

Good Shepherd RCIA Orientation

Welcome & Overview

Welcome to the second phase of Good Shepherd RCIA. Following are the four phases of the Good Shepherd RCIA process and the purpose for each:

1. **Inquiry:** A time to ask questions about the Catholic faith and get answers.
2. **RCIA (called the Catechumenate for the unbaptized):** A year-round series of sessions aimed at teaching the Catholic faith as well as Scripture education from a Catholic perspective.
3. **Purification and Enlightenment (P&E):** A series of sessions that occur just before the Rites of Initiation. The purpose is final preparation before being received into full communion with the Catholic Church.
4. **Mystagogy:** A time for new Catholics who were just received into the Catholic faith to learn how to “be” Catholic.

Benefits

Those who actively participate in RCIA can expect to receive the following two benefits:

1. **Knowledge of the teachings of the Catholic Church.** RCIA attendees who enter into full communion with the Catholic faith are asked to publicly profess that they believe all that the Catholic Church holds to be true. As a result of your time in RCIA, catechumens and candidates should respond to this question with integrity.
2. **Knowledge of Scripture from the perspective of the Catholic Church.** There are many ways to interpret the Bible. For those who regularly attend Breaking Open the Word (BOW) and participate in the discussions, should be well down the path to having a good understanding of Scripture from the Catholic perspective.

Expectations

Our responsibility is to present the teachings of the Church including the Bible in ways that are meaningful and understandable. Your responsibility is to make the effort required to digest the information presented. Our hope and, indeed, our expectation is that you will do the following:

- Complete the homework assignments before each session
- Regularly attend all Monday night RCIA sessions
- Pay attention and participate in the discussions during the sessions
- Read in advance the 4 readings for the Breaking Open the Word (BOW) sessions
- Regularly attend all Breaking Open the Word Sunday morning 9:00 AM sessions (Unless BOW is moved to a Mass with one of the Rites of RCIA.)

More on BOW: Breaking Open the Word (BOW) is held each Sunday morning at the 9:00 AM Mass. After the homily, the presider (celebrating priest) “dismisses” the catechumen and candidates or those on their way who then move to the St. Clare and St. Francis rooms to discuss the 4 readings proclaimed at that Mass. Catechumens and candidates are encouraged to read these 4 readings prior to Mass. The readings can be found at <http://www.usccb.org> and then clicking on the appropriate date in the calendar. The readings can also be found in the free Catholic app, Laudate. Additionally, Laudate has a very helpful section called Reflections that gives commentary on the readings of the day.

Other Helpful Information

Childcare: Childcare is generally available for the RCIA sessions but arrangements must be made at least a week in advance. Go to the parish website, click Ministries/Serve, and then Child Care. From there communicate with the Child Care Ministry Lead to schedule childcare.

Schedule: RCIA meets on Monday nights in rooms 2 and 3 of the parish hall. The sessions start at 7:00 PM and end no later than 9:00 PM. Food is provided and is usually available starting around 6:45 PM.

Resources needed: Each week bring your Catechism of the Catholic Church and the prayer booklet to the RCIA sessions. Also bring a bible to each session. This may be a traditional print bible or you can use one of the cell phone Bible apps.

Check-in: Upon arrival each Monday night catechumens and candidates should check in at the check-n station located on the counter in room 2. Sign in next to your name to confirm that you are present and then pick up your individual nametag.

Nametags: People come to RCIA from a variety of faith journeys. Each attendee has a colored nametag that identifies his or her specific situation:



Catechumen: A person who has not been baptized.



Christian Candidate: A person who was baptized in another faith tradition.



Catholic Candidate: A person who was baptized in the Catholic Church but has not received the sacraments of Eucharist and/or Confirmation.



Sponsor: A volunteer who is supporting the journey of faith for a Catechumen, Christian Candidate, or Catholic Candidate.



RCIA Team Member: A parish volunteer who helps with the RCIA ministry.

Session videos: As indicated above, all RCIA sessions are videoed and the links to these sessions are housed on the RCIA section of the parish website (see below). Our hope is that all catechumens, candidates and sponsors attend each and every session. However, life happens. If you do miss a session, please make up the session by reviewing the video. Please note, these videos can not be found on YouTube searches.

RCIA website: The RCIA website can be accessed from the Home page of the parish website by clicking Sacraments & Rites and then RCIA. You are an RCIA participant so click the link that reads "Access to the RCIA Participant Page". Following is the access information: The number 1000 in the password should be easy to remember. It is the physical street address for Good Shepherd (1000 Tinker Road):

 Password: rcia1000

Many resources including the latest version of this orientation document and the links to the session videos are housed here. Please spend a few minutes reviewing the list of resources.

Catechism video: The Catechism of the Catholic Church is central to your time in RCIA and it is important that all attendees know how to use this amazing book. The best source for this is to view the "The Introduction to the Catechism of the Catholic Church" video (28 minutes). The link to this video can be found on the RCIA website. All attendees are encouraged to review this video.

Definition of terms: It is common for catechumen and candidates to want to learn the definitions of Catholic terms. Rather than provide an extensive printed list of terms and definitions, we are offering an alternative solution. Create the following search in Google: "Definition of the Catholic term _____". When viewing search results, be sure to go to reliable website sources such as WIKI and Catholic website.

Faith sharing talks: While not mandatory, we strongly encourage all RCIA attendees to give a 5-7 minute faith sharing talk at one of the Monday night RCIA sessions. There is a sign-up sheet to schedule these talks in advance. Our goal is that each talk should be 5-7 minutes and no more. To help keep the faith sharing talks on schedule, we ask that those speaking create their talks by responding to the following questions or statements:

Catechumens and Candidates:

1. Give a brief summary of your faith journey before you came to RCIA
2. What motivated you to start RCIA?
3. What has your RCIA experience been like?
4. Would you recommend RCIA to others? Why?

Sponsors

1. Give a brief summary of your faith journey before you had a spiritual conversion (if you had one)
2. What happened to change the direction of your faith journey?
3. Where are you now in your faith journey?
4. Would you recommend being an RCIA sponsor to other Catholics? Why?

No pressure: Catechumen and candidates should never feel pressure to become Catholic. Our goal is to present the teachings of the Catholic Church and give you an opportunity to explore Scripture from the Catholic perspective. It is totally your decision whether you want to move forward or not to become Catholic.

Rites and next steps: The 4 phases of the RCIA process do not necessarily coincide with the Rites that catechumens and candidates experience as they journey towards full communion with the Catholic Church. These Rites, their requirements and the dates they are held are discussed from time to time during the weekly sessions. Father Ron is responsible for all Rites as well as transitioning from one RCIA phase to another. You should always feel free to discuss any issues concerning these with him after discussing the matter with your sponsor.

Missing information: If you are missing some resources indicated above or you need help with anything other than Rites and transitioning to the next RCIA phase, contact Keith. If Keith is not available, Father Ron can usually help:

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