion throughout the initiation process you may be asked to give your personal impression of your child's faith development. In other words, we may ask,

“How's it going?”

Is your child growing in her or his relationship with God?

Is she enjoying and learning from the stories of the Bible?

Is he getting to know people at the parish and feeling a part of parish life?

Is she feeling drawn to Jesus Christ? Your thoughtful responses to questions like this will help you and the RCIA team discern if your child is ready to celebrate one of the rites of the RCIA.

As Lent and Easter approach, you will also be asked to help discern if your child is ready for Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

# Making Connections with the Parish

If possible, connect the children to the outreach activities that are held in conjunction with the religious education, school, and/or parish programs. These would include seasonal service projects such as: school supply collection; food pantry collection; Christmas gift collection and delivery of food; Lenten Rice Bowl collection; Easter basket preparation and delivery; and meal preparation for the local homeless shelter. From such joint ventures, the children would meet their peers and learn by example how the parish lives the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

# CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

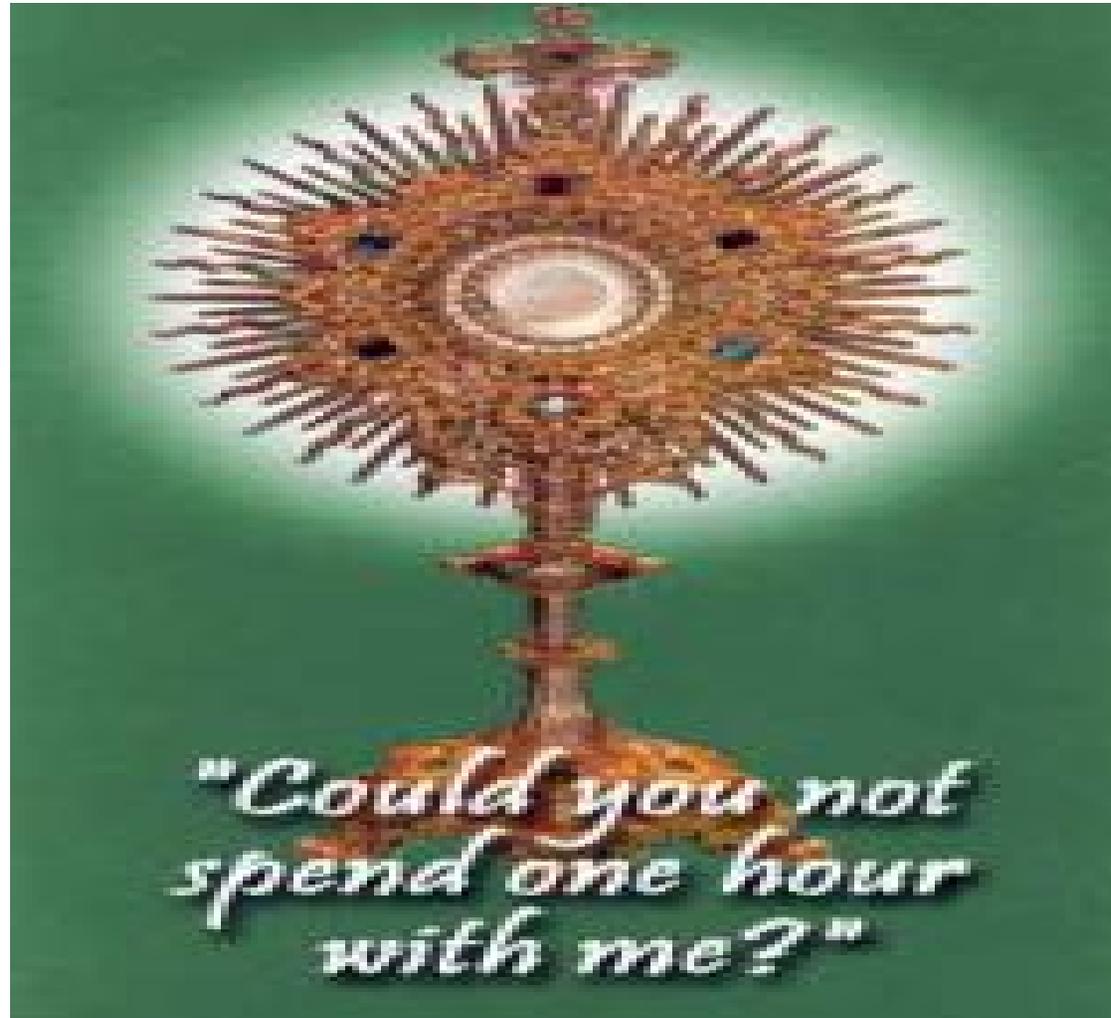
We encourage the children and their families to become active in that ministry. This would help them learn Catholic Social Teaching principles and what it means to put one's faith into action.

- It is important to also take time after each experience to
- reflect on the experience, and to name the ways in which
- they observe and experience Catholics living out the
- Gospel.

# Opportunities for Active Participation in Catholic Social Teachings

- Young children:
  - Fish Fry on 2/20, 2/27, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20, 3/27
  - St. Vincent de Paul Pantry
  - Rice Bowl
- For teenagers
  - Migrant Farm – February 7<sup>th</sup>
  - Ronald McDonald House – February 28<sup>th</sup>
  - Trinity Café – April 18<sup>th</sup>
  - Rice Bowl
  - For more information please email Barbara Houston at [bhouston@stmarktampa.org](mailto:bhouston@stmarktampa.org)

# Invitation



# INVITATION TO EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

– *Jesus is inviting us to spend time with Him. How can we refuse when He gave His life for us. Come and receive many “actual graces” in front of the Sacrament of LOVE.*

– “When you look at the Crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you then, when you look at the Sacred Host you understand how much Jesus loves you now.”

-Mother Teresa

- When: Wednesday, February 4th, 2015 and any first Wednesday of the month
- Time: Any time between 9am until 7:15pm.

# Celebrating Your Child's Baptism

Ultimately, this journey that we call the RCIA will lead to your child's Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. (Or, if your child is already baptized, he or she may be confirmed and receive Eucharist). These Sacraments of Initiation are the Church's most sacred and holy mysteries. Through the Sacraments, by the power of the Holy Spirit, your child will be united to Jesus Christ and become a member of the Church.

# Baptism



**ANY QUESTIONS????**

Thank you for coming  
and

May God bless you and your Family