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Dear Friend,

The purpose of this letter is to introduce you to the Association for Catechumenal Ministry (ACM), an apostolate founded by a group of clergy and laity to address and foster the full implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation in the United States.

The enclosed material contains an overview of ACM — who we are as well as the services we provide, from diocesan seminars to our newly published set of RCIA resources. We welcome any questions that you may have about the Association’s work.

The purpose of the Association for Catechumenal Ministry is to provide a communications, resource and education network for diocesan and parish personnel involved in the preparation of catechumens for initiation into the Catholic Church and of baptized Christians into full communion with the Catholic Church.

As you may note from the letterhead, ACM is under the counsel of several bishops. This is to ensure that the Association remains closely tied to the intentions, directives, and priorities at the heart of the universal Church. The Association is incorporated as an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

As you look over the information in this packet, please consider how ACM might best be of service to you. Thank you for your interest and support.

In Christ Our Lord,

William J. Keimig, MPM, MA
Director
Focus and Mission of the Organization
The Association for Catechumenal Ministry is an organization of Catholic clergy and lay people committed to providing a communications, resource and education network for diocesan and parish personnel involved in the preparation of catechumens for initiation into the Catholic Church, of baptized Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church, and of uncatechized Catholics for reception of Confirmation and First Eucharist. The Association’s resources and work reflect its focus on the complimentarity and indispensability of the various components (liturgical, pastoral, catechetical) of a comprehensive Christian Initiation process.

The Association carries out its mission by the following means:

- Maintaining a roster of speakers committed to the general philosophy of the Association with expertise in the area of Christian Initiation available to dioceses, parishes and Catholic educational institutions.
- Providing seminars, workshops and consultation services to dioceses seeking to develop their catechumenate formation ministries according to the principles of the Association.
- Commissioning texts, handbooks, and other resources for RCIA and RCIC formation consistent with the general philosophy of the Association.

The Association is committed to the following general principles:

1) The full and integral initiation of catechumens and candidates into the Church in its doctrinal, spiritual, moral and sacramental dimensions.
2) The inculcation in catechumens and candidates of a love for the Church, her traditions, her hierarchical character and her official teaching.
3) A model of Initiation in which the liturgical and catechetical elements are properly integrated without compromise of either, and both are recognized as pastoral companions.
4) A model of initiation that stresses the need for proper pastoring leading to full conversion.
5) A commitment to a catechumenal formation in which Catholic doctrine plays an integral and indispensable role.
6) A conception of the catechumenate as incorporation into the fullness of the Church that is lifelong, sacrificial, service-oriented, and irrevocable.
7) A commitment to the rites of the catechumenate, and of all Catholic liturgy subsequently, as endowed with God’s objective, redeeming and sanctifying power.
8) A commitment to catechumenal formation and celebration characterized by the “noble simplicity” required by Vatican Council II, so that RCIA does not become bureaucratized, administratively top heavy and excessively complex.
9) A commitment to the cooperative involvement of both pastors and lay catechists at every stage of the catechumenate.
10) An exploration of new models of catechesis in relation to traditional teaching procedures, especially those of early Christian catechumenal formation.
11) A commitment to making access to Christian Initiation available to all regardless of ethnic, social, or economic status.
12) A commitment to making access to a process of Christian Initiation available to all regardless of the size or resources of a parish, even in small parishes with limited resources.
ACM Publications

ON THE JOURNEY BOOK SERIES
This collection of books is designed to provide a parish with a practical, user-friendly set of resources to assist in the full implementation of the liturgical, pastoral, and catechetical aspects of the catechumenal process. Each publication is described below:

**RCIA Leader’s Manual  2nd Edition with CD © 2007**


This resource provides an unparalleled comprehensive aide for RCIA leaders. This book’s all-embracing contents include, for example, how to facilitate an evangelizing and welcoming mentality in the parish, how to recruit and train RCIA teams and sponsors, discerning the signs and stages of conversion, handling annulments and issues of baptismal validity, etc. Practical appendices contain an immense variety of useful forms, sample letters, and sample retreat formats, all copyable from the enclosed CD. The book also contains the entire set of full-color handouts used in ACM’s popular seminars.

$44.95 (was $55.95 ~ save 20%)  
Order Code: ERLM2

**RCIA Catechist’s Manual  2nd Edition © 2007**

ISBN: 1-933374-00-4

This newly-revised, spiral-bound book is designed to be a practical help to catechists by offering a structured yet highly flexible way of preparing for and presenting the catechetical portion of Christian initiation sessions. Together with the companion Participant’s Book, this best-selling resource allows catechists to prepare thoroughly for each meeting, and to present the faith both systematically and organically. This Manual provides users with 60 session plans, with full Scripture and Catechism references, definitions of key terms participants need to know, suggestions for music and prayers, discussion questions to use at each session, and helpful supporting appendices.

$39.95  
Order Code: ERCM2

**RCIA Participant’s Book  2nd Edition with CD & Booklet © 2007**


The 2nd edition of this acclaimed resource still features the content-rich, beautifully illustrated, and endlessly copyable collection of 380 handouts, but is now packaged even more affordably in a convenient and compact CD format, with all navigation tools, tables of contents, and indexes now bound together in a small saddle-stitched booklet. Browse this astounding collection of handouts on doctrine, lives of the saints, conversion testimonies, liturgical year pieces, prayers, psalms, and other topics, at home or anywhere a computer is accessible without the hassle and bulk of carrying around all the printed copies. And with so many different types of handouts, leaders not only enjoy the flexibility of creating a yearly program tailored to their participants’ needs, but also benefit from its unique cost-effective nature.

**You Only Buy the Participant’s Book Once! It’s Copyable & Printable!**

$189.95  
Order Code: ERPCD
**RCIA Godparent and Sponsor Handbook**  © 2008

ISBN: 978-1-933374-04-8

This inexpensive and succinct booklet provides a straightforward and practical aide to those serving as sponsors or godparents in the Christian initiation process. It is pragmatic, spiritual, down-to-earth, and easy to read. A unique feature of this fullcolor booklet is a home retreat for godparents and sponsors based on encountering Scripture through a highly-accessible form of Lectio Divina. This new resource enables parish RCIA leaders to provide a high-quality means of effectively communicating the Church’s intentions for this crucial ministry of companionship and conversion in the catechumenate.

1-9 copies: $7.00 each / 10 or more copies: $6.00 each  Order Code: ERGSH

**RCIA Overview Chart**  © 2006/2008

ISBN: 1-933374-02-0

Taken directly from the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults guidelines, this is a full-color fold-out chart showing the entire catechumenal process at a glance. It’s an easy-to-use reference tool ideal for training RCIA teams. Each period is divided into three aspects: liturgical, catechetical, and pastoral. This chart makes the information in the guidelines of the RCIA ritual book easy to understand. 7 ¾” x 10” folded, opens to 38 ½” x 10”.

1-4 copies: $6.00 each  5-19 copies: $5.00 each  20-49 copies: $4.50 each  Order Code: EROC2 / SROC2

**RCIA Ritual Book Tabs**  © 2007

These six-color tabs are designed for the U.S. edition of the Vatican document Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Durable and simple to install, these 59 tabs are precut and self-adhesive. Works with all editions of the ritual book.

$5.00  Order Code: RCIABT

**Rcia Catechist Formation Course Via Distance Education**

ACM has just published in 2009 a pioneering new way of conducting in-depth and inexpensive training for parish RCIA catechists and leaders. Without sacrificing personal interaction with trainers and advisors, this distance education approach is uniquely suited to the many hundreds of parishes that are striving to implement the RCIA process, but may not have access to significant in-diocese training, and do not have the funds to attend far away workshops or conferences.
The Catechumenal Process for Children

As ACM continues to work to publish our full set of RCIC resources, this portion of the website has been developed to provide a source of help and advice. It offers recommendations of certain other publications, as well as downloadable items of use in the RCIC process for parish leaders and parents.

The Catechumenal Process for Teenagers

This portion of ACM’s website has been developed to provide a comprehensive source for those working to assist in the initiation of teenagers. You will find saint stories for teens, lists of the best resources on numerous topic areas, recommendations of existing publications, tips for teaching all aspects of the deposit of faith, event suggestions, even a blog site to discuss issues with others in the field. There are many downloadable items, some for free, some for an online fee.

Spanish-Language RCIA

ACM has received an immense number of requests for materials in Spanish. While we work towards adapting and publishing our various books for Spanish-language RCIA, this portion of the website has been developed to provide items that are ready for use. Some of the items are free; others require an online fee to access and download.

Bible Study for Neophytes

This Bible Study, scheduled for publication in late 2009, will be available to help parishes meet the needs of those who have recently entered the Church. This study uses the Acts of the Apostles as the means to deepen neophytes in their understanding of the Church, its missionary nature, and the power of the call to give over our lives to the work of spreading the Kingdom of God. It is designed for new Catholics following the period of mystagogy.

Order Online at: www.ltp.org
Comments about A

“These new resources represent a new level of mature theological and pastoral reflection on the integral implementation of the RCIA; they are invaluable for both leaders and participants.”

~ Bishop William Lori, Diocese of Bridgeport, CT

“That whole Participant’s Book is copyable! And they give it to you on CD so you can print it all you want – for anything you want!!”

~ Randy Mueller, Faith Formation Director, Nativity of Our Lord Parish, St. Paul, MN

“We have been using the books in our RCIA process for the past year. The quality of the preparation they provide, the thoroughness of the presentations, and resulting benefits to our catechumens, candidates, and sponsors has been outstanding!”

~ Gary and Patricia Norris, RCIA Directors, St. Gertrude Parish, Madeira, OH

“Unique, innovative, comprehensive, faithful, and totally affordable. What else do you need to know? The bar has been raised in catechetical materials. These books represent a new paradigm from which all others will be judged. These books are a catechist’s dream.”

~ Walt Bechtell, RCIA Director, Mother of Sorrows Parish, Murrysville, PA

“WOW!! What a treasure chest! I’m so THRILLED!”

~ Ann Wittenauer, St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Upper Marlboro, MD

“I received copies of the long-awaited Catechist’s Manual and RCIA Participant’s Book. They are very handsome sets and should be in parishes for years to come. You and your team have done something truly extraordinary.”

~ Kevin Thornton, Publishing Manager, The Liturgical Institute, University of St. Mary of the Lake / Mundelein Seminary, Chicago, IL

“It is like coming into an oasis after several years of delivering too experiential a course that infantilized the Faith. I cannot tell you the joy of having a tool to help us deliver the riches of the Truth.”

~ Michael Hughes, Birmingham, England

“These precious publications are the fruit of nine long years of hard work! The Diocese of Bagdogra in north-eastern India is a Mission Diocese. We have many catechumens who need solid catechetical formation. The RCIA Catechist’s Manual will be of immense use.”

~ Bishop Thomas D’Souza, Diocese of Bagdogra, India
“Thank you for these phenomenal resources. We are building RCIA from the ground up at our parish and the Catechist’s Manual and Participant’s Book are invaluable. God bless your work!”  ~ Kathy Coughlin, St. Bernard-St. Hedwig Parish, Thorp, WI

“It took me almost a year to sell the ACM concept to my pastor. He was becoming increasingly wary, because he did not have anything tangible to view. I want you to know, however, that when he reviewed the finished material he was thrilled. He is now just as enthusiastic as I am. Congratulations. You and the rest of the ACM staff have developed an extraordinary resource. It is very professional and easy to use.”  ~ Susan Kehoe, Director, Faith Formation, St. Anthony Parish, Des Moines, IA

“Being the Director of the RCIA program here at my parish, I’m finding your RCIA material as being one of simplicity and knowledge. We are enjoying the material and it is making our presentations to the candidates a pleasure and joy.”  ~ Deacon Levi Jelks, RCIA Director, St. Anthony Parish, Atlanta, GA

“The materials are beautiful and very user friendly. When we handed out the manuals last night, the students flipped through them and looked like they had just walked into the best candy store in the world. Great job!”  ~ Fr. Robert Matya, Newman Center, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE

“The materials arrived today and are breathtakingly beautiful, catholic-ly expansive, and combine a sense of the visionary with the practical. There’s nothing like them. Congratulations from us all!”  ~ Dr. Petroc Willey, Deputy Director, Maryvale Institute, Birmingham, England

“I wish to offer my congratulations to all those involved in the production of these valuable resources which are undoubtedly a significant contribution in the area of catechetics. It is my hope that these new publications for the RCIA and adult faith formation will be promoted widely in the Archdiocese of Sydney.”  ~ Bishop Julian Porteous, Episcopal Vicar for Evangelization and Renewal, Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia

“This comprehensive presentation of our faith is an excellent resource for any parish RCIA team and Adult Religious Education program.”  ~ Edward Cardinal Egan, Archdiocese of NY
ON THE JOURNEY SERIES
for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

RCIA
Leader’s Manual

Barbara A. Morgan
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William J. Keimig
MANAGING EDITOR

This Leader’s Manual was authored and edited at various stages by a team of clergy, catechists, directors of religious education, RCIA directors, diocesan officials, and theologians including:

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A Product of

THE ASSOCIATION FOR CATECHUMENAL MINISTRY (ACM)
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Using the Leader’s Manual

This Leader’s Manual is part of the ON THE JOURNEY series of books intended to be used for the Order of Christian Initiation. This Manual is designed to be a practical help and a comprehensive guide for those in RCIA leadership, both clergy and laity. Together with its two main companions in the ON THE JOURNEY series—the Catechist’s Manual and the Participant’s Book—this Leader’s Manual should enable a parish to successfully implement the liturgical, catechetical, and pastoral aspects of the Christian initiation process. Although this Manual may be used as a reference tool, it is intended to provide an RCIA leader with a much more systematic and thorough understanding of the catechumenal process if read in chapter order.

The Purpose of Section One: Main Text

The chapters in this Manual’s main section provide an RCIA leader with a clear and thorough explanation of the practicalities of RCIA ministry. The chapters of the Introduction establish the foundation for understanding the necessity of each of the aspects of the RCIA process: liturgical, catechetical, and pastoral. This foundational material is followed by an in-depth and pragmatic set of chapters unpacking each of these aspects. The main section of the Manual concludes with a portrait of a new Catholic as a means to maintain focus on the evangelical goal of the entire endeavor.

The Purpose of Section Two: Appendices

The entire appendix section of this book is copyable, and is also provided on CD-ROM (found in the front pocket of this Manual) to allow for unlimited printing or downloading for modification to a parish’s needs. The appendices contain all forms that would normally be used for participants, as well as other useful forms to assist RCIA leaders in recruiting and working with team members, godparents, and sponsors. These forms are designed to be appropriate for international use. In addition, the appendices provide a wealth of text and ideas for many different components of the RCIA process, such as letters, advertising, bulletin items, prayers, liturgy reminders, and retreats. These are things that facilitate the full implementation of the catechumenal process, but would ordinarily take an RCIA leader a great amount of time to develop.

Any of the material in these seven appendices may be modified in whatever way a parish RCIA leader deems appropriate. The CD-ROM contains only these seven appendices, not the entire Leader’s Manual. The PDF documents on the disc are programmed to allow a user to highlight the text on-screen and move it to a hard drive, or simply to print a document with its formatting intact.

The original purchaser (parish, local parochial institution, or individual) has permission to use and reproduce the seven appendices of this Leader’s Manual, without charge and without further permission, subject to the following terms and conditions:

- Appendix items can be modified by the purchaser for local use, and do not have to be kept intact as created by the publisher.
- All handouts or text resulting from use of the appendix are to be offered free of charge by the original purchaser. Materials in this book cannot be duplicated to be sold.
- The following uses are not allowed without first applying for an additional license from ACM: Any art originally present in the appendix section may not be used as part of a permanent or quasi-permanent installation, such as mosaic tiles, stained-glass windows, altars, pews, chairs, and other furniture or as part of a building structure. Furthermore, the art may not be used as part of a logo, trademark, or other identifying mark of any institution, association, organization, or program, regardless of whether it is non-profit or for-profit. Neither the CD-ROM nor the individual files may be copied or resold by any individual or organization, or become part of any electronic product.

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The Purpose of Section Three: Seminar Handouts

The seminar handouts are not intended to be an integrated part of the preceding two sections of the Leader’s Manual. Instead, they are provided for those
Samples from the RCIA Leader’s Manual: Introductory Section

who take advantage of ACM’s Team Training and Catechist Training Seminars, or who view them in a recorded format. These highly practical handouts are also used to complement ACM’s RCIA distance-education module, which is designed for those who cannot attend ACM’s live seminars or who do not have access to a recorded version. The twenty Team Training handouts provide a comprehensive and highly detailed walk through the three aspects (liturgical, catechetical, and pastoral) of the Christian initiation process. The seventeen Catechist Training handouts break down the work of the catechist into three parts — method, content, and themes for each of the periods of the RCIA process — providing an in-depth picture of what it means to teach for conversion, and how that teaching serves the liturgical and pastoral aspects of passing on the faith.

Both sets of handouts make significant use of sacred Scripture and relevant magisterial documents to illustrate points and develop themes, thereby remaining closely tied to the living sources that grant universal authority and ensure fidelity to the work of serving God’s newest chosen ones in the life of each local church.

The RCIA Overview Chart

The foldout Overview Chart found in the front pocket of this Manual looks daunting at first, but the idea is to provide a picture of the whole process, from start to finish. Many parishes have found this chart valuable for training their RCIA teams. Across the top are the names of each of the periods of the RCIA process and the status of the participants, as well as terms used to identify them at any given stage. Notice that no timeframes are specified except for the period of purification and enlightenment, which normally coincides with Lent, and the neophyte year, normally extending from one Easter to the next. All of the references quoted in the chart are taken from the RCIA ritual book; as with all ecclesiastical documents, the numbering refers to paragraphs, not pages. Down the side, the journey of each possible type of participant is tracked (unbaptized in green, baptized uncatechized in red, and baptized catechized but not Catholic in blue), as well as the responsibilities of the Church in each period of the catechumenal process. The dark bars denote the major liturgical gateways of the process, and continue to use the color scheme, with the combining of red and blue to make purple in the case of baptized participants, since both of these categories of people can go through the same gateways. Each period is divided into the three aspects: liturgical, catechetical, and pastoral. This has been done to make information in the guidelines of the ritual book more accessible, and to undo some of the confusion that arises when using it. When reading through this Leader’s Manual, the Overview Chart should be kept open to aid in grasping the larger context of the particular subject at hand.

The Tabs for the RCIA Ritual Text

The RCIA ritual text is one of the Church’s largest and most complex liturgical publications. Its English-language version is offered by a number of different publishing houses, sometimes with differing appendices. The tabs included in the front pocket of the Leader’s Manual are designed to work with those versions of the text which are published in the United States. Although other versions are published in different countries, these tabs will be applicable to the main text of the book in all cases. The pagination will differ, and the tabs for the U.S. version of the appendices may not suit, but the vast majority of the tabs will be usable with any English-language edition. The result of applying these tabs is a significantly-greater ease in navigating the ritual text. ACM exists to foster the full implementation of the Christian initiation process. Successful implementation necessitates the extensive use of the ritual text by RCIA leaders, both clergy and laity. These tabs have been created to allow that most fundamental of texts to be more user-friendly.

As a final note to set the tone for the rest of this Manual, it is important to place this work in proper relation to its goal: helping those in RCIA leadership to be at the service of the Holy Spirit’s work of conversion. The catechumenate seeks to impart an understanding of the Catholic faith in such a way as to transform the life of the catechumen or candidate. The RCIA process not only results in a change of status with respect to the Church, but also a change of status with respect to God. The process is intended to be life-changing. Conversion, seen as a progressive process, involves various stages of change. Simply stated, conversion involves a turning from something coupled with a turning towards something else. “The Christian faith is, above all, conversion to Jesus Christ” (GDC 53). Whatever an inquirer’s original reason for coming to RCIA, it is a good one — it is the reason God has used.
However, by the end of the RCIA process this original motivation must be cultivated, encouraged, and purified so that an inquirer can come to the conviction that he or she cannot imagine living the rest of his or her life outside of the Church.

A fully implemented catechumenate—making available the liturgical, catechetical, and pastoral aspects that the Church knows will bear fruit—is at the heart of the Church’s mission to evangelize, to teach, and to sanctify. It calls forth a significant and consistent effort from the clergy and laity directly involved, and an evangelical attitude within the welcoming parish community. If undertaken, the personal investment implied in this Leader’s Manual places an RCIA leader in communion with all those down through the centuries whose sacrifice to prepare a Godly welcome for those as yet unknown allows them to echo the words of St. Paul: “For I want you to know how greatly I strive for you … and for all who have not seen my face, that their hearts may be encouraged as they are knit together in love, to have all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:1-3).
Adult Inquirer Information Form

Information on this form is held in confidence and is not shared without your permission.

Today's Date: ____________________

Name: First: ____________________ Middle: ____________________ Last: ____________________

Maiden Name (if applicable): ____________________

Date of Birth: ____________________ Age: ____________________

Place of Birth: ____________________

(include locality (town, city, county, etc.), region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

Name of Father: ____________________

Name of Mother: ____________________

1. CONTACT INFORMATION

Full Mailing Address: ____________________

Phone: (Daytime) ____________________ (Evening/Weekend) ____________________

Cell/Mobile Phone: ____________________ Occupation: ____________________

Email: ____________________ (Home) ____________________ (Other) ____________________

II. RELIGIOUS HISTORY

1. What, if any, is your present religious affiliation? ____________________

2. Have you ever been baptized? □ Yes □ No □ I am not sure

   If you answered “Yes” to Question 2, please provide the following information:

   (a) In what denomination were you baptized? ____________________

   (b) Date or your approximate age when you were baptized: ____________________

   (c) Baptismal name (if different from current name): ____________________

   (d) Place of Baptism (name of church/denomination): ____________________

   (e) Address, if known: ____________________

   (f) Location, if known: ____________________

   (include locality (town, city, county, etc.), region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

3. If you were baptized as a Catholic, check those sacraments you have already received:

   □ Penance (Confession) □ Eucharist (First Communion) □ Confirmation

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III. CURRENT MARITAL STATUS

Check the appropriate statement(s) below and provide any information requested beneath each statement.

- 1. I have never been married.
- 2. I am engaged to be married.
- (a) Your Fiancé(e)’s Name: __________________________________________________________
- (b) Your Fiancé(e)’s Current Religious Affiliation (if any): ________________________________
- (c) For you: ❑ This is my first marriage. ❑ I have been married before.
- (d) For your fiancé(e): ❑ This is his/her first marriage. ❑ My fiancé(e) has been married before.
- 3. I am married.
- (a) Your Spouse’s Name: ___________________________________________________________
- (b) Your Spouse’s Current Religious Affiliation (if any): ________________________________
- (c) For you: ❑ This is my first marriage. ❑ I have been married before.
- (d) For your spouse: ❑ This is my spouse’s first marriage. ❑ My spouse has been married before.
- (e) Date of Marriage: __________________________________________________________________
- (f) Place of Marriage: __________________________________________________________________
  (include locality (town, city, county, etc.), region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)
- (g) Officiating Authority of Marriage:____________________________________________________ 
  (civil government, non-Christian minister, Christian minister, Catholic cleric)

- 4. I am married, but separated from my spouse.
- 5. I am divorced and I have not remarried.
- 6. I am a widow/widower and have not remarried since my spouse’s death.

IV. FAMILY INFORMATION

List the name(s) of any children or other dependents (e.g., Daughter — Jane; Stepson — John).

Relationship: _______________ Name: __________________________ Age: ______
Relationship: _______________ Name: __________________________ Age: ______
Relationship: _______________ Name: __________________________ Age: ______
Relationship: _______________ Name: __________________________ Age: ______
Relationship: _______________ Name: __________________________ Age: ______

Adult Inquiry Information Form — page 2
V. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What or who has led you to want to know more about the Catholic Faith?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

2. Please describe the types of religious education you have received, as a child and as an adult.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

3. What contact have you had with the Catholic Church to date?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

4. What are some of the questions or concerns you have about the Catholic Church?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

5. At this point in time, which of the following statements best describes your present feelings and thoughts about the possibility of joining the Catholic Church? (please circle one)

A. I need much more information about the Catholic Church before I would consider joining.

B. I am considering joining, but I am still unsure about it.

C. I am fairly sure that I would like to join, but I still need some time to study and pray about it.

D. I am fairly sure that I want to join the Catholic Church.
Sample text that could be used in a parish bulletin, descriptive flyers, or other RCIA advertising:

A walk through the RCIA process in the parish bulletin:

Here are ideas for bulletin announcements that raise the awareness among parishioners of the ministry of Christian initiation going on in the parish as it unfolds through the periods and rites of the process. Depending on what is intended, one or more questions or answers might appear in the parish bulletin at appropriate times.

How does our parish attract inquirers each year who consider becoming Catholic?
The short answer is you! When any parish has many inquirers year after year, it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit as parish members opens their hearts to welcome others. Members of a welcoming and evangelizing community take seriously their call to share the Divine message of salvation. It happens in parish families, in the workplace, in gatherings with friends and neighbors, and in daily contacts. Give thanks to God as he continuously strengthens each of us who seek to do his will in offering a gentle, humble, and clear welcome to the Catholic faith. “Go out into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15)

What is RCIA?
The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the process, established for the universal Church, for individuals to become Catholic and receive the sacraments of initiation – Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. This initiation process also involves a parish community experiencing a renewal in faith as it prepares and welcomes new members into the Church. The Rite speaks of conversion as a “spiritual journey.” Centered on fostering a deep relationship with Jesus and the Church he founded, this journey takes place through distinct stages over a period of time suitable to bring about a thorough catechesis, significant experience of the parish community, and commitment to the liturgical and moral life of the Catholic faithful. The RCIA process is a restoration of the ancient catechumenate, arising within the first three centuries following the era of the apostles. It was the early Church’s way of Christianizing the pagan Roman Empire. The Second Vatican Council called for the restoration and use of this venerable and powerful method of initiation for the worldwide Church.

Has someone in your life shared his/her love of Scripture with you? Would you like to share that love and gift with another?
Thanks to the generosity of our parishioners, Bibles are given to every adult and child in our RCIA process as a gift from our parish community. Our parish RCIA process is in need of donations for Bibles to give to our adults and children inquiring to be one with us. Bibles donated for those in the RCIA process are given to participants at a special time during our weekly gatherings. The cost is $15. Please make checks payable to our parish and indicate at the bottom that it is for an RCIA Bible. Thank you. “Keep this book of the law on your lips. Recite it by day and by night, that you may observe carefully all that is written in it; then you will successfully attain your goal.” (Joshua 1:8)

Who is RCIA for?
1. Persons in need of Baptism.
2. Persons baptized in another Christian tradition who desire to become Catholic.
3. Persons baptized Catholic in need of First Communion and/or Confirmation.

There were a number of limitations to private instruction. The priest was the only member of the Catholic community with whom the inquirer had contact, apart from any supporting family and friends. Private instruction did not ensure that the inquirer had a lived experience of the Catholic faith, or was exposed to authentic Christian charity as lived in a parish community.
How long is the RCIA process?
The time varies, but is rarely shorter than six months or longer than three years. The Church greatly respects the time each person needs for conversion and decision. The RCIA text gives guides for discerning this on a case-by-case basis.

What is happening next Sunday at Mass for those ready to move forward in our parish’s RCIA process?
The initial inquiry (precatechumenate) period for our parish’s group of inquirers will be moving into the second stage, with our first opportunity for unbaptized inquirers to go through the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, and baptized inquirers to go through the Rite of Welcoming next Sunday. The first phase of the journey of initiation has been a time for seekers to hear the mystery of Christ proclaimed. The inquirers have consciously and freely sought the living God and entered the way of faith and conversion as the Holy Spirit opens their hearts. We ask you to please pray for the inquirers as they continue their conversion journey and for our RCIA process as we assist them in moving toward a closer relationship with God. Your prayers are critical to the success of our program. We will continue to keep you informed of the initiation process and progress of those considering joining the Church. We invite you to take an active role in welcoming our soon-to-be catechumens and candidates, and to be models of faith and Christian charity for them.

What is the RCIA Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens?
The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens is for inquirers in the RCIA process who are preparing for their Baptism. They are now ready to publicly declare their intention to continue their journey toward becoming Catholics. At this Rite, they are asked to more fully embrace the Gospel message with the help of God, and are also signed with the Cross to show that they now belong to Christ, the Shepherd of souls. In this Rite, the parish community has the opportunity to more fully participate in and pray for those in the RCIA process. At Sunday Mass, some of the inquirers who are considering joining the Catholic Church are going through the Rite of Acceptance. This Rite places these catechumens in a formal relationship with the universal Church. By Church law, the Pope and all bishops are to pray for those who have gone through this Rite. We encourage all parishioners to pray for these souls as well, as they continue in the initiation process over the coming months, and to reach out to them as fellow members of the Household of the Faithful.

What is the RCIA Rite of Welcoming?
The Rite of Welcoming is for inquirers who have been previously baptized and are ready to publicly declare their intention to continue their journey toward full communion with the Catholic Church. At this Rite, they are asked if they are ready to listen to the apostles’ instruction, gather with the worshipping community in prayer, and join that community in the love and service of others. They are signed with the Cross to show that they belong to Christ.

Why is the parish community important at the Rites of Acceptance and Welcoming, and when will these Rites be celebrated?
Members of the parish community should affirm that they are ready to help and support the RCIA candidates seeking to follow Christ. The Rites of Acceptance and Welcoming are celebrated at a time designated by the parish, and can be offered multiple times, depending upon when a given inquirer is ready to move forward.

What was the ceremony celebrated last Sunday at Mass?
Last Sunday we celebrated two Rites of initiation for inquirers in the RCIA process: the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens (for those preparing for their Baptism) and the Rite of Welcoming (for those already baptized in another Christian tradition who are seeking full communion with the Catholic Church). The following catechumens celebrated the Rite of Acceptance:
[name]
The following candidates celebrated the Rite of Welcoming:
[name]
A very special thanks to all who helped in any way with the celebration. Please continue to pray for our catechumens and candidates as they now enter into a period of deeper formation in the RCIA process.
Why are RCIA participants dismissed in the middle of the Mass? This Sunday, at one or more of the morning Masses, those adults preparing to be initiated into the Catholic Church will be dismissed at the end of the Liturgy of Word. This will continue each Sunday until Easter when, at the Easter Vigil, those who are ready will join us at the Table of the Eucharist for the first time. The parish is not sending them out because they are somehow “unworthy” to stay for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Though they cannot yet come to the Table of the Eucharist, Mother Church still has an obligation to feed those who have entered into a relationship with her through the Rites of Acceptance and Welcoming which were celebrated recently. His Word is their only food during this period. Instead, the participants depart from the Mass with their godparents and sponsors (if available), and one or more RCIA team members, to go out to discuss the Mass readings for that Sunday and to experience more fully the impact of the Scriptures in their lives. This time is informally known as “Breaking Open the Word.”

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the one who belongs to God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

What is the RCIA Rite of Sending? Across the entire world, Catholic bishops on this first Sunday of Lent will welcome those sent by the parish to gather together with their godparents and sponsors in what is known as the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion. The Rite of Sending, ordinarily held earlier on the same day, offers the parish community an opportunity to acknowledge the spiritual progress the catechumens and candidates have made, express approval of their election or recognition, and send them forth to our bishop with assurance of the parish’s care and support. To send a catechumen or candidate to the bishop means that a parish has discerned that the person is ready to enter the Catholic Church. In Sacred Scripture, the Book of Revelation makes reference to a “Book of Life,” in which are written the names of those who have chosen to follow the Lord Jesus and be baptized. Those who are already baptized, as Catholics or in other denominations, had our names written in the Book of Life at our Baptism. 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.

What is the RCIA Rite of Election? This Rite marks a key moment. For the catechumens this Rite signifies that they have been called by Christ and attests to the reality that only those mystically claimed by Christ will enter Heaven. St. John writes, “If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev 20:15). Throughout the RCIA process, catechumens should have become increasingly involved with the parish community. The community, with godparents representing the parish, will wholeheartedly acclaim the participants’ readiness. It is appropriate for the bishop to recognize them because he is the sign of unity of the particular Church, and it is the parish community’s responsibility to bring those in RCIA into the fullness of the life of the Church. The godparents give public testimony about the catechumens. The godparents’ role is very significant; they represent the community and are asked during this Rite to make serious statements about the catechumens. The decision of an RCIA participant to go through this Rite means that the judgment and decision-making (of both the catechumen and the parish) about whether to enter the Catholic Church has ended. From this point forward, they are no longer catechumens but are called the “elect.” They have been chosen to enter into the final period of preparation for initiation, and called by the bishop, their shepherd, to the holy mysteries to be celebrated that Easter.

What is the RCIA Rite of the Call to Continuing Conversion? For all who have been baptized, the reality of being chosen and claimed by Christ took place at their Baptism. This is true for the baptized candidates as well. Therefore the Rite of Election is inappropriate for them; they are already among the elect in Christ. Instead, the candidates are “called to continuing conversion,” and thus their intention to be fully initiated and share in the Eucharist is recognized. This Rite also takes place before the bishop, normally as part of the same liturgical event as the Rite of Election for those who are unbaptized. With their sponsors standing in support of them, the candidates are addresses by the bishop: “Hear the Lord’s call to conversion and be faithful to your baptismal covenant.” (RCIA 454) Together with the elect, the candidates are thereby moved by this Rite into a period of intense spiritual preparation.
What does Lent have to do with those becoming Catholic?
In Lent, RCIA participants move into the final period of preparation for the sacraments. They have been nourished by the graces of various liturgical Rites throughout the RCIA process, which have helped them to embrace God’s call. In Lent, God pours purifying and enlightening graces upon them, through the spiritual preparation they receive in RCIA sessions, the special Rites that mark the Sundays of Lent, and the prayers offered for them by the faithful.

How should the RCIA process encourage all Catholics to enter into Lent more deeply?
The Church, in the RCIA process, calls this proximate time immediately preceding initiation the period of “Purification and Enlightenment” for those in the RCIA process. That is what Lent is meant to be for all of us, who are already receiving the graces poured out through the sacraments of the Church. The Church calls us to reflect on our own baptismal graces, through prayer, penance, and almsgiving. We are also called to pray for those who are approaching the Easter sacraments of initiation. We are called to examine our lives through increased prayer and penitential practice; identify sins that keep us from becoming holy; purify ourselves through the sacrament of Reconciliation; and express our gratitude to God through the love of the poor by giving from our material and spiritual bounty. Throughout Lent we enter into the Passion of Jesus Christ. We turn our hearts and minds in prayer to our own Way of the Cross, we call our own wounds by name, and we give them to the Divine Healer. When we behold the empty tomb at Easter we can be filled with joy, believing with complete certainty that those chains that bind us have been broken, and that life, not death is our birthright.

How can every Catholic make Lent a time of “purification and enlightenment”?
We can attend weekday Mass. We can reflect on the Creed, taking each statement of belief and asking ourselves if we do believe, and what it means in our everyday lives. We can go to adoration and go to Confession. We can attend our parish penance service. We can pray the Stations of the Cross, pray the Liturgy of the Hours, pray the rosary. We can give alms, in a genuinely sacrificial manner, to the poor. As Catholics we know all of these things. It is not a lack of “things to do” that have many of us scratching our heads on Holy Thursday wondering why Lent was really not any different for us than any other forty days throughout the year. What we lack is a conversion of the heart. We don’t have to seek far to hear God speak to us. The Church in her wisdom provides us in the Liturgy of the Word at Mass what our hearts yearn to hear. In the Lenten liturgies the Church prays what she believes and teaches, and in word and sacrament the Lord directs us toward his Divine heart.

What is the Penitential Rite?
For those baptized Christians seeking to enter full communion with the Catholic Church, this Rite helps them to prepare for the healing sacrament of Reconciliation. Normally occurring on the 2nd Sunday of Lent after the homily, this Rite calls the candidates to a deeper repentance and a total abandonment to the mercy of the Father who sent his only Son to die for our sins. 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.

What are the Scrutinies?
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 (RCIA 141). The Rites of Scrutiny are meant to uncover, and then heal, all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the elects’ hearts and to bring out through repentance all that is upright, strong, and good. Three Scrutinies are celebrated in the parish community on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent, after the homily. The Scripture readings for the Scrutinies ordinarily come from Cycle A of the Lectionary: the Gospel story of the Samaritan woman at the well for the 1st Scrutiny, the Gospel story of the healing of the man born blind for the 2nd Scrutiny, and the Gospel story of the raising of Lazarus for the 3rd Scrutiny. The celebrations of the Scrutinies also remind the whole parish community of the need to reflect on their own sins and the need for God’s help.
How might the Scrutinies of the RCIA process help the parish as a whole?

On the 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays of Lent we participate in the Scrutinies. The universal Church hears the stories of the Samaritan woman, the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus. These readings were chosen to be the driving force of prayerful introspection, surrender, and conversion. They offer powerful images for all of us of need, surrender, sin, conversion, faith, and healing. In our faith journey with those seeking Baptism, we must stir our souls, as if they were dying campfires, to expose any pieces of ourselves that have not been purified by the burning love of the Holy Spirit. We are challenged with the Samaritan woman at the well when we thirst for the Lord, who knows what we need and provides it; we beg, with the man born blind, to see Jesus, who is the light and gives us sight; and finally we lie with Lazarus within the tomb of oblivion and death, built with the stones of our own sins, until Jesus reaches out his hand and pulls us from the pit. Take this gift of the Church and use this group of readings as Lenten reflections. The Scripture readings for each Scrutiny are listed below. Read them slowly, asking the Lord to give you the grace to hear what is being said to you. Share these readings with your children or your spouse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Scrutiny</th>
<th>2nd Scrutiny</th>
<th>3rd Scrutiny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(3rd Sunday of Lent)</td>
<td>(4th Sunday of Lent)</td>
<td>(5th Sunday of Lent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus 17:3-7</td>
<td>1 Samuel 16:1b,6-7,10-13a</td>
<td>Ezekiel 37:12-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 95:1-2,6-9</td>
<td>Psalm 23:1-6</td>
<td>Psalm 130: 1-2, 3-4, 5-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romans 5: 1-2, 5-8</td>
<td>Ephesians 5:8-14</td>
<td>Romans 8:8-11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: the readings for the Scrutiny are always taken from Cycle A, regardless of the current cycle of readings being used. Each parish has the option of using these readings for all Masses, or only for the Masses where the elect are present.)

What is the Presentation of the Creed for those in the RCIA process, and when does it occur?

This Rite, which can be done at Mass or during an RCIA session, entrusts the words of the Creed to those seeking to enter the Catholic Church. Nearly seventeen centuries old, the Creed is recited by the faithful at every Mass, and summarizes what we believe as Catholics. For those coming into the Church this Easter, this Rite symbolizes that our parish community is passing on and sharing the beliefs of our Catholic faith with them, so that these new initiates may embrace and treasure these venerable words as we do.

What is the Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer for those in the RCIA process, and when does it occur?

This Rite, which can be done at Mass or during an RCIA session, entrusts to those seeking to enter the Catholic Church the precious words of our Lord on prayer. This prayer of hope is to Catholics a summary of the entire Christian life, and a model of that relationship of trust that we are invited to enter as children of our Heavenly Father. For those coming into the Church this Easter, this Rite symbolizes the passing down of our heritage of prayer, learned at the feet of the Savior, and nurtured in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that is the Church.

Who will join our parish family this Easter?

Those who will enter through the sacraments into our Catholic faith at the Easter Vigil are: [names]. The RCIA catechists and team offer our thanks to all those present for the Masses for the past four Sundays, and our parish community as a whole, who prayed for and with our candidates during the RCIA Penitential Rite, and our elect during the RCIA Scrutinies. Please continue to pray for our elect and candidates as they enter their final week of preparation for the sacraments of initiation.

What is next for those who entered the Catholic Church this Easter?

We have reached the 4th period of the RCIA process, which is the neophyte year. All who were baptized and received into full communion are called neophytes in this period, until the anniversary of their initiation next Easter. The final period of regular weekly formation extends through the Easter season, the seven weeks from Easter to Pentecost. This post-baptismal catechesis is called mystagogy. It is a time for deepening the Christian experience, especially in appreciation for the sacramental life, for spiritual growth, and for entering more fully into the life and unity of the Catholic community. The neophytes now share with Christ, and his Body in the parish community; the intimate communion of the Eucharist. Now they have access to all the means of sanctification. We as a parish community pledge to help them grow and mature in the Christian life and to develop a genuine Catholic world view. Please pray for all those who God has called us to join us as we continue on our pilgrimage to our Father in Heaven.

Using the Leader’s Manual 15
A walk through the calendar year in the parish bulletin:
Here are ideas for bulletin announcements that raise the awareness of Christian initiation and invite parishioners or inquirers to take a step in contacting a priest, or other parish staff, about Christian initiation (RCIA) throughout the year.

January
As we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, let us recall our own Baptism. We have all received the call to go and baptize all nations. Pray for those who are considering if they too are ready to renounce Satan and all his works and empty promises. If there is someone you think would like to explore what Baptism in the Catholic faith means, ask him or her to contact…

February
Come and see. Are you searching for a Church to call your own? Do you struggle with questions about life, death, suffering, hope, forgiveness, love, God? Sessions exploring these and other issues in relation to our Catholic faith are being held. Ask about inquiry meetings by contacting…

March (Lent)
Help bring to the Light those who no longer want to walk in darkness. Invite those who have never been baptized or who have been baptized in a non-Catholic Christian tradition, as well as adult Catholics who have not been confirmed, to the inquiry sessions. For more information, contact…

April (Easter Season)
Many people have said that what drew them to the Catholic Church was the Eucharist. As we reflect on recognizing Jesus in the Breaking of the Bread, think for a moment whether there is someone you could invite to Mass and to explore what else the Catholic faith might hold for them. For information, contact…

May
As our Blessed Mother brings us to her Son Jesus, it is our task also to bring others to the Lord. Is there someone you can invite to explore the Catholic faith – someone unbaptized, or baptized in a non-Catholic Christian tradition? Perhaps you know a Catholic adult interested in being confirmed. Please contact…

June
The great Solemnity of Pentecost marks the great gift of the Holy Spirit to those God the Father calls to be his own. Perhaps you can think of someone who longs to have a closer relationship with our Heavenly Father. Can you plant the seeds of hope as you speak of our Father’s loving care, and his everlasting promises fulfilled in the sending of his Son, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? Ask about the RCIA inquiry sessions for those who are not baptized, are of other faiths, or are adult Catholics who were not confirmed by contacting…

July
With the gift of Jesus’ Precious Blood on the Cross and in the Eucharist, let us reflect on the freedom given to us through our Baptism into him -- to be heirs of the promise and liberated from sin. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the way by which persons become “citizens of the Kingdom” through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Inquiry sessions are ongoing. For more information, please contact…

August
In celebrating this month Our Lady’s final journey to God in her glorious Assumption, let us ask her motherly intercession to draw souls to the Sacred Heart of her Son. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a journey too -- of conversion to God and what he intends for us. RCIA is the process by which persons who were never baptized, or were baptized in another Christian tradition, become members of the Church, a people on pilgrimage to our Heavenly Father. Please contact…
September
Life has many storms – distressful relationships, jobs, poor health; situations where we feel our powerlessness. If you know someone unbaptized or baptized in a non-Catholic Christian tradition, who is searching for strength and understanding to weather such squalls, invite them to seek the perspective the Catholic Church offers. Please contact…

October
Our lives sometimes go through seasons of change; of closeness to God and distance from him. Yet God the Father’s love is steadfast and ever-present to those who seek with a sincere heart, no matter what sins or situations have caused separation. If you have thought about becoming Catholic and beginning a new “season” in your life, contact…

November
As we celebrate All Saints Day, and recall those “living witnesses” of the joy and peace that living the Catholic life can bring, let us ask for the saints’ intercession for those who are thinking about finding out more about the Church. If someone you know wants to know more about the Church, contact…

December
The preparations for Christmas include buying or making gifts for those whom we love. You can give no better gift than the gift that God has given to us: his Son, Jesus. Invite someone who is not Catholic to attend Mass with you at Christmas. For information about the RCIA, contact…
Comes to Conversion

... for you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.  - ST AUGUSTINE, CONFESSIONS

Facilitating Change

The Church sees conversion as an ongoing process that never ends. Conversion, seen as a progressive process, involves various stages of change. Simply stated, conversion involves a turning from something coupled with a turning towards something else. “The Christian faith is, above all, conversion to Jesus Christ.” (GDC 53) This turning occurs in many areas, including:

● In prayer ~ in conversation with God
● In communion ~ in our relationships and experience of Christian witness
● In the moral life ~ in living out our growing Christian convictions
● In perspective ~ in learning to see things through a Catholic worldview
● In seeking and study ~ in growing in hunger for knowledge of God

From Prodigal to Perfection

The biblical account of the forgiving father in the parable of the Prodigal Son gives us a glimpse of our loving and merciful Father in Heaven. (see Luke 15:11-32) The father is the first to see the repentant son, and the father goes running toward his child. We must come to know the Father in order to foster conversion to him through Jesus Christ. The “Yes” to Jesus Christ involves (GDC 54):

● A trustful abandonment to God
● A loving assent to all that he has revealed to us

Faith is a gift from God. It can only be born in the intimacy of man’s heart as a fruit of that “grace [which] moves and assists him;” (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, 5; see CCC 153) and as a completely free response to the “promptings of the Holy Spirit who moves the heart and turns it toward God.” (GDC 55)

Because this life of ongoing conversion and journeying towards perfection is the normal life every Christian is called to live, the Christian initiation process must be thoroughly steeped in this understanding.

From Wherever They Start, Expect Progress

The pastoral work of moving participants from their initial motivation to firmer conviction involves facilitating a desire for “more”. Their longing for more is often accompanied by the difficulties of pain, confusion, misery, grief, and/or humiliation. When this longing is identified, it is possible for eyes to be opened and hearts to be softened; nevertheless they remain aching and weak until grace is strengthened in them.

Following the guidelines for the Christian initiation process and the norms in the GDC, each period presents us with signs that should be discerned and fostered in the participants.
The Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate

Signs: Interest in the Gospel, the inclination to believe, desire to begin a religious quest (GDC 56a)

The celebration of the Rite of Acceptance into the order of catechumens should be delayed until the candidates have had sufficient time to conceive an initial faith and to show the first signs of conversion. (RCIA 18.1)

In the guidelines to the Rites these signs for fostering and identifying this initial faith in the candidates are found (RCIA 37, 38, 42):

- To feel called away from sin and drawn into the mystery of God’s love
- The genuine will to follow Christ and seek Baptism begins to mature
- With a purifi ed and clearer intention participants may cooperate with God’s grace
- The beginnings of the spiritual life
- The fundamentals of Christian teaching have taken root
- The first faith is conceived
- Intention to change their lives become evident
- Entrance into a relationship with Christ
- The first stirrings of repentance
- A start of the practice of calling upon God in prayer
- A sense of the Church
- Some experience of the company and spirit of Christians

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 Period of the Catechumenate

Signs: Conversion, a firm option for faith, adherence to Christ and willingness to walk in his footsteps (GDC 56b)

Before the Rite of Election is celebrated the catechumens are expected to have undergone a conversion in mind and in action and to have developed sufficient acquaintance with Christian teaching as well as a spirit of faith and charity. With deliberate will and an enlightened faith they must have the intention to receive the sacraments of the Church, a resolve they will express publicly in the actual celebration of the Rite. (RCIA 120)

In the guidelines to the Rites, the following signs for fostering and identifying conversion are found (RCIA 47, 75.1, 75.2):

- Eagerness to take part in celebrations of the Word, and to receive blessings
- A profound sense of the mystery of salvation in which they desire to participate
- Learning to turn more readily to God in prayer
- A desire to bear witness to the faith
- In all things to keep their hopes set on Christ
- To follow supernatural inspiration in their deeds
- To practice love of neighbor (at the cost of self-renunciation)
- A progressive change of outlook and conduct, developing gradually
- Awareness and experience of divisions and separations
- Tasting the joy that God gives without measure

RITES OF ELECTION AND CALL TO CONTINUING 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)
The Period of Purification and Enlightenment

**Signs:** A progressive change in outlook and morals, and a profession of faith (GDC 56c)

*The Church prepares the elect and candidates to receive the sacraments of initiation through various means; a Penitential Rite, Scrutinies, Presentations of the Creed and of the Lord's Prayer, and the Preparation Rites of Holy Saturday (RCIA 139-140). Candidates should learn to deepen an inner adherence to the Church, where they will find the fullness of their Baptism.* (RCIA 477)

In the guidelines to the Rites, the following signs for fostering and identifying the continuing purification and enlightenment of the elect and candidates are found (RCIA 139):

- More intense spiritual preparation
- More interior reflection than catechetical instruction
- To purify their minds and hearts as they search their consciences and do penance
- To enlighten the minds and hearts of participants with a deeper knowledge of Christ
- Celebration of certain Rites, Scrutinies and Presentations brings about this process and extends it over the course of the entire Lenten season

CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION:
Having completed their spiritual preparation, they receive the sacraments of initiation. (RCIA 6.3)

The Period of Mystagogy and Neophyte Year

**Signs:** Journeying towards perfection and seeking to realize the desire of Christ: “Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matt 5:48) (see GDC 56d)

*This [postbaptismal catechesis] is a time for the community and the neophytes together to grow 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 works of charity.* (RCIA 244)

In the guidelines to the Rites, these are the signs for fostering and identifying this journeying toward perfection of the neophytes which aids them in living the mature Christian life (RCIA 245):

- Introduced into a fuller and more effective understanding of mysteries through the Gospel message and sacraments
- Renewal in mind to seek to think with the mind of Christ
- Tasting more deeply the sweetness of God’s Word in study and prayer
- Receiving the fellowship of the Holy Spirit through communion with believers
- Growing to know the goodness of the Lord in seeing his faithful actions in daily life
- New perception of faith, the Church, and the world
- A full and joyful welcome into the community and with other faithful

---

*The basic maturity which gives rise to the profession of faith is not the final point in the process of continuing conversion. The profession of baptismal faith is but the foundation of a spiritual building which is destined to grow.* (GDC 56d)
The time between Easter and Pentecost is spent in deepening the understanding and appreciation for the sacramental life. As well, the deepest meaning of discipleship must be examined, including the responsibility of all the baptized to give personal witness to the power of the Gospel, and to bring the light of Christian revelation to every corner of the world. Catechesis during this period should be driven by the Lectionary. The Church intends that the Lectionary readings for the Sundays and the Feast of the Ascension form the basis for the teaching given during this period.

### Mystagogy Readings for Year A

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<td>14:15-20</td>
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<td>17:1-11a</td>
<td>Prayer for Unity and Glorification of the Church ~ Apostolicity</td>
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The distinctive spirit and power of the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy derive from the new, personal experience of the sacraments and of the community (RCIA 247).
Ideas for Post-Baptismal Catechetical Sessions, and the Neophyte Year

Ask neophytes to share their experiences of the sacraments, and provide an opportunity to reflect on the Vigil.

Help neophytes see the sacraments in light of Scriptural images (called “typology”). For example…

- **Baptism**
  - Creation
  - The Crossing of the Red Sea
  - Living Water and the Samaritan Woman
  - Water from Jesus’ Side

- **Eucharist**
  - Manna in the Desert
  - Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes
  - Last Supper: Commandment of Love
  - The Road to Emmaus

Tell the story of the “wonderful works” of God again, this time highlighting the sacramental life, foretold in the Old Testament and now available to them in the New Testament.

Proclaim and reflect on Scripture for the post-baptismal catechesis — especially the Sunday readings of Year A of the Easter season.

Sing songs to celebrate the Easter season. Repeat songs from throughout the initiation process and the Easter Vigil.

Pray together:

- Eucharistic Adoration
- Liturgy of the Hours
- Rosary
- Extemporaneous Prayer
- Guided Meditation
- Other Catholic Devotions

Tell stories of saints, such as those who were baptized or received into the Church as adults (St. Augustine, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, etc). Discuss the Universal Call to Holiness.

Make presentations on new topics or topics discussed earlier, keeping in mind the additional grace now at work in the lives of the neophytes.

Discuss current moral/social issues in the light of the Church’s teaching to help neophytes gain a “Catholic worldview.”

Set aside time for silent reflection or sharing between neophytes, team, and sponsors.

Encourage neophytes to continue asking questions as they come up. Answer them.

Make a pilgrimage to a local shrine, the Cathedral, etc.

Attend a Mass for new Catholics with the bishop.

Have a potluck with the pastor every six weeks or so.

Keep in touch! — Maintain a mailing list of neophytes; send a newsletter; create a website.

Insist that sponsors maintain regular contact with neophytes.

Help neophytes begin a Bible study or join a small faith-sharing group in the parish.

Discuss what it means to share in the Church’s mission of evangelization — spread the Good News!

Share opportunities for involvement in social outreach activities in the parish.

Have a retreat for neophytes in Lent and a celebration on the anniversary of their initiation.

Ask neophytes to assist with the next RCIA group, perhaps as a team member.
ON THE JOURNEY SERIES
for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

RCIA Catechist’s Manual

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Using the Catechist’s Manual

This Catechist’s Manual is part of the ON THE JOURNEY series of books intended to be used for the Order of Christian Initiation. This Manual is designed to be a practical help to the catechist by offering a structured way of preparing for and presenting the catechetical portion of an RCIA session. Together with the companion Participant’s Book, this Manual should enable catechists to prepare thoroughly for each teaching and to present the faith both systematically and organically (see CT 21; GDC 67). In order to understand the structure of each lesson plan and its context within the catechumenal process, it is essential that each catechist read with care all of the introductory sections of this Manual.

The Purpose of Section Two

This section provides a summary of the structure of the RCIA process. This highly simplified explanation offers a basic context for the following sections, which then elaborate on the catechetical aspect in detail. The enclosed foldout RCIA Overview Chart (discussed below) is a useful companion to this section. The liturgical and pastoral aspects of the RCIA process receive much more significant treatment in other publications of the ON THE JOURNEY series, particularly the RCIA Leader’s Manual.

The Purpose of Section Three

The RCIA ritual book directs that catechesis should shift in emphasis and, to some degree, in method as a participant goes through the process (see RCIA 4-7). This section explains, in practical terms, how those changes serve the process and help foster conversion. The lesson plans provided in this Manual are primarily written for the Catechumenate period, which is usually the longest and most densely catechetical. As the character of the catechesis in each of the other periods is described, this section should assist the catechist in adapting these lesson plans to suit teaching during other stages in the RCIA process.

The Purpose of Section Four

The lesson plans are designed according to a teaching structure suggested by Magr. Francis D. Kelly in his book The Mystery We Proclaim: Catechesis for the Third Millennium (Our Sunday Visitor, 2nd edition, 1999) in chapter three of part five, as an “Ecclesial Approach to Catechetical Methodology.” This section explains the rationale behind that structure in the context of the distinctive demands of RCIA catechesis and the adult learning model.

The Purpose of Sections Five and Six

These sections are written with two goals in mind. The first purpose is to examine how to present the truths of the faith in an orderly and cohesive manner that fosters conversion and a deep hunger to know the God who reveals such wonders. Addressed here are two interrelated issues: how to teach the truths of the faith systematically, and how to teach them organically. Section Five treats the systematic question — ways to determine the order of RCIA teachings by using pastoral, liturgical, and catechetical means. Section Six treats the organic question — ways to teach the relationships among doctrines by using salvation history, the theological virtues, and the pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The second purpose of these two sections is to address certain problems that are commonly found in catechesis today, especially in the Western world. Within the Catholic Church, there has developed the problem, or perhaps the crisis, of dissent. Exploring in detail the sources of what Pope Paul VI called the “leaven of infidelity to the Holy Spirit” (PCB 41) is beyond the scope of this Manual. However, the effort to not perpetuate the problem is very much relevant to this discussion of catechizing those entering the Catholic Church. In RCIA catechesis, attempts are often made to initiate adults into the faith without due consideration of the cultural context of dissent, in which their adherence to the truth will be constantly challenged. If the faith has not been taught in an authentically systematic and organic manner, their hold on the truth is endangered. Participants may develop a fragmented, emaciated, and unenthusiastic view of divine truth, wherein the outright rejection of certain revealed truths or passive lack of...
formation of conscience becomes accepted as normal. The results of this kind of catechesis range from nominal adherence, lukewarmness, or cynicism, to outright absence from the visible fold soon after initiation. To counter this, this Manual suggests the necessary, demanding, and wholly wonderful challenge of being what Pope John Paul II calls a “true catechist” (CT 30), who can genuinely say, “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received” (1 Cor 15:3).

The Purpose of Section Seven

The sixty lesson plans that form the heart of this Manual are presented with three Tables of Contents for the sake of suggesting important considerations to the catechist. First, the lesson plans are listed in alphabetical order so as to give the catechist the freedom to determine the order of catechesis. Second, the lesson plans are listed by dividing them into the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. Third, the lesson plans are listed by dividing them into the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The rationale behind these divisions is discussed in Sections Five and Six.

Sixty lesson plans can carry a parish well beyond a twelve-month period, allowing flexibility in organizing a catechumenal process that can grow beyond the bounds of the “school-year model,” and more towards the ideal of a year-round process. However, many RCIA processes operate in a period of a year, or even less. Catechists in these situations will have to decide how best to combine two or more lessons, depending on their experience of what aspects of the faith need most attention in a given circumstance. In parishes with a year-round process, catechists may opt to teach some of the more content-rich lesson plans over the course of more than a single session. Appendix II provides examples of how some parishes have chosen to combine or expand certain lesson plans using the methods presented here.

The Purpose of the Appendices

The seven appendices are intended to make this Manual easier to use as a catechist prepares a teaching, and as the RCIA director decides what handouts to use from the companion Participant’s Book. Used carefully in tandem with the lesson plans, these appendices will add to the ability of musicians, catechists, and the rest of the team to stay unified on a theme in a manner that takes full advantage of the adult learning model and the appropriate use of liturgical catechesis.

The RCIA Overview Chart

The foldout Overview Chart enclosed with this Manual looks daunting at first, but the idea is to provide a picture of the whole process, from start to finish. Many parishes have found this chart valuable for training their RCIA teams. Across the top are the names of each of the periods of the RCIA process and the status of the participants, as well as terms used to identify them at any given stage. Notice that no timeframes are specified except for the period of Purification and Enlightenment, which normally coincides with Lent, and the Neophyte Year, from one Easter to the next. All of the references quoted in the chart are taken from the RCIA ritual book; as with all ecclesiastical documents, the numbering refers to paragraphs, not pages. Down the side, the journey of each possible type of participant is tracked (unbaptized in green, baptized uncatechized in red, and baptized catechized but not Catholic in blue), as well as the responsibilities of the Church in each period of the catechumenal process. The dark bars denote the major liturgical gateways of the process, and continue to use the color scheme, with the combining of red and blue to make purple in the case of baptized participants, since both of these categories of people can go through the same gateways. Each period is divided into the three aspects: liturgical, catechetical, and pastoral.

This has been done to make information in the guidelines of the ritual book more accessible and to undo some of the confusion that arises when using it. When reading through the remaining introductory sections of this Catechist’s Manual, the Overview Chart should be opened and examined to aid in grasping the larger context of the particular subject at hand.

As a final note to set the tone for the rest of this Manual, it is important to place this work in proper relation to its goal: conversion and discipleship to Jesus Christ. Authentic conversion and discipleship to Christ means learning “more and more within the Church to think like him, to judge like him, to act in conformity with his commandments, and to hope as he invites us to” (CT 20; see also the initiatory catechesis section of the GDC). Conversion is a gradual turning from the darkness of sin, and turning to a desire for holiness, which involves:
...being led into the mystery of God’s love, who invites [participants] to establish a personal relationship with him in Christ. Under the movement of divine grace the new convert sets out on a spiritual journey by means of which, while already sharing through faith in the mystery of death and resurrection, he passes from the old person to the new who has been made perfect in Christ (see Col 3:5-10; Eph 4:20-24). This transition, which involves a progressive change of outlook and morals, should be manifested in its social implications and effectuated gradually during the period of the catechumenate. Since the Lord in whom he believes is a sign of contradiction (see Lk 2:34; Mt 10:34; 39) the convert often has to suffer misunderstanding and separation, but he also experiences those joys which are generously granted by God (AG 15).

The catechetical endeavor native to the catechumenal process serves a deeply personal end for the catechist — discovering at an intellectual level not simply how an individual learns the faith, but how a participant falls in love. The goal of catechumenal catechesis is far more than imparting that which must be believed — it seeks to prepare participants for a new union, an embrace. This embrace is human and divine, unifying the two as water into wine, inviting participants to thereby quench the deepest call of relationship that Jesus gives — “I thirst” (Jn 19:28).
### Section Seven

**Lesson Plans Listed Alphabetically**

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The Virtue of Faith

**CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT**
We believe because of the authority of God who reveals. Our response is a gift of his grace. We must remain steadfast in faith to see God.

Keeping the above statement in mind, read and meditate on the following passages:

**SCRIPTURE (IN ORDER BY BOOK)**

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<td>Noah responds to God’s command to build an ark in faith</td>
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<td>God tests Abraham’s faith by asking him to offer his son Isaac</td>
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<td>Ex 14:21-29</td>
<td>Moses parts the Red Sea and the Israelites pass through it dry-shod</td>
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<td>Everything is possible to one with faith; we must ask God for help to believe</td>
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<td>Eph 6:16</td>
<td>Faith is a shield against Satan</td>
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<td>We must be steadfast in our faith</td>
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<td>We must strive to sustain and live our faith</td>
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<td>2 Tim 4:6-8</td>
<td>We receive our reward after a lifetime of keeping our faith</td>
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<td>Heb 11:1-12:2</td>
<td>We have many forebears and witnesses to faith in God</td>
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<td>Jas 1:2-8</td>
<td>Our faith should be steadfast and our prayer must be without doubt in God</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jas 2:14-26</td>
<td>Faith must be living and active, and manifests itself in works of charity</td>
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<td>1 Pt 1:3-9</td>
<td>Faith is tested by suffering</td>
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**CATECHISM (IN ORDER BY PARAGRAPH NUMBER)**

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<td>We can know God by reason and revelation; faith does not oppose reason</td>
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<td>142-145</td>
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<td>2087-2089</td>
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**KEY TERMS**

- **Deposit of Faith**: The entirety of revelation, contained in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition
- **Faith**: The theological virtue that responds to God in belief, trust, and obedience
- **Theological virtues**: The supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and love that equip human nature for participation in God’s own life which are infused by God at Baptism
- **Virtue**: A disposition to do good that is both firm and ongoing

**SUGGESTED HYMNS AND SONGS FOR CATECHETICAL SESSION**

- A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
- Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus
- Day Is Done
- Eye Has Not Seen
- Faith of Our Fathers
- For All the Saints
- God Is Our Fortress and Our Rock
- God of My Life, I Believe
- The Joy of the Lord
- The Lord Is My Light
- We Walk by Faith
Samples from the RCIA Catechist’s Manual: Faith Catechist Lesson Plan

CATECHETICAL SESSION

The Virtue of Faith

PREPARATION – LITURGY OF THE WORD

If beginning with a hymn or song, see previous page for suggestions
First Reading: Heb 11:1-13
Response: Ps 146
Gospel: Jn 14:1-6

PROCLAMATION

We believe because of the authority of God who reveals. Our response is a gift of his grace. We must remain steadfast in faith to see God.

EXPLANATION

The theological virtues: faith, hope, and love (charity) (see 1 Pt 1:3-9)
- These virtues orient us directly to God, who desires eternal fellowship with us
- By faith, we believe in God; by hope, we cling to God; by charity, we love God
- They are the basis for a life lived according to the Father’s plan
- They dispose us for eternal life with the Trinity and are thus necessary for salvation
- They are undeserved gifts from God, infused by God at Baptism
- They are the foundation of the moral life in Christ and give it its special character
- They are grown and developed in human hearts by our cooperation with the promptings of the Holy Spirit

Faith: the root of the supernatural life (see Eph 2:1-10)
- God offers the gift of faith to all; it is ours to accept or reject
- Faith is more certain than acquired human knowledge
- The object of our faith is the Deposit of Faith: we find the living Christ in the living Church
- Faith and reason are always in agreement, for God is the source of both
- Reason prepares us for faith and helps us to see the reasonableness of faith
- Faith is not a blind leap, but is based on knowledge of and trust in God’s authority
- Faith does not oppose, but rather enlightens understanding
- Faith yields and reveals truth, exposing reason to ultimate truth and stirring reason beyond its isolation to obtain truth, beauty, and goodness
- Faith is the basis and substance for our hope
- Faith is the only true foundation of charity

Ways to lose faith — always a deliberate choice (see 1 Thes 5:9-11)
- Persistence in ignorance of God or his revelation, or indifference to him
- Misplaced priorities, such as a love of riches or power (see 1 Tim 6:9-10)
- Choosing to be influenced by the bad example of some believers
- Refusal to obediently submit to the Church’s teachings, leading to schism, heresy, and apostasy
- Revolting against God by deliberately doubting or rejecting him, and outright hostility to religion

Ways to obtain or increase faith (see 1 Thes 5:9-11)
- Participate devoutly and frequently in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Confession
- Read spiritual works, most especially Sacred Scripture, the Catechism, and lives of the saints
- Seek the companionship of true believers
- Exercise faith by professing it, declaring it, defending it, and doing good works (see Jas 2:14-36)

APPLICATION – SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why does the modern culture often seem closed to the possibility of faith in God?
2. Why is faith a gift that only God himself could give us?
3. Why wouldn’t God just show himself directly and obviously to us so that we could more easily believe in him?
4. Why is it important that faith be living and active? What can we do to make our own faith more meaningful and active?

CELEBRATION – SUGGESTIONS FOR CLOSING PRAYER

1. Ask God for the desire to accept the gift of faith that he offers, and the grace to increase our faith daily.
2. Hymn or song (see previous page for suggestions)
3. Pray together Act of Faith (see handout on Well-Known Catholic Prayers from Participant’s Book)
Baptism

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT

Baptism regenerates a person as a child of God. It forgives original and all personal sin and fills the soul with grace. It confers the virtues of faith, hope, and love.

Keeping the above statement in mind, read and meditate on the following passages:

SCRIPTURE (IN ORDER BY BOOK)

Go 7:1-8:19 Noah and his family are saved from death by water in an ark
Ex 14:10-30 The Israelites are saved from Pharaoh by God’s miraculous parting of the waters
Mt 15:17 Jesus is baptized by St. John and anointed by the Holy Spirit for his ministry
Mt 28:18-19 Jesus commissions his apostles to baptize all nations in the name of the Trinity
Mk 16:16 Belief in God must be accompanied by Baptism
Jn 5:1-18 Baptism into Jesus is Baptism into his Death, and the Resurrection of Christ means that we too might have eternal life
1 Cor 12:27-15.15 The virtues of faith, hope, and love are greater than the gifts of ministry
2 Cor 5:17 The person in Christ is a new creation
Eph 4:4-6 In the one Body of Christ, there is one Lord, one faith, one Baptism
Eph 5:25-27 Christ’s Paschal mystery was for the purpose of sanctifying his Bride, the Church, through Baptism, which regenerates the Church as a perfect, holy Bride
Col 2:12 Buried with Christ through Baptism, we are brought to new life with him
2 Pt 1:3-4 God has called us to everlasting life and to partake of his own nature

CATECHISM (IN ORDER BY PARAGRAPH NUMBER)

537 Baptism sacramentally joins the Christian to Jesus
977-978 Baptism is the principal sacramental means for forgiveness of sins and birth into new life, a forgiveness so complete that every sin, including original sin, is gone
1113-1130 The sacraments in general
1127-1128 By their very action, the sacraments accomplish what they symbolize, working by the power of Christ and not by the holiness of the minister of the sacrament
1213-1274 The sacrament of Baptism: names, prefigurations, in the New Testament, how it is celebrated, who can receive it, who can administer, its necessity, its graces

KEY TERMS

Ex opere operato: A sacrament’s effects depend on the valid administration of the sacrament itself, not on who administers it
Form: The essential words and actions of a sacrament (this use of the term is analogous only, since the primary meaning of the term is as a constituent of material substance, together with matter)
Infused: Of a permanent and eternal character
Matter: 1) one of the intrinsic elements of creation, which, together with form make material substances; 2) in an analogous use of the term, regarding the essential material substances used in administering a sacrament (such as water or oil) or, in the broad sense of the concept of matter, it also is an action, such as the manifestation of contrition in the sacrament of Reconciliation
Regeneration: The completely new life conferred by Baptism, becoming a son or daughter of God
Sacrament: An efficacious sign of grace instituted by Christ and administered by the Church that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, imparts divine life
Seal: A permanent change in the soul resulting from certain sacraments
Theological virtue: The supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and love that equip human nature for participation in God’s own life which are infused by God at Baptism

SUGGESTED HYMNS AND SONGS FOR CATECHETICAL SESSION

Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death
(tune: Azmon)
Baptized in Water
Breathe on Me Holy One
In Your Light
Make My Heart Your Dwelling Place
Now You Have Called Us
Sing Praise to Our Creator
Spirit, Move upon the Waters
The River Is Here
This Is the Spirit’s Entry
We Know That Christ Is Raised
When John Baptized by Jordan’s River
With Joy You Shall Draw Water
**Samples from the RCIA Catechist’s Manual:** Baptism Catechist Lesson Plan

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**CATECHETICAL SESSION**

**Baptism**

**PREPARATION – LITURGY OF THE WORD**

If beginning with a hymn or song, see previous page for suggestions
- First Reading: Rom 6:1-11
- Response: Ps 55:1-5, 11-15, 18-22
- Gospel: Jn 5:1-6

**PROCLAMATION**

Baptism regenerates a person as a child of God. It forgives original and all personal sin and fills the soul with grace. It confers the virtues of faith, hope, and love.

**EXPLANATION**

The seven sacraments were instituted by Christ to give grace
- The sacraments give us God’s life and help for daily Christian living at special times in our lives
- They are dispensed and celebrated by the Church and connect us to the Body of Christ
- Sacraments consist of a specific form (rite) and specific matter (such as water or oil) or, in the broad sense of the concept of matter, it also is an action, such as the manifestation of contrition in the sacrament of Reconciliation
- God uses material things to both signify and accomplish spiritual outcomes (the sacramental principle)
  - The sacraments therefore work *ex opere operato*
- The sacraments are necessary for our salvation — they serve the plan of the Father to transform us and be united forever in the divine life (see Jn 5:5 and Jn 6:55-58)

Names and purposes of the sacraments
- Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist are the sacraments of initiation
- Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick are the sacraments of spiritual and physical healing
- Holy Orders and Matrimony are the sacraments at the service of the Church

**Baptism is the first sacrament of initiation** (see Acts 2:37-38)
- Baptism was prefigured in the Old Testament
- The words from Mt 28:19 are the form of Baptism
- Water (immersion, or poured or sprinkled) is the matter of Baptism, a washing unto new life
- The rite also includes prayers, especially the Litany of the Saints, and material symbols of Baptism’s effects, including anointing with the blessed Oil of Catechumens and the consecrated Holy Chrism, the giving of a lit candle, and the clothing with a white garment
- It makes an indelible spiritual mark on the soul and so is never repeated

**Baptism gives us new life in Christ** (see 2 Cor 5:17)
- It removes original sin, all personal sin, and all punishment for sin, and fills the soul with the grace and gifts of the Holy Spirit (see Col 2:13-14 and Acts 2:38)
- We die with our Lord in Baptism and are born into the new, spiritual life of Christ, and are clothed with him
- We are given access to the Father through Jesus
- We are incorporated into the Body of Christ, the Church (see 1 Cor 12:13)

**We receive the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and charity** (see Gal 5:5, Ti 3:5-7, Gal 5:22)
- Faith is the foundation of our relationship with God
- Hope is the sure pledge of our salvation
- Charity is the vocation and strength to live the Christian life of love
- These virtues are not human, but supernatural, equipping us to become partakers in the divine nature

**APPLICATION – SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. How is Baptism similar to a birthday?
2. How do the physical aspects of Baptism (for example, the water) help us to focus on the eternal meaning of the sacrament?
3. When have you been given a chance to turn over a new leaf? How is Baptism similar to this?
4. Why is Baptism so important in our spiritual lives?

**CELEBRATION – SUGGESTIONS FOR CLOSING PRAYER**

1. Pray for the grace to desire Baptism and become a “new creation” in Jesus and a child of the Father.
2. Hymn or song (see previous page for suggestions)
3. Pray the Litany of the Saints (see Participant’s Book)

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Diocesan Manual e3 Book Samples  ACM 43
The Universal Call to Holiness

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT
Jesus has called us to the perfection of his Father, perfection in love. Holiness is the call of all the baptized. Our wholehearted response to God’s grace will fill us with joy surpassing human understanding.

Keeping the above statement in mind, read and meditate on the following passages:

SCRIPTURE (IN ORDER BY BOOK)
Lv 11:45  Because God is holy, Israel is therefore to be holy
Prv 5:11-12  Do not hate the suffering sent by God, for he is perfecting us as his children
Hb 3:18-19  The God of my salvation is the source of my rejoicing and my strength
Mt 5:3-12  In the Beatitudes, Jesus promises rewards for holiness and virtuous behavior
Mt 5:48  Our call is to be perfect as God the Father is perfect
Mt 6:25-34  Do not be anxious about anything; your Heavenly Father will take care of you and your needs if you seek first his Kingdom and holiness
Mt 10:37-39  To be worthy of Jesus, we must love him above and take up our cross; to find our life, we must lose it for his sake
Mt 11:29-30  With Jesus as our model and master, virtue becomes easy and not burdensome
Mt 19:26  It is impossible to save ourselves, but God makes holiness possible
Mt 26:31-46  We will be judged according to how we have loved others
Jn 15:4-5  Jesus is the true vine and we are the branches; we must abide in him to bear fruit
2 Cor 5:17  In Christ we become a new creation
Gal 5:16-26  Living in the Spirit means renouncing the desires of the flesh so that we can attain Heaven; living in the Spirit gives us love, joy, and peace and strengthens our virtues so that we can crucify the flesh
Eph 4:22-24  Put on our new nature, made in the image of God in virtue and holiness
Col 1:9-10  Paul prays that we be filled with a knowledge of God’s will so that we can live worthily, bear good fruit, and know God more and more
Heb 12:1-15:17  The plan for holiness

CATECHISM (IN ORDER BY PARAGRAPH NUMBER)
459  Jesus is our model and standard
825-826  We are called to perfection; love shapes and perfects holiness
828  Canonized saints are examples of holiness
1716-1729  The Beatitudes, our charter for holiness
2015-2015  The requirements of our call to holiness and intimate union with Jesus
2030  Christians fulfill their vocations to holiness within the Church

KEY TERMS
Holiness:  A state of complete self-mastery, complete self-gift, heroic virtue, and sinlessness made possible only by the grace of God and the merits of Jesus Christ
Joy:  An abiding sense of happiness that comes from union with God which is not diminished by suffering, trials, or persecution
Love:  The theological virtue by which we love God for himself alone more than ourselves or any creature; out of love of God, we love our neighbor as ourselves

SUGGESTED HYMNS AND SONGS FOR CATECHETICAL SESSION
Bring Forth the Kingdom  O For a Heart to Praise My God
Come into My Heart  Refiner’s Fire
Everyday  Take My Life
Go Make of All Disciples  Where Charity and Love Prevail (Ubi Caritas)
Let All on Earth Their Voices Raise  Where True Love and Charity Are Found (Ubi Caritas)
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling  You’re Worthy of My Praise
O Breathe on Me, O Breath of God

Samples from the RCIA Catechist’s Manual: Universal Call to Holiness Catechist Preparation
The Universal Call to Holiness

PREPARATION – LITURGY OF THE WORD
If beginning with a hymn or song, see previous page for suggestions
First Reading: Eph 4:22-25
Response: Ps 24
Gospel: Mt 11:29-30

PROCLAMATION
Jesus has called us to the perfection of his Father, perfection in love. Holiness is the call of all the baptized. Our wholehearted response to God’s grace will fill us with joy surpassing human understanding.

EXPLANATION
Human nature and the nature of our call (see 1 Pt 1:6-9)
* Within each of us is a God-implanted desire for happiness that only he can fulfill
* Holiness is not optional; on earth, authentic happiness is achieved only through sanctity: the joy of holiness
* In Heaven, happiness is participation in Trinitarian love, joy beyond measure

The nature of holiness: forming ourselves into “other Christs” (see Rom 15:8-14)
* Jesus Christ, Son of God become Son of Mary for the salvation of all humankind, came among us as the visible image of his invisible Father
* Holiness is being like Christ, conforming ourselves to him as our model of holiness
* The more clearly our intellects grasp Jesus, the more powerful will be the action of our will (see Phil 1:9-11)
* The Holy Spirit is our source of strength to be like Christ; holiness manifests the Spirit’s fruits (see Gal 5:22-25)

The pursuit of holiness in this world (see Rom 12:2)
* The libed blood of holiness is charity: the more we die to self and lay down our lives in love to others, and the more vigorously we work to sanctify the world, the more we attain holiness and the easier it becomes for others to become holy (see Col 3:9-17)
* We offer up life’s sufferings, which Jesus sanctified and made redemptive for ourselves and others
* God asks us to do only what he gives us sufficient grace to do (see 1 Cor 10:15)

The obstacles to our call
* Salvation is the responsibility of each person, but for good or ill, others influence our efforts and we influence theirs
* All Christians discover that the world is hostile to our efforts to attain holiness (see Jn 15:18-20)
* The flesh, that is, our own disordered desires make us prone to sin (see Rom 7:18-20)
* The Devil ceaselessly tempts us to pursue counterfeit pleasure and happiness (see 2 Thes 2:9-12)

The resources to answer God’s call (see Eph 1:5-23 and Eph 5:8-12)
* Mother Mary has been given to us as a model of holiness and our prime intercessor with her Son
* The Church gives us all that we need for salvation, including the truths God intends us to know, the graces of the sacraments, and the witness of holiness of the saints
* Frequent reception of Jesus in the Eucharist and of the sacrament of Reconciliation fill us with supernatural life and strengthen us against sin
* The Christian family is the school of holiness, the most basic unit of the Body of Christ
* The Christian fellowship of the faithful offers example, support, encouragement, and inspiration
* A relationship with God developed through prayer intensifies our yearning for him and desire to please him
* The heart of holiness is to will what God wills, for the sake of love

APPLICATION – SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION
1. Does God expect too much of me? Is it really possible for me to be holy in this world?
2. What are some concrete ways that I can follow Jesus?
3. What can I learn about holiness by focusing on Jesus on the cross?
4. What ways would the world be worse without the Church?

CELEBRATION – SUGGESTIONS FOR CLOSING PRAYER
1. Pray for an ever-stronger desire for holiness in the world and to see God’s face forever.
2. Hymn or song (see previous page for suggestions)
3. Pray together Psalm 33 or Psalm 34 (see Participant’s Book)
Samples from the RCIA Participant’s Book: Introductory Section

ON THE JOURNEY SERIES
for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

RCIA Participant’s Book

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Samples from the RCIA Participant’s Book: Introductory Section

Introduction

This Participant’s Book is part of the On the Journey series of books intended to be used for the Order of Christian Initiation. This particular book, unlike the others in this series, is supplied as shrink-wrapped handouts that are designed to be masters for photocopying. These masters can, therefore, be used to create handouts for each RCIA session. This entire book is also provided on a CD to allow for printing copies for RCIA participants or to make new masters.

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Structure of the Book

Since it is part of ACM’s approach not to spell out a specific order of catechesis, which is properly the responsibility of parish catechetical staff, most of the material included in this Participant’s Book is presented in alphabetical order by title. To assist catechists in selecting appropriate handouts, the book provides both sectional Tables of Contents and Indexes of Citations from Sacred Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC).

Main Sections: Part I (Doctrines) is made up of scores of handouts providing comprehensive coverage of the Deposit of Faith. Part II (Special Topics) includes many handouts on specific liturgical subjects and other Catholic practices that are suitable for use during appropriate parts of the liturgical year, or as questions arise. Part III (Psalms and Canticles) and Part IV (Litanies and Other Prayers) can be photocopied and handed out to participants for use during liturgies and prayer services. All are formatted for respornatorial use. Part V (Saints) offers brief biographies of saints and other holy men and women that can be given out on or around their respective feast days, or to reinforce a specific teaching. Part VI (Conversion Stories) can be distributed as needed to provide written testimonies of others’ journey to the Catholic faith. Finally, Part VII (Small Group Discussion Questions) provides the application questions printed with the sixty lesson plans of the On the Journey series companion Catechist’s Manual. This last section is given in this book simply to allow for copying (or downloading and modifying), thereby facilitating handing out the questions to groups, rather than verbally stating them, retyping them, or asking participants to write them down.

Table of Contents and Indexes: The first page in each part of the Participant’s Book lists material in its section alphabetically by title, except for Part III (Psalms and Canticles), which lists Psalms in numerical order, followed by Canticles in order by their title. The Table of Contents for Part I (Doctrines) and Part II (Special Topics) is combined and is extensively cross-referenced, so that all related handouts can easily be located. This is intended to assist catechists in determining which handouts are appropriate with a given teaching. This Table of Contents, therefore, serves also as a subject index. The Index of Citations to Sacred Scripture lists
all biblical quotations and citations from the handouts in Parts I (Doctrines) and II (Special Topics). This Index is ordered alphabetically by title of the books of the Bible, and each citation is accompanied by the handout title(s) related to the biblical passage. Asterisked titles are from Part II (Special Topics) handouts. The Index of Citations from the Catechism of the Catholic Church lists the citations that are found at the end of each of the handouts in Parts I (Doctrines) and II (Special Topics). This Index is ordered numerically by CCC paragraph number, and each numerical citation is accompanied by the handout title(s) related to the CCC paragraph(s). Asterisked titles are from Part II (Special Topics) handouts.

**Using the Handouts Effectively**

The large number of topics covered by these handouts may seem daunting. As with all the handouts provided in the Participant’s Book, an RCIA leader can opt to use as many or as few as he or she deems prudent, a decision that can and must be made at the parish level for the participants in each given year. At a given parish, some handouts that do not seem useful for one group of participants may prove to be highly applicable to participants in another year. The larger point is that the handouts provided here are designed to be used when, as, and if needed. Therefore, the intent of the Participant’s Book’s large size is to provide a thorough spread of material from which an RCIA leader may select what is most suitable for those whom God has guided to the parish’s front door.

Copies of the handouts in the Participant’s Book would typically be given to all the people in the RCIA process (participants, sponsors, and team members) in a gradual way. Only those handouts intended for that session’s teaching should be made available. One possible method of doing this is as follows: the first time a person comes to RCIA, he or she receives an empty binder of suitable size (a two-inch binder is likely to work the best). Handouts chosen for each session are added to the binder every week. This is most easily done by copying sets of the handouts desired for that session, three-hole-punching them, and placing them out collated on a table to be taken as people come in for the session. A few extra sets could be made in case an unexpected inquirer shows up. At the end of the evening, sets left over can then be paper-clipped together and put out the next week for those who have missed that session. The handouts could also simply be mailed to those not present. As RCIA leaders become familiar with these handouts, other creative ways of using and distributing them will no doubt develop.

**Determining What to Hand Out When**

It is for good reason that ACM does not present the handouts in this book (or the lesson plans in the On the Journey series companion Catechist’s Manual) in a specific order or pre-set curriculum. The General Directory for Catechesis states:

> Indeed, “it can happen that in the present situation of catechesis reasons of method or pedagogy may suggest the communication of the riches of the content of catechesis should be organized in one way rather than in another.” It is possible to begin with God so as to arrive at Christ, and vice versa. Equally, it is possible to start with man and come to God, and conversely. The selection of a particular order for presenting the message is conditioned by circumstances, and by the faith level of those to be catechized (GDC 118; material in quotations is from Catechesi Tractatii 31).

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the method of determining the order of catechesis for a given set of participants must take into account liturgical, catechetical, and pastoral considerations at a given parish in a given year. This crucial issue, and others associated with ensuring that catechesis is systematic and organic, are discussed in detail in the introductory sections of the companion to this book: the RCIA Catechist’s Manual.
PART I

Doctrines
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Angels
Anointing of the Sick
Aspects of Prayer
Attributes of God
Baptism
Battle of Prayer
Beatitudes
Beauty
Blessed Trinity
Can the Bible be Taken Literally?
Catholic Family
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Confession to a Human Being
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Conversion to Jesus Christ
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Did Jesus Always Know He Was God?
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God the Creator
God the Father
God's Justice, God's Love
God's Law
God's Plan of Salvation
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Heights of Prayer, Contemplation
Holiness and Joy
Holy Orders
Holy Spirit
Honoring our Parents
In Persona Christi
Incarnation
Indulgences
Infallibility
Infant Baptism
Introduction to Prayer
Jesus: Our Exemplar in Prayer
Jesus, the Unexpected Messiah

Samples from the RCIA Catechist’s Manual: List of all 380 handouts
**Samples from the RCIA Catechist’s Manual:** List of all 380 handouts

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PART III

Psalms and Canticles

The Psalms and Canticles in this section have been formatted as handouts for use by participants in Liturgies of the Word that can begin a catechetical session (see RCIA 81-89). When necessary, Psalms have been shortened to fit onto a single page. This ensures that the Liturgy of the Word is balanced in length among the first reading, Psalm or Canticle, and Gospel reading. The verses used in these shortened Psalms, and in the Canticles, are shown in the tables of contents below.

For each Psalm and Canticle, both a musical refrain and a refrain suitable for spoken response have been provided (in many cases, the musical refrain is also suitable as a spoken refrain). For the convenience of the catechist an Index of Sources for Sung Psalm and Canticle Refrains is provided, listing the widely-available hymn books from which the sung refrains have been selected.

In the following table of contents are listed the Psalms and Canticles suggested for use with each of the lesson plans in the companion Catechist’s Manual in the ON THE JOURNEY series. Also included in this list are Psalms suggested for seasonal Liturgies of the Word that may, at the catechist’s discretion, replace the Liturgy of the Word suggested for the lesson scheduled at that time. Seasonal Liturgies of the Word may also be used for special events for candidates, such as retreats, holy hours, and the like that are not devoted to any single lesson.

Following the table is a list of the additional Psalms and Canticles that have been included in this section to provide the catechist alternatives to those suggested. When necessary, these also have been shortened to fit each Psalm or Canticle onto a single page.
Sample from the RCIA Catechist's Manual: List of all 380 handouts

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Litanies and Other Prayers

This section contains a small selection of prayers that are particularly suitable for use in a catechumenal setting. All are formatted for responsorial use as handouts. There are many others that could have been chosen, but those included here are given simply to provide RCIA leaders with a few other options besides the Psalms and Canticles for group prayer, retreats, and other opportunities to engage RCIA participants in the rich traditions of prayer in the Church.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Litany for Holy Communion
Litany of the Holy Spirit
Litany of the Most Holy Name of Jesus
Litany of the Sacred Heart
Litany of the Saints
Litany of Saint Joseph
Angelus
Regina Coeli
Chaplet of the Divine Mercy
Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary
Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary
Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary
Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary
Pentecost Sequence
Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction
PART V

Lives of Saints

This section contains seventy-five lives of saints, blessed, and venerables. They are written specifically with RCIA participants in mind — explaining certain things in greater depth, and drawing out certain themes having to do with conversion, dealing with sin, deepening one’s prayer and devotional life, handling adversities, and other aspects of holy lives that would be particularly edifying or helpful to those considering becoming Catholic.

The selection of these particular saints and other holy men and women is not intended to suggest that others are less applicable to a catechumenal situation. Instead, the intention is to present a suitable cross-section of our elder brothers and sisters in the faith, so that participants can gain a feel for the universal Church and the blessed variety of divine callings and heroic human responses.

These stories focus less upon the actions or deeds of a given person, and more upon the ways God called each of them, and the difficulty and beauty of each one’s struggle to attain genuine sanctity. The stories can be given out on or near a feast day or as a means of giving emphasis to a certain teaching. Of course, as with the rest of this Participant’s Book, RCIA leaders may opt to use these handouts weekly, less frequently, or not at all. This section is supported by several indexes that list the saints in alphabetical order, by feast day, by various biographical categories, and by century of death.

Declaration:

In accordance with the decree of Pope Urban VIII, we declare that in speaking of events, prodigies, and revelations in this work, we wish to accord them no other authority or belief than that which is usually given to narratives resting on merely human evidence and we in no way presume to pronounce on their authenticity or supernatural character, or to anticipate the judgment of the Holy See and the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints, to which we unreservedly submit.
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St. Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions — November 24  
St. Andrew Kim Taegon and Companions — September 20  
St. Ann Wang and Companions — July 9  
St. Anthony of Padua — June 13  
St. Athanasius — May 2  
St. Augustine of Hippo — August 28  

**B**  
St. Benedict of Nursia — July 11  
St. Bernadette Soubirous — April 16  
St. Bernard of Clairvaux — August 20  

**C**  
St. Catherine Labouré — November 28  
St. Catherine of Siena — April 29  
St. Charles Lwanga and Companions — June 3  
St. Clare of Assisi — August 11  

**D**  
St. Dominic de Guzmán — August 8  
St. Dominic Savio — March 9  

**E**  
St. Edith Stein — August 9 (see St. Teresa Benedicta)  
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton — January 4  
St. Elizabeth of Hungary — November 17  

**F**  
St. Faustina Kowalska — October 5  
St. Frances of Rome — March 9  
St. Francis of Assisi — October 4  
St. Francis de Sales — January 24  
St. Francis Xavier — December 3  
Bl. Francisco Marto — February 20  

**G**  
St. Gertrude the Great — November 16  
Bl. Gianna Beretta Molla — April 28  
St. Gregory the Great — September 3  

**I**  
St. Ignatius of Antioch — October 17  
St. Ignatius of Loyola — July 31  
St. Irenaeus of Lyons — June 28  
Sts. Isaac Jogues, John de Brebeuf and Companions — October 19  

**J**  
Bl. Jacinta Marto — February 20  
St. John Bosco — January 31  
Ven. John Henry Newman — March 26  
St. John Neumann — January 5  
St. John of God — March 8  
St. John the Evangelist — December 27  
St. John the Baptist — August 29 (beheading) and June 24 (birth)  
St. John Vianney — August 4  
St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer — January 9  
St. Joseph — March 19 and May 1 (St. Joseph the Worker)  
St. Josephine Bakhita — February 8  
St. Juan Diego Cuauhtláotzin — December 9  
Bl. Junipero Serra — July 1  

**K**  
Bl. Kateri Tekakwitha — July 14  
St. Katharine Drexel — March 5  

**L**  
St. Leo the Great — November 10  
St. Louis de Montfort — April 28  
Ven. Louis and Zélie Martin — March 26  

**M**  
St. Margaret Clitherow — March 25  
St. Margaret Mary Alacoque — October 16  
Bl. Margaret of Castello — April 15  
St. Margaret of Scotland — November 16  
St. Maria Goretti — July 6  
St. Martin de Porres — November 3  
St. Mary Magdalene — July 22  
St. Maximilian Kolbe — August 14  
Bl. Miguel Pro — November 23  
St. Monica — August 27  

**P**  
St. Patrick — March 17  
St. Paul Miki and Companions — February 6  
St. Paul the Apostle — June 29 and January 25 (conversion)  
Sts. Perpetua, Felicity, and Companions — March 7  
St. Peter Claver — September 9  
St. Peter the Apostle — June 29 and February 22 (Chair of Peter)  
Ven. Pierre Toussaint — June 20  
St. Pio of Pietrelcina — September 23  

**T**  
St. Teresa Benedicta — August 9  
Bl. Teresa of Calcutta — September 5  
St. Teresa of Jesus (St. Teresa of Ávila) — October 15  
St. Thérèse of Child Jesus (St. Thérèse of Lisieux) — October 1  
St. Thomas Aquinas — January 28  
St. Thomas More — June 22  
St. Thomas the Apostle — July 3  

**V**  
St. Vincent de Paul — September 27
PART VI

Conversion Stories

This section contains twenty-one conversion stories by individuals who have entered the Catholic Church as adults in recent years. The intention of providing these stories is to give RCIA participants a clearer picture of how God’s grace often works in people’s lives when he calls them to the Catholic Church. Each is written to place emphasis on both the “how” and the “why” of a person’s choice to follow Jesus’ call to enter into the arms of Holy Mother Church.

The stories can be handed out at regular intervals throughout the RCIA process, or used to highlight specific issues, or even given privately to certain participants with whom there is a similarity in the details of a given story. The stories were chosen for the variety of responses of these individuals to God’s call.

A Future and a Hope, by Joe Allison
Going Through the Door, by Anonymous
Not Obligated, but Freely Choosing, by Anonymous
From Bible Anarchy to the Joy of Apostolic Authority, by Doug Beasley
Waiting for the Invitation, by Paul Bennett
In Mary’s Womb, by Andrea Bolster
Come Home, for to This You Were Born, by Dana Brault
God Will Reveal His Plan to Us, by Anne Brauner
Little Mary and My Trinity of Friends, by Shari Deeb
God Cares Specifically About Me, by Julie Eddy
Many Apostles Bring Me to the Church, by Jim Easley
Finding the Desire of My Heart, by Fr. Ed Fride
Seeing the Love of God, by Anne Foy
Mary By My Side, by James M. Herbert
Happily Ever After, by Heather Keimig
Lost and Then Found, by Stephanie Nemecek
Finding the Truth, Finding My God, by Eric Pavlat
Beacon of the Catholic Faith, by Debbie Plescia
A Gentle, Guiding Hand, by Brenda Randall
Joy, Freedom, and Ecstasy, by Steve Ray
Accepting Jesus as God and Lord, by Jim Safford
Ready to Accept Christ into My Life, by Randy Shaw
Starving for the Eucharist, by Martha Tonn
My Friend Is Jesus, by Steve Westmoreland
Have Mercy on Me, Lord, by Belinda Wickham
PART VII

Small Group Discussion Questions

The purpose of this part of the Participant’s Book is to provide a practical means to use the application questions offered at the end of each of the sixty lesson plans in the On the Journey series companion Catechist’s Manual. A catechist or RCIA director may opt simply to copy these pages a number of times and slice up the copies to give each small group a set of questions.

However, many parishes will decide to combine certain lesson plans or expand sections of other lesson plans into entire teachings. In these cases, the sixty categories of these questions are not the desired breakdown. As well, some parishes will decide not to use all of the questions suggested for a given session, or may like to add questions more suitable to a given set of participants. For all of these reasons, these questions are offered in this book to be copied as needed, and in electronic form to be altered as desired.
The Catholic Family

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in Heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God. ~ Ephesians 3:14-19

In the latter part of the twentieth century, a breakdown in the family occurred that had not previously been experienced. Divorce rates, which had been roughly stable except for a brief period after World War II, began rising and are more than twice as high as forty years ago. Many millions of children are victimized by the break-up of their parents’ marriages, and themselves grow up wary of committed relationships. Each new break with the law of God has brought additional havoc to the family. Not only divorce, but also contraception, cohabitation, and abortion have devastated marriage and the family. A huge variety of social pathologies exist that seem to raise the number of intact, stable, two-parent homes falls. And, although children may manage to develop into healthy, happy adulthood, more who might have done so, do not. Yet there is a better way to create a home and raise children, to avoid these tragedies and rebuild the foundation of human society.

What a Catholic Family Looks Like

In God’s plan, the family is a community, founded upon the marital consent of the spouses, and the children they bring into the world or adopt.

Let the little children to come unto me, late 19th century print

“In God’s plan, the family is a community, founded upon the marital consent of the spouses, and the children they bring into the world or adopt.”
“Parents are to nurture and form their children’s will and conscience, gently and steadily showing them how to turn away from sin and choose the good.”

parents, live considerately with your wives, bestowing honor on the woman as the weaker sex, since you are joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered” (1 Pt 5:1-4, 7). Wives are expected to be “well attuned for her good deeds, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the feet of the saints, relieved the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way” (1 Tm 5:9-10). Fathers are reminded not to “provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:4) “not they become discouraged” (Col 3:21), while children are instructed to “obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right” (Eph 6:1) and to “make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God” (1 Tm 5:4). The ideal and goal that is described in Scripture is one of family harmony and gentleness, mutual self-giving out of love of God, parents devoted to their children and children obedient to their parents, a warm welcome to the home for others, and service to those most in need in the community.

The relationship between husband and wife in a Catholic marriage is given supernatural life by the graces of the sacrament of Matrimony. Their love and respect is mutual, and they give themselves unreservedly to each other in a bond so strong that it enables weak human creatures to sustain the relationship despite all hardships. The children that come forth from their mutual self-giving are welcomed as gifts from the Creator.

As a communion of persons, the Catholic family reflects the union of the Holy Trinity, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and seeks to follow the example of the Holy Family of Nazareth. The practice of prayer, reception of the sacraments, mutual and repeated forgiveness, gratitude and respect, and the cultivation of holiness, gives the family its strength. As a whole and through each of its members, the family experiences the joy of honest work, the unity that attends upon prayer and familial worship of God, and the bonding and support that results from the love of parents for their children, and of children for their parents and for their brothers and sisters. The truly Catholic family can and should have an impact on the society in which it exists: its example of stability, proper exercise of authority, and harmonious relationships are transferable to society at large to bolster the foundations upon which freedom, security, and fraternity can flourish in the world community. Society can learn from the family how to care for the young, the sick and the handicapped, the old and the impoverished. Finally, the Catholic family has an evangelizing and missionary purpose. The children are taught by example and word the truths and virtues that will be carried forward into the generations to follow, to pass on the faith in Jesus Christ that they themselves received, and to help bring the world to that faith.

Raising Catholic Children

Before God, before themselves, and before society, a husband and wife as parents in a family have awesome and indispensable responsibilities. First, they must know that they live not with but for each other; for happiness here and hereafter. They are
Samples from the RCIA Participant’s Book: Part I: Doctrines

responsible for living in such a way as to assure that they will be forever together in Heaven. They have a reciprocal responsibility for each other’s sanctity and salvation. To fulfill this obligation of mutual love and to provide the proper environment for wholesome Catholic living, parents establish a home characterized by respect, tenderness, fidelity, forgiveness, and self-sacrificing service. In this Catholic home, virtue can grow, for it is fostered by self-denial, solicitude, and just judgment as well as by a spirit of faith through which the things of God are given priority over the lesser things of daily concern.

Children encounter God’s love first through the love their parents show them and each other. Parents also need to begin, very early, to tell and teach their children the story of God’s overflowing love for all human beings, God’s care for each of us, and our eternal destiny to live within the divine family of the Trinity.

The whole paradigm for Catholic family life should be one of forming disciples. Parents, as Catholic adults, must not only constantly strive to form their consciences more perfectly, but also help their children to form their consciences so that they might make correct choices when faced with decisions in their lives. Parents can follow the pattern laid out for them by Holy Mother Church towards her children—that is, all Catholics. In answering the question, “How does the Church parent us?,” Catholic parents can develop principles and expectations for how they ought to bring their children up in holiness as well.

Unlike the attitudes common in our society that children’s wills either need no formation at all or are to be broken in order for them to behave, a Catholic understanding of the human will is that our wills have already been weakened and wounded by sin, but that we still reflect the image and likeness of God. Parents are to nurture and form their children’s will and conscience, gently and steadily showing them how to turn away from sin and choose the good in any situation while always respecting their great dignity as human beings. Just as the Lord does for each of us, parents also should reach down to their children’s level of understanding and ability, meeting their needs so they learn trust and love. From this place, parents can slowly and patiently build in their children a desire and firm capacity for holiness that will stay with them through their whole life.

To this end, children need to learn, very early in life, that human nature is prone to sin, and that each of us needs the salvation that Jesus earned for us on the cross. They need to learn that they must seek God’s grace, and that God has given them a free will so that they can freely choose the good, but that their free will can lead them to bad as well as to good choices. They need to learn that they can repent of wrongdoing and that God’s forgiveness is, like Daddy’s, always extended to a son or daughter who sincerely repents of sin and wants to become better. They need to learn that we are perfected within our communities—that no one can live outside God’s family and be all they were meant to be, and that salvation comes from love of neighbor as well as love of God. They need to learn that God gave us his Church to help us to attain salvation, and that Heaven is not a place “in the clouds” where we all “get angel wings,” but is our true home where we can be enveloped in the wondrous family life of God. All this they need to understand, in an age-appropriate way, by the time they attain the age of reason and discretion (about six to eight years old), and repeatedly taught, with more depth, as they mature.

Although by Baptism God is present in the child, the child is not at first aware of God; it is the parents’ responsibility to accomplish this. Baptism instills the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. These virtues make it possible for parents to nurture their children’s understanding of their wonderful, unique, and irreplaceable place in God’s plan of salvation; their belief in the marvelous truths about God and themselves; their own hope for salvation; and their ability to love others because they see Jesus in each of them. In doing so, parents should not merely be telling “Bible stories” to their children, but communicating their own joyous acceptance of God’s Revelation and its meaning to them, so that their children make this the center of their own lives.

There are four important elements of religious ed-
ucation for children that ideally should begin during their preschool years. First, children must learn to pray. Through their own prayer life, parents teach the place of prayer in their children’s lives. Children join parents in prayer when rising, before meals, and before going to sleep. Even small children can memorize the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, and the Hail Mary. In addition, children can understand the concept of personal, spontaneous prayer much better than most adults think, for wonder at the unseen world is at its peak in young children. Children have no problem believing in Santa Claus and in writing letters to let him know what they desire, and parents can capitalize on the same impulse to turn their children’s minds toward the most wondrous mysteries of all.

To promote the sense of holiness in the home, the Catholic family can set up, with the help and suggestions of the children, a sacred space or corner with a crucifix, a Bible, possibly a picture or statue of Jesus, Mary, or a saint, and, if desirable, votive lights. This sacred space reminds all in the household of God’s presence in the family and in their individual lives. Other ways to sanctify the home include crucifixes in the bedrooms, religious art, and holy-water fonts, creating an environment that promotes prayer and the frequent remembrance of God.

A Catholic calendar allows the family to be aware of approaching feasts. Children’s imagination and creativity can be drawn upon to prepare for feasts such as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. Advent wreaths and Advent calendars heighten the awareness of all family members to the coming of the Babe of Bethlehem. Children can be taught very early to pray more, practice voluntary penances, and give alms during Lent. Even Halloween — which in reality commemorates the Feast of All Saints (“All Hallows”) — and Thanksgiving lend themselves to the creating of God-centered family traditions. Children can be encouraged to create and care for an outdoor shrine to the Blessed Virgin or a special saint. Family outings can include pilgrimages to churches and shrines.

Second, children must learn to worship in community — that is, to participate in liturgy. While Mass may be difficult for infants and toddlers, parents should bring children to Mass from infancy. Going to Mass on Sundays, holy days, and other occasions should be made a matter of utmost importance and anticipation; cleanliness and proper dress for all should be emphasized. Children must be taught how to respect the presence of God in church and what is expected of them, regardless of unacceptable behavior around them. Even the youngest can appreciate that something very special is happening during the consecration, and can be kept occupied with age-appropriate picture books of the Mass, Bible stories, and lives of the saints. Children should be taught specifically the meaning and importance of the liturgy; that our bodies as well as our hearts, minds, and souls need to worship God; and that worship is a community, not a solo, action.

They need to experience the world as it really is, not just the material world we can see, hear, and touch, but also the transcendent reality of God for which all human hearts are made. Liturgy points to and actually makes us present at the Heavenly worship and is a foretaste of that worship; it is an encounter with the living God.

Third, children must learn Catholic attitudes as a foundation for later instruction in virtue and doctrine. Among these attitudes are the following:

1) A sense of the sacred — that some events (such as Mass), objects (such as the Bible, crucifixes, vestments), and people (such as priests) are set apart for holy use.

2) A sense of family — that their family is a special collection of people, that their parish is an extended family, that every human is a brother or sister and that some need special help. Pope John Paul II reminded us that “God in his deepest mystery is not a solitude, but a family” (meeting with Latin American bishops, Pueblo, Mexico, 1979) — not like a family, but truly a family, so that we should see our human fami-
lies as a foretaste of the family for which we are made, God’s divine family.
3) A sense of the good — that God created the world and all that is in it, and pronounced it good; that God created human beings to know, love, and do good; that in becoming human, Jesus elevated humanity with him; that there is a right way to appreciate and use all the wonderful things of the world; and that we must offer praise, thanksgiving, and gratitude for all that comes from God.
4) A love of truth — that God, who is Truth, created an objective truth that can be known and understood, and that truth should be searched out and held fast; that a fulfilling life comes from knowledge of and assent to the truth, for God gave it to us because, as a loving father and mother know and provide for their children’s needs, he in his superabundant love knows that this is what we need.
5) A sense of service, selflessness, and blessing, which flows from the theological virtue of charity; that in following Jesus we selflessly devote our lives to serving others and become a blessing to them, and thereby become what we were created to be.
6) A sense of hope — that in the midst of suffering, immorality, and social breakdown, we can trust in God and his promises and face our future with confidence.

Fourth, parents need to help their children to learn to avoid and resist sin. By the age of discretion, children should already have begun their lifelong effort to cooperate with God’s grace in mastering their will. This is most fully accomplished through the sacramental life — the regular reception of the Lord in the Eucharist and in his forgiveness in the sacrament of Reconciliation. Instruction in virtue must be accompanied by appropriate discipline, which itself is a manifestation of divine love, for “the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives” (Heb 12:6). Parental neglect in this area is especially grave, as our Lord says: “whoe'er causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Mt 18:5-6).

As children approach adulthood, parents must work to ensure that family piety and devotions are transformed into genuine, deep faith, for otherwise as the children move into the larger society as teens and adults, their rootless faith will wither. Parents need especially to guard their children from the modern dismantling of faith. For today’s society, “belief” is a purely secular concept and lacks any relevance to God’s Revelation or objective truth. In addition, modern culture places a great premium on belief of any kind, without regard to the content of what’s believed. God’s Revelation in its awesome wholeness needs to be preserved and transmitted to children so that they can receive what is rightfully theirs as adopted children of God.

The important thing in the family is to place priority on almighty God. In our thoughts, our words, our deeds and aspirations, he is paramount: “seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness” (Mt 6:33). Everything then falls into proper perspective, providing guidance and support in the solution to the inevitable difficulties that accompany life in our sin-laden world. Establishment of God as an integral part of family life helps parents choose the proper kind of schooling for their children and to give judicious advice when they confront the choice of a career and way of life. For “what does [God] desire? Godly offspring” (Mal 2:15) who will respond to God’s call in their lives.

The Catholic family shows us, as is evident nowhere else, the priesthood of the laity in a domestic church. It shows us the mystery of Holy Mother Church forever united to her Head, Jesus of Nazareth and the Holy Family. The beauty, splendor, and love of the Trinity is manifest in the earthly Catholic family, which can, with the Psalmist, rejoice: “Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways! You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. In truth the man be blessed who fears the Lord. The Lord bless you from Zion! May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life! May you see your children’s children! Peace be upon Israel!” (Ps 128).

(CCC 1652-1653, 1656-1657, 2201-2208, 2214-2217, 2219, 2221-2230, 2232-2233, 2685, 2691)
The Eucharist

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.” ~ John 6:53-56

In the Gospel of John, chapter six contains one of the most explicit teachings on the Eucharist made by Jesus. The chapter begins with a miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, a prefiguration of the Eucharist (see Jn 6:1-14). Immediately following the miracle, because of their lack of understanding, the people intend to make Jesus king. For this reason, Jesus withdraws to the hills (see Jn 6:15). Noticing that he has gone away, the people begin seeking Jesus in Capernaum (see Jn 6:24). When they find him, Jesus teaches them the meaning of the miracle. He says, “[T]he will of my Father [is] that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life” (Jn 6:40), because he is the “true bread from Heaven” (Jn 6:52) which “gives life to the world” (Jn 6:35). Not only must they believe in him, but also they must eat and drink his Flesh and Blood: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you” (see beginning verses). Those who heard the teaching said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to [that is, believe and follow] it?” (Jn 6:60). “After this teaching, many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him” (Jn 6:66), but the Twelve remained (see Jn 6:67-69). At the Last Supper, Jesus gave the Twelve the power to change bread and wine into his Body and Blood (see Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-23; Lk 22:19-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26). Ever since the Last Supper, Christians truly eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood in the Eucharist.

The Eucharist completes Christian initiation, because it is the most intimate union with Christ. Although Jesus is present in the other sacraments, Jesus is fully present in the Eucharist, that is, he is present Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the
Eucharistic species (the consecrated bread and wine). For this reason, the Eucharist is called the Real Presence. Also, for this reason, the Eucharist is the source and summit of all Christian life, a participation in the life in Heaven given to those who believe in him while he is still on earth. In other words, every aspect of the Christian faith leads toward and flows from this sacrament, which is nothing other than Jesus himself. In his love, God also gave to us the Third Commandment, “Remember to keep holy the sabbath day.” This commandment, which in Pope John Paul II’s words is “a defining and indelible expression of our relationship with God” (On Keeping the Lord’s Day Holy 15), is transferred in the New Covenant from the sabbath (the seventh day, or Saturday), to the Lord’s Day (Sunday) because Sunday was the day when Jesus rose from the dead. We therefore recall God’s saving works by honoring the “new day of creation,” the weekly Easter. Participation in Sunday Mass is obligatory — a participation which is necessary for the People of God to live as God created them and to praise him rightly as he deserves to be praised. Furthermore, through the Holy Spirit, this required Sunday participation has also become the first precept of the Church, “You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor” (CCC 2042) (see handout on The Sabbath and Sunday Worship).

**Names for the Eucharist**

The sacrament of the Eucharist is known by several different names, each revealing some aspect of the sacrament. The name “Eucharist” is drawn from the Greek word eucharistia, meaning “to give thanks.” This word is found in two of the Last Supper accounts, the Gospel of Luke and St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians. In the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, a related Greek word eulogia, meaning “to bless or praise,” is used. Since the Eucharist is celebrated as a community, the celebration is sometimes referred to as the “Eucharistic Assembly.” The name “Lord’s Supper” references both the Last Supper and the Heavenly Banquet. During the Last Supper, Jesus first instituted both Holy Orders and the Holy Eucharist when he took, broke, and blessed the bread and wine and instructed the apostles to do this in memory of him (see Lk 22:19-20). The Heavenly Banquet anticipates “the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rv 19:9), when the entire family of God will all be present in glory.

The name “Breaking of the Bread” points to the fact that the Eucharist is prefurred by the Jewish Passover meal that also had a “Breaking of the Bread.” When Jesus appeared to the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus, it was not until he broke the bread that “their eyes were opened and they recognized him” (Lk 24:31). This name was also used by the first Christians (see Acts 2:46; Acts 20:7, 11).

The names “Holy and Divine Liturgy” or “Most Blessed Sacrament” state the truth that the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. It is the sacrament to which all other sacraments lead, because Jesus is really present, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

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1 Cf. Codef iuris Canonici, cann. 1246-1248; Corpus Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium, can. 880 § 3, 881 §§ 1,2,4
The name “Sacrifice of the Mass” emphasizes that in the Eucharistic celebration, Jesus’ sacrifice of His Body made “once for all” (Heb 10:10) time and all people is truly present. In other words, when we participate in the Eucharist, we join Jesus at the cross. Scripture also uses the name “sacrifice of thanksgiving” (Ps 50:14; Ps 116:17), “spiritual sacrifice” (1 Pt 2:5).

The name “Holy Communion” tells the reality that in the Eucharist, we unite ourselves with Christ and his Body (the Church) whose members are in Heaven, Purgatory, and on earth.

Last, the most common name “Holy Mass” or “Mass” comes from the ancient Latin closing words of the priest: Ite, missa est (“go, you are sent”). We hear in English, “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord,” and these words send the faithful into the world to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ and to take the charity which comes from our communion with Christ to the world (see Mt 28:18-20).

The Eucharistic Celebration

The celebration of the Eucharist was made possible by Jesus himself when he instituted Holy Orders and Holy Communion at the Last Supper. Particularly, through the institution of Holy Orders, every priest acts in persona Christi (“in the person of Christ”; see handout on In Persona Christi), and so Jesus and his Paschal mystery are made present every time Mass is celebrated.

The Mass has two parts. The first part consists in the reading and preaching of the Word of God and the second in the celebrating of the Eucharist. After the preaching, the faithful are invited to present their needs to God in prayer. Next, the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the Presentation of the Gifts. The gifts are bread and wine because they are ancient symbols of God’s creation which call to mind many Old Testament images, among which is the offering of the priest-king Melchizedek (see Gn 14:18-20). They are brought forward, sometimes in procession by the faithful as a sign of Thanksgiving to God for the goodness manifested to them in the abundance of his creation. After receiving these gifts, the priest begins the Eucharistic Prayer by offering these gifts in the name of all those gathered and the whole Church to God the Father. Then, by calling down the Holy Spirit, he transforms the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ by means of the same words spoken at the Last Supper: “Take this all of you and eat it; this is my body given up for you. Take this cup and drink from it; this is my blood shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins; do this in memory of me.” These words are referred to as the words of consecration and represent the most important element of the Mass.

Proper Reception of the Eucharist

“Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord” (1 Cor 11:27), which is known as a sin of sacrilege. In order to receive Jesus in the Eucharist in a “worthy manner,” one must examine his or her conscience to be certain that he or she is in the state of grace, that is, free from all deadly sin. Those who are aware of deadly sin in their own lives must first re-
receive absolution in the sacrament of Reconciliation. For those who come to Mass with venial (lesser) sins, a proper disposition of contrition and the faithful praying of the Introductory prayers (penitential) are all that is required to be properly prepared. One also prepares to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus by observing the one-hour fast before Communion, spending time in prayer immediately before Holy Communion, and through a daily life of prayer and Christian witness. Thus freed from all sin and strengthened by prayer, the faithful may receive the Eucharist. They are obliged to receive Holy Communion at least once a year, but they can receive whenever they participate in the Mass. The Body and Blood of Jesus may be received either on the hand (making a “throne” for the Lord) or the tongue. Some prior act of reverence — genuflecting, bowing, or making the Sign of the Cross — must also be done, keeping in mind the appropriate etiquette (not “lording it over others” or prolonging the Communion line disruptively). In the United States, a simple bow of the head prior to receiving the host and the chalice is recommended as the norm for all the faithful (see Phil 2:10). Most importantly, these signs of reverence should reflect an interior disposition of gratitude and adoration for Jesus who has humbled himself to become bread for us to eat.

This coming up to Holy Communion and the subsequent “Amen” is the “altar call” for the believing Catholic. In this “altar call,” it is Jesus himself (acting in the person of the priest) who gives his very Body and Blood to be taken inside each one who receives him following their affirmation of faith: Amen (“I believe”).

Grace of the Eucharist

The principal effect of the Eucharist is an intimate union with Christ. Jesus says, “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him” (Jn 6:56). By receiving Holy Communion, the Christian is physically joined to Jesus — a union in which the believer becomes ever more like him. Thus this union preserves, increases, and renews the grace received in Baptism. The consecrated bread and wine are our spiritual food.

Christians cannot be intimately united with Christ, who was without sin, without themselves being forgiven of all sin. This release from sin enkindles in us charity and a greater love for God, strengthening our spiritual life so that we practice virtues and give Christian witness. In turn, we become even more like Christ and find it more difficult to sin in the future. This cycle of spiritual growth is continuously repeated as the image of Christ is made more visible in the heart of every Christian who properly receives Jesus in this sacrament.

“Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor 10:17), that is, when we receive Holy Communion, we are not only intimately united with Christ, but also with his Body, the Church, the family of God. In other words, in the Eucharist, we are more intimately united to each other. Furthermore, since we are all united with Christ, we share in his mission together. In Christ, we are to go out to all the nations and teach them all that Jesus commanded (Mt 28:18-20) so that they might also be united to the family of God in Baptism and eventually feast at the heavenly marriage supper of Christ and his Church.

(CCC 1522-1405, 1555, 2042, 2835-2837)
**AMEN**

*For from him and through him and to him are all things.*

*To him be glory for ever.* Amen. — Romans 11:36

The word “amen” is such a universal feature of Christian prayer that we often don’t think any more about it than we do about the period at the end of a sentence. However, knowing its meaning can enrich our prayer.

“Amen” is derived from a Hebrew root that also provided the Hebrew word for “believe.” In both Hebrew and English, belief in someone indicates that the person is solid, trustworthy, and faithful. “Amen” has this same sense, and can express both God’s faithfulness towards us and our trust in him” (CCC 1062).

Because of its breadth of meaning, “amen” is used in several ways in the Old and New Testament. The prophet Isaiah’s phrase translated as “God of truth” (Is 65:16) is “God of Amen.” On several occasions, the Israelites used “amen” to indicate their acceptance of something. For example, in the book of Deuteronomy the people were instructed to say “amen” following a series of curses connected with the breaking of the moral law (see Dt 27:15-26). “Amen” is also used following prayers of praise to God. For example, when David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, the people concluded the hymn of thanksgiving sung by the Levites with “Amen” (see 1 Chr 16:36). Following the return of the Jews from their Babylonian captivity and the restoration of the Temple, the people gathered to hear the first five books of the Scripture read to them, and before the scribe Ezra began to read, he blessed the Lord, and everyone answered “Amen” (see Neh 8:6). Several of the Psalms end with “Amen” (see Ps 41:15; Ps 72:19; Ps 89:52; Ps 106:48), following an expression of praise of God.

In the New Testament, the majority of the letters contain “amen,” some more than once, usually following an expression of praise to God or a blessing by the author. In the book of Revelation, Jesus himself is, as God is in Isaiah, “the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s creation” (Rv 5:14). “Amen” is also a response to praise of God in the book of Revelation (see Rv 5:14; Rv 7:12; Rv 19:4), and “Amen” ends both the Gospel of Mark (see Mk 16:20) and the book of Revelation (see Rv 22:21).

The most original use of “amen” was by Jesus himself. He repeatedly opened a teaching with the phrase “Amen, I say to you” (see, for example, Mt 5:18; Mt 18:5; Mk 5:28; Mk 9:1; Lk 18:29; Lk 21:32). In the Gospel of John, the word is often doubled (see, for example, Jn 5:19; Jn 6:55; Jn 8:58). (In some translations of the Gospels, “amen” is rendered by “truly.”) Jesus tells us that his statements are worthy of our complete trust, for “all the promises of God find their Yes in him” (CCC 1065).

In ending the Creed at Mass with “Amen,” we return to the initial “I believe,” ratifying everything we have just prayed. The Great Amen concludes the most solemn part of the Mass, the Eucharistic Prayer:

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, God, for ever and ever” (CCC 1065).

Because Jesus is the seal and guarantee of the love of his Heavenly Father, we in turn offer our Amen through him. The Great Amen at Mass was in use by at least 155 AD, since it is found in St. Justin Martyr’s description of the Mass (see CCC 1345). This “Amen” is, like those of the assembly in the Old Testament, a Yes to all that has come before. When we receive the Eucharist, we also say “Amen,” saying, as St. Augustine explains, “yes, it is true!” (CCC 1396). The Church concludes all its prayers with “Amen,” an affirmation, a Yes, a “so be it!” to what we have just prayed, and a sign of participation by all those assembled. In praying “Amen,” we entrust ourselves “completely to him who is the ‘Amen’ of infinite love and perfect faithfulness” (CCC 1064).

(CCC 1061-1065, 1345, 1348, 1396, 2856)

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1 2 Corinthians 1:20
SOLEMNITY OF EASTER

Without having seen him you love him; though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. – 1 Peter 1:8

Easter, the celebration of Jesus’ Resurrection from the dead, is the highest feast and greatest of solemnities in the Church. It ushers in its most extended season of rejoicing, the fifty-day period from Easter Sunday to Pentecost. All Sundays are feasts because Jesus’ Resurrection, the “great feast,” occurred on a Sunday. It is the Passover of Christ (see CCC 1168), and is always celebrated very near the date of the Jewish Passover, although the method of calculation is not exactly the same and, of course, Easter must always fall on a Sunday. (The method of calculation also differs between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, a problem that it can be hoped will be resolved soon.)

Of all days, Easter is the day of which the Psalmist sings: “This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Ps 118:24). We shout for joy, for our Savior has risen; he has conquered death, and he dwells in glory. Truly he is great, he is “the Son of the Most High” (Lk 1:32). He possesses “the throne of his father David, and be [reigns] over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his Kingdom there will be no end” (Lk 1:32-33). “The Lord has risen indeed!” (Lk 24:34).

Christ was born, suffered, died, and rose from the dead; these are historical events. The Resurrection of Jesus was a real event, one that is at the very core of the mystery of faith “that transcends and surpasses history” (CCC 647). His Resurrection confirms his divinity and our expectation of rising with him. This is the significance of Easter for the Church and all its faithful members.

The triumphant Exsultet in the Church’s Easter proclamation is sung at the Easter Vigil Mass. From the moment that the Exsultet is begun, the liturgy of Easter resounds with joy, jubilation, and shouts of “Alleluia!” The joy of Easter bursts like a long-awaited flood upon the Christian soul. One is struck by the splendor of the Exsultet and the claring of its words: “O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam, which gained for us so great a Redeemer!” (The Roman Missal, Mass of Easter Vigil, Easter Proclamation). This “happy fault” (félix culpa in Latin) is a bold declaration, a cry of hope and optimism confirming that the power of God is so incredible that he can turn sin into a means for his own glory and our good.

The Church seems unable to restrain its joy at the Resurrection: “Rejoice, O earth,” it sings, “in shining splendor, radiant in the brightness of your King! Christ has conquered! Glory fills you! Darkness vanishes forever!” It continues: “The power of this holy night dispels all evil, washes guilt away, restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy; it casts out hatred, brings us peace, and humbles earthly pride” (The Roman Missal, Mass of Easter Vigil, Easter Proclamation).

A 2nd- or 3rd-century Christian writer sang thus: “O spiritual feast! O divine Passover!… O festival of the whole cosmos! O joy of the universe, its honor, its banquet and delight!… Heaven’s gates have opened; God has appeared as a human being and human beings have risen as God… O divine Passover, to us you have spiritually united the God whom the Heavens cannot contain” (Ancient Paschal homily 62).

A Father of the Church, St. Gregory Nazianzen, carried away by the glory of Easter, cried out: “O great and holy Easter, I speak of you as of a living being” (Oratio XLV). Easter is the glorious feast of faith. The Risen Jesus says to each of us, as he said to Martha: “I am the resurrection and the life: he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (Jn 11:25-26).

Blessed will be we who can reply, inspired by God’s goodness and grace, “Yes, Risen Lord, I believe.” This belief will merit an eternal Easter.

(CCC 647, 655, 1168-1170)
Psalm 22B

Sung Response: My God, my God, O why have you abandoned me?
—or—

Spoken Response: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?
Why art thou so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but thou dost not answer; and by night, but find no rest. But I am a worm, and no man; scorned by men, and despised by the people.

All who see me mock at me, they make mouths at me, they wag their heads; “He committed his cause to the Lord; let him deliver him, let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; thou dost lay me in the dust of death.

Yea, dogs are round about me; a company of evildoers encircle me; they have pierced my hands and feet — I can count all my bones — They stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.

But thou, O Lord, be not far off! O thou my help, hasten to my aid! For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; and he has not hid his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him.
Psalm 63

**Sung Response:** My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord, thirsting for you, my God.
My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord, thirsting for you, my God, thirsting for you, my God.

—or–

**Spoken Response:** My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

God, thou art my God,
I seek thee, my soul thirsts for thee;
my flesh faints for thee,
as in a dry and weary land where no water is.

So I have looked upon thee in the sanctuary,
beholding thy power and glory.
Because thy steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise thee.

So I will bless thee as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands and call on thy name.
My soul is feasted as with marrow and fat,
and my mouth praises thee with joyful lips,
when I think of thee upon my bed,
and meditate on thee in the watches of the night.

For thou hast been my help,
and in the shadow of thy wings I sing for joy.
My soul clings to thee;
thy right hand upholds me.

But those who seek to destroy my life
shall go down into the depths of the earth;
they shall be given over to the power of the sword,
they shall be prey for jackals.

But the king shall rejoice in God:
all who swear by him shall glory;
for the mouths of liars will be stopped.

*St. John the Apostle,*
11th century pierced ivory panel
Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Leader: Lord, have mercy on us.
All: Christ, have mercy on us.
Leader: Lord, have mercy on us.

Leader:
Christ hear us.
God the Father of Heaven...
God the Son, Redeemer of the world...
God the Holy Spirit...
Holy Trinity, one God...

Holy Mary... Pray for us.
Mystical rose...
Holy Mother of God...
Holy Virgin of virgins...
Mother of Christ...
Mother of the Church...
Mother of Divine grace...
Mother most pure...
Mother most chaste...
Mother most undefiled...
Mother most amiable...
Mother most admirable...
Mother of good counsel...
Mother of our Savior...
Virgin most prudent...
Virgin most renowned...
Virgin most powerful...
Virgin most merciful...
Virgin most faithful...
Mirror of justice...
Seat of wisdom...
Cause of our joy...
Spiritual vessel...

Vessel of honor...
Tower of David...
Tower of ivory...
House of gold...
Ark of the Covenant...
Gate of Heaven...
Morning star...
Health of the sick...
Refuge of sinners...
Comforter of the afflicted...
Help of Christians...
Queen of angels...
Queen of patriarchs...
Queen of prophets...
Queen of apostles...
Queen of martyrs...
Queen of confessors...
Queen of virgins...
Queen of all saints...
Queen conceived without original sin...
Queen assumed into Heaven...
Queen of the Most Holy Rosary...
Queen of Peace...
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world... Spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world... Graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world... Have mercy on us.
Pray for us O holy Mother of God... That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Leader: Let us pray.
All: Grant we beg you, O Lord God, that we your servants may enjoy lasting health of mind and body, and by the glorious intercession of the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, be delivered from present sorrow and enter into the joy of eternal happiness, through Christ our Lord. Amen.
The Chaplet of the Divine Mercy

The Chaplet of the Divine Mercy is said on regular rosary beads and prayed as follows, either individually or in a group.

Our Father
Leader: Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.
Response: Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Hail Mary (x5)
Leader: Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Response: Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

Apostle’s Creed
Together: I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day He rose again. He ascended into Heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father almighty. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.
Amen.

On Large Bead before Each Decade
Leader: Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
Response: In atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

Once on Each of the Ten Small Beads
Leader: For the sake of His sorrowful Passion,
Response: Have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Concluding Doxology
(after five decades repeat three times)
Together: Holy God, Holy Mighty One,
Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.
**St. Margaret Clitherow**

Born about 1556; died 1586
Wife and martyr
Feast day: March 25

Religious indifferentism — the wrongful idea that all faiths are equally expressions of the truth, and all equally lead to God — is common in today’s culture. But in sixteenth-century England, men and women died because they professed Catholicism as the true faith and because embracing untruth was an affront to God. St. Margaret Clitherow, one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales, was among those willing to die for the true faith.

King Henry VIII had made himself head of the Church in England to secure his right to a divorce. Following his death, his oldest daughter Queen Mary, a faithful Catholic, sought to restore the faith but soon died. She was succeeded by her half-sister Queen Elizabeth I, under whom Catholics were forbidden to go to Mass, required to attend Protestant services, and heavily fined or imprisoned if they failed to comply with the law. Being or harboring a priest was treason. (The usual punishment of men for treason in the England of this time was hanging, drawing, and quartering. The condemned was dragged to the place of execution chained to a piece of fencing, hanged but cut down while still conscious, mutilated and disemboweled. Finally his still-beating heart was cut out and the body dismembered into quarters.) Margaret was born during the reign of Queen Mary and was two when Queen Elizabeth I made the break with Rome final. She was one of four children of a wealthy candlemaker and Sheriff of York, England, and possibly raised a Catholic. However, by the time she married widower John Clitherow, a butcher and at one point Chamberlain of York, at about fifteen, she was a Protestant. John was also Protestant, although he too may have been raised Catholic, since both his brothers were Catholics, one a priest. John was well-to-do, kind, and generous. He and Margaret had three children, Henry, Anne, and William. John loved Margaret dearly as a wife, a mother, and manager of his household. She was merry, witty, charming, and beloved by everyone, and was often sought out for advice and consolation. She was also humble and frequently, despite servants, did the most distasteful household chores.

Within three years after her marriage, Margaret but not John converted (or returned) to Catholicism. It is not known how this came about, but she told others that she was convinced English Protestantism was untrue, and

“She had made a shroud for herself while in prison and carried it as she walked, barefoot, smiling, and joyous, to her death.”

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that she was awed and inspired by the numerous martyrdoms of Catholics. She embraced the Catholic faith, and the probable consequences of doing so. Seeking perfection, she deeply repented of even the smallest sins. When she received the Eucharist, it was often with tears.

Over the next approximately twelve years, Margaret sheltered priests in her home, which had a “priest-hole” (a secret room). She made nighttime pilgrimages to the site of York’s martyrdoms to pray, and founded a catechetical school to teach children the faith. She was imprisoned several times, once for two years, regarding this as a time of retreat, prayer, and fasting. Of course, her entire household was aware of the frequent visits of the priests, the Masses said, and the risks she took daily. Even though he remained a Protestant himself, John was fined again and again because she refused to attend Protestant services. She was under house arrest for the last year and a half of her life.

When John was brought to court to explain why his son Henry was abroad (he was studying for the priesthood), the Clitherow home was searched, but nothing was found. Anne and William (both under twelve) were arrested. They did not betray their mother, but under duress an eleven-year-old student of the school did; the priest-hole was found, with vessels and books for Mass. Margaret was arrested and accused of treason. A few days later, she was arraigned but refused to plead either guilty or not guilty, because a trial would have forced her family, servants, and friends to testify against her or to lie to save her. Her defense of her faith showed her well able to explain and defend Catholic doctrine. She was therefore sentenced to death, for which a new form of capital punishment, pressing, had been established for women. She was not permitted to see her children, who were still in prison. She possibly was pregnant.

Eleven days after Margaret’s arrest, the sentence was carried out. She had made a shroud for herself while in prison and carried it as she walked, barefoot, smiling, and joyous, to her death. She was stripped and laid on the ground, clothed as a concession in the shroud. A sharp stone was put under her back and her hands were stretched out in the form of a cross and bound to posts. Then a heavy door was placed on top of her and at least seven hundred pounds of weights were put on top of it. She took about fifteen minutes to die, crying “Jesu! Jesu! Jesu! Have mercy on me!” Both sons became Catholic priests and her daughter a nun, testaments to the gift of faith transmitted by their mother’s witness in blood.
The Protestant revolt was, from its earliest days, a rebellion against the authority of the Pope as divinely appointed to guide and guard the Church Jesus founded. St. Thomas More died for his unwavering determination to recognize the authority of the papacy as superior to that of the king.

Thomas was born in London, England, the only surviving son of John More, a lawyer and judge, and his first wife Agnes Granger. At twelve, he became a page to the Archbishop of Canterbury, also at that time Chancellor, a high royal office. Two years later, the Archbishop sent Thomas to be educated at Oxford. There his father allowed him little money, thereby keeping him from leading a dissolute life at the university. He remained there for four years, and his father then sent him to study law. Thomas completed his legal studies three years later and entered into legal practice. He quickly became successful and enjoyed great popularity, for he was not only brilliant but also wonderful and witty company. However, he seriously considered becoming a monk or priest, lived for four years in a monastery and following the schedule of prayer before and after work. He read the Fathers of the Church and gave a series of lectures on St. Augustine’s City of God. Eventually, Thomas’ confessor advised against a life in religion.

At twenty-seven, Thomas married Jane Colt. In the six short years of their extremely happy marriage, three daughters and a son were born. Following Jane’s untimely death, he married a widow, Alice Middleton, a kind, capable, and sensible woman who had three children of her own. This marriage was comfortable but not as happy as his first. Although both had a sense of humor, neither appreciated the other’s. She was concerned that he lacked ambition, while he was concerned about her vanity. Thomas laid great stress on educating his children, even the girls in an age when this was not done. The family estate was filled with unusual pets — birds, monkeys, foxes, ferrets, weasels. He also carefully brought his children up in a life of prayer and study of Scripture. During the family meals, which included the servants, an episode from the Scriptures would be read, perhaps by one of the children, followed by discussion. Even though Thomas did not permit card or dice games, family time bubbled with merriment. The family and servants also prayed the Liturgy of the Hours at night.

During these years, Thomas became a great intellectual and leading figure of the European Renaissance, which focused on a recovery of Greek and Latin classics of literature, art, and architecture, as well as on “humanism,” a religiously-neutral approach to pagan culture. His best-known work, Utopia, satirized his own society and described an ideal society that seemed so real that some believed it actually existed. One of his greatest friends was the Dutch priest and scholar Erasmus, whom he met while studying law. Although both remained loyal sons of the Church, they advocated reform in the Church, Erasmus in such a way that he was playing with fire, as he later acknowledged by saying that his defense of “liberty of spirit” had been twisted into “unbridled licensed of the flesh” and that he would never have written what he did if he had foreseen the Protestant revolt.

Unlike Erasmus, Thomas was a deeply religious man. He went to daily Mass and was conscious of the impact reception of the Eucharist made on his daily life, arming him for spiritual combat, enlightening him, and strengthening his prudence. Wary of the temptations to pride that education offered, he nevertheless thought that a life of scholarship was better suited to piety, charity, detachment, and gentleness than the rough-and-tumble of politics or the insidious culture of the royal court. He despised luxury and ostentation. The guests at his table were the learned and those in poverty, rather than the rich or members of the nobility. He watched out for the welfare of the poor, quietly seeking them out in alleys and obscure lanes, and whenever he learned of a woman in labor, he prayed intensely until she delivered her child. Unlike his intellectual contemporaries, he thought highly of asceticism. From the age of eighteen, he wore a hair shirt, which only his family knew, and on Fridays, he scourged himself.

The year before his first marriage, at age twenty-six, Thomas was elected to the English Parliament. He immediately began opposing certain taxes of King Henry VII. Partly as a result of his leadership, the king had to back down. He was so angry that he near-
ly had Thomas beheaded, and in retaliation imprisoned Thomas' father in the Tower of London and had him fined. In 1509, Henry VII died and his son succeeded him as Henry VIII. As Thomas' fame grew, the king and his Chancellor, Cardinal Wolsey, sought his services. Fourteen years after he had first been elected to Parliament, Thomas reluctantly entered the service of the king, although he did not give up his seat. The king's favor led to advancement, and Thomas became Speaker of the House of Commons in 1525. Five years later, offices and preferments followed, although he refused any gifts intended to gain his favor.

These were years of friendship with the king. Thomas often dined with the king and Queen Catherine, and late-night discussions were frequent. Thomas detested always being at the king's beck and call, and tried to distance himself somewhat from his intense, overwhelming monarch, even trying to make himself less likable. One surprising result was the king inviting himself to Thomas' home for dinner, so that he might enjoy 'Thomas' company. In these years, both men were outspoken in their defense of the true faith, so much so that the Pope conferred on the king the title "Defender of the Faith" and Thomas began writing treatises against heresy.

Yet these were also years when trouble was brewing. The king had one child, a daughter Mary, to succeed him. This had not been a problem until he developed a consuming infatuation for Anne Boleyn and decided that his marriage to Queen Catherine should be annulled, on the grounds that he should not have received a dispensation to marry his brother's widow. Cardinal Wolsey applied to the Pope for an annulment, but as the years dragged on and it was not granted, the king removed him from his office and in 1529 replaced him with Thomas, the first layman ever to hold the position as Lord Chancellor of England he was faith. In early 1533, the king "married" Anne Boleyn, some months before his now-submissive clergy declared his marriage to Catherine null and void.

Thomas' resignation reduced him to near poverty, but he told his family that, if they had to go begging, they'd do it together, merrily. He remained eighteen months in seclusion. In 1534, Parliament passed the Act of Succession, declaring that the king's daughter Elizabeth, born the previous September, was the legitimate heir to the throne; that his marriage to Catherine had not been a true marriage; repudiating the authority of any foreign prince or potentate — that is, the Pope; and making opposition high treason. (A week later, the Pope issued a final disapproval of the king's annulment.) Everyone was required to swear an oath acknowledging the king as head of the Church of England. Thomas refused, and two weeks later he was imprisoned in the Tower of London.

For months, Thomas' family begged him to take the oath. He refused, but neither did he speak against the king. The finest of his spiritual works, Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation, was written during the fifteen months he was imprisoned, as was the unfinished Treatise on the Passion. He remained cheerful and joked with visitors. Six months into imprisonment, his lands were taken and his family left penniless. His silence came to be interpreted as treason, and he was eventually forbidden visitors, books, and writing materials. A few months later, an Act of Supremacy gave the title of "only supreme head of the Church of England" to the king and decreed that it was treason to deny it. When asked his opinion of the Act, he said nothing.

During the last weeks of his imprisonment, Thomas witnessed martyrdoms, and feared that he could not measure up to the cheerfulness with which these men went to their deaths. He felt unworthy and weak. Nevertheless, he expressed trust in God's merciful goodness. Ill from a "disease of chest" and kidney stones, he was condemned to death on the basis of perjured testimony. After sentencing, he stated his belief that no king should be head of the Church. Less than a week later, dressed in his best clothes, he went to his martyrdom. He prayed for the king, prayed Psalm 51, kissed his executioner, and declared: "I have ever been the king's good and loyal servant — but God's first."

Thomas answered the call to give his life to God while living in the world. In the ordinary events of everyday life, in his role as husband and father, and in his position as Lord Chancellor of England he was faithful, above all else, to God.
Felt like a kid, dragging my heels, as my heart was being tugged onward by God’s hand. I didn’t want to go, and it hurt. I had already learned the importance of obedience. Just as Jesus “learned obedience through what he suffered” (Heb 5:8), I had learned that, even though God’s ways were not always my ways, his ways are always best. But as I sought God daily through prayer and Scripture reading, I found myself less and less able to pray. I was holding back, even though God was calling me to go to RCIA.

At the time, my husband was a graduate student studying theology at the Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. I had been exposed to enough of what he was learning to know that this would be a place where my questions about Catholicism would be answered. But I wasn’t sure that I even wanted them answered. What if I found them to be true? Then what?

I knew my resistance was distancing me from God. I told myself, and everyone else, that I was going to RCIA in order to learn, not necessarily to become Catholic. Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” I knew that God was capable of leading me places that I would have never dreamed of myself.

My RCIA experience turned out to be a wonderful one. I was surprised to find out how the teachings based on Tradition were rooted in Scripture. It was also a relief to find out that many of my fears about the Catholic Church were based on misunderstandings or misconceptions.

When I married a Catholic I knew that I could never become a Catholic simply for his sake. Nor did he want me to do so for any other reason than a desire to do God’s will. I knew that, in order for me to become Catholic, God would have to make his will very clear to me and that I would have to be able to explain it and fully believe it in order to embrace it. As I began to learn more about the Catholic faith, I found myself explaining and defending it to my friends and family. This I never dreamed would happen.

My marriage was also richly blessed as a result of my openness to learn about the Catholic faith. What had once led to pain and defensiveness on both sides could now be discussed in a more reasonable manner. My husband attended RCIA with me. He never once told me of his desire for me to become Catholic, although I sensed an increase in his prayer life. He gave me all the space I needed to explore, question, and doubt. Consequently, I found it easier to approach him with my thoughts. This often led to long hours of discussion.

During the RCIA process I found out that I was pregnant. My husband and I were thrilled with the news. I remembered reflecting upon my sister-in-law’s pregnancy, six years earlier, and recalled the insights I had received about Heaven at that time. My family had gathered to celebrate Christmas and my younger sister played carols on her flute. My brother commented that the baby, still in his mother’s womb, could
probably heard the music. I thought at the time that, just as the baby could hear music from our world while still in the womb, in a spiritual sense we can glimpse the worship of God in Heaven while yet in this world.

At about this time, one of the RCIA sessions closed, as it normally did, with a popular song of praise. Later that evening, while I was reading the Bible, I recognized that the words of the song that we had sung were taken directly out of Scripture. I was familiar with the songs and Psalms that we regularly sang or chanted, but the words of this particular song came from the book of Revelation: “Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen” (Rv 7:12). I kept reading and found the passage where the saints in Heaven sang, “Holy, holy, holy” (Rv 4:8) and realized that when Catholics sang these praises at Mass they were imitating the vision of Heaven that St. John described in the book of Revelation. “This is what we will be doing in Heaven,” I realized. I brought my discovery to my husband’s attention and he explained that Catholic worship is more than just an imitation, but an actual participation in the Heavenly worship of God. Just as my unborn baby hears the sound from a world that he has never experienced, God invites me, through the Mass, to glimpse a world that I have not yet experienced.

As my pregnancy continued, I began reading a book that a friend had given me describing the development of a child within the womb. I began to pray specifically for each member of my baby’s tiny body as God shaped him inside of me. As this miracle took place within me, sometimes I felt like a mere spectator, but I also sensed that God had invited me to participate in this miracle in a special way. It seemed that God was doing all the work, caring for this child that I had never even seen. I continued to pray and wondered sometimes if my baby did not perhaps know his Creator more intimately than he knew me. It seemed that this could be the case and, though I longed to hold my child, I found myself praying with deep desire that the intimate relationship that they now shared would continue throughout his life.

Our RCIA director had scheduled an extra weekend session, as she often did when she wanted to give us more time to discuss important topics. Though I was coming to enjoy the sessions more and more, I found myself uncomfortable as the “Mary” weekend approached. Though I certainly had nothing against Mary, I felt that too many Catholics went overboard in their devotion to her. I felt that the love Catholics have for Mary should be reserved for God alone. I didn’t understand what role Mary had in my life, since Jesus alone had died for my sins. However, during our discussions about Mary in RCIA, we learned that true devotion to Mary should always lead us closer to her Son, Jesus. This gave me a sense of peace about the Catholic Church, but I had known Jesus for many years and did not understand how Mary could help me know him better.

My sponsor suggested that I try spending some of my prayer time in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and though I did not really understand how that could make a difference, I figured that it couldn’t hurt. One day while I was praying in the chapel, I felt the presence of Jesus with me as I brought to him my concerns and desires for my unborn child. As I prayed that my child would know him as I did, he made it clear to me that his mother had been praying the same for me all along, with that same sense of longing that I experienced for my own child. All of a sudden I understood that Mary loved me with the same motherly love that I as a mother was giving to my child. It was as if I had been in her womb all my life, being formed by her Heavenly Father, but had never recognized the special role she was playing in my spiritual development.

Through these revelations, and many others, I felt that God was leading me to join the Catholic Church. Though most of the intellectual difficulties were overcome, the emotional struggle I experienced caused me to hesitate. My family had been very supportive, but my greatest difficulty was the separation I felt when I contemplated becoming Catholic. However, I knew that I had to obey God’s call, and respond as my newfound spiritual mother had done when she had said, “Let it be to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38).
From “Bible Only” Anarchy to the Adventure of Apostolic Authority

DOUG BEASLEY

“A man cannot expect any adventure in the land of anarchy. But a man can expect any number of adventures if he goes traveling in the land of authority.” ~ G.K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy

On the Road to Azusa Street

I was born in 1939, the year of Gone With the Wind, The Wizard of Oz, and Hitler’s invasion of Poland. The winds of World War II, socioeconomic changes, and a struggle within the church over “speaking in tongues” forced us to find another road. There is a yellow brick road of Pentecostalism that runs from Topeka, Kansas through my hometown of Houston and on to Los Angeles. In 1946, we moved to Los Angeles, birthplace of organized Pentecostalism at the Azusa Street Mission of 1906. My uncle gave me my first Bible for my sixth birthday, and I soon began to read the Bible “on my own.”

The Holy Spirit led me to these words of Peter: “You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:21-23). Little did I know that this call to conversion came from the first Pope, the Pastor of Pastors. The Holy Spirit used the “keys of Peter” to bring me to Christ as Savior.

At ten, I received Jesus as Lord. I felt the Lord calling me to follow in the path of my uncle and become a pastor. I spent much of my time in study and prayer. In 1960, I graduated from L.I.F.E. Bible College. I was immediately ordained in the Pentecostal church.

In the 1950s, God had given to Pentecostals a great visitation of the Holy Spirit known as the “Latter Rain.” The Holy Spirit was calling the Pentecostals back to their Catholic roots of apostolic authority, prophetic gifts, and “singing” the liturgy in the Spirit. Organized Pentecostalism rejected the “Latter Rain” but, thanks to Dr. David Du Plessis, an Assemblies of God minister known in charismatic circles as “Mr. Pentecost,” who had a personal audience with Pope John XXIII, the “rain” began to fall in the Catholic Church. “Latter rain” was given a theological face-lift and a new name: the Charismatic Renewal.

Unfortunately, I witnessed the sad spectacle of a divided Pentecostalism. I was deeply confused by Pentecostals who could not agree on the interpretation of a given text in the Bible and split into hundreds of groups. The Charismatics taught that speaking in tongues is one of the many gifts of the Spirit, but not the initial evidence of the Spirit-filled life as taught by Pentecostals. Without Holy Mother Church and the Pastor of pastors, we Pentecostals did not know where to take theological controversy, except to the Bible verse which agreed with our experience, and this only made matters worse.”

“Without Holy Mother Church and the Pastor of pastors, we Pentecostals did not know where to take theological controversy, except to the Bible verse which agreed with our experience, and this only made matters worse.”

Tim Staples, an Assemblies of God pastor who converted to the Catholic Church, showed me how we: Pentecostals hop, skip, and jump all over the Bible looking for our “proof texts.” For example, I have preached on the Parable of the Lost Sheep in Matthew 18:10-14 but stopped short of apostolic authority taught in Matthew 18:15-17: “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church” (Mt 18:15-17).

Knowing that Pentecostalism came out of Methodism, and...
longing for unity in the Body of Christ, I became a United Method- 

ist pastor in 1975. I was serving the largest church of my de-

nomination in the Southwest Texas Conference when my wife 
dropped the bomb: she wanted out of my life. The chill of death 
could not have been colder. After twenty years of marriage, three 

wonderful children, and ten years of being counseled by a "Bi-

tle-only" marriage counselor, we were divorced in 1982.

My life after divorce looked like the devastation of a Hiroshi-

ma. Divorce was a thief that stole my wife and a robber that left

me a lame pastor. The "Eleventh Commandment" for Protestant 
pastors is "Thou shalt be married." Yet as my world fell apart, my 
faith increased. Again the Holy Spirit led me to the Bible: "Take 
courage, for as you have testified about me at Jerusalem, so you 
must bear witness also at Rome." (Acts 23:11)

What the devil calls the end, God calls "a bend in the road."

On the Road to Rome

"I am out to build a church that will be a road back to Rome" 

(John Wesley, Journal).

I made my last pastoral call in 

San Antonio just as the sun was 

setting. I stood in that parking 

lot and watched the sun go down on 

my ministry. I had never felt 

so alone. I was entering a dark night of the soul. Out of no-

where, a woman approached me and started to talk about that 

beautiful Texas sunset. Small talk soon became a serious con-

versation about the Lord. The woman said, "There is hope for 
you in the Catholic Church." She left me with some prayer 
cards and the promise that she would call me at my new place 
to see how I was doing. No bishop and no fellow pastor called 
me — but she did. Unfortunately, I would not be ready for the 
Catholic Church without another crisis in my vocation.

In 1983, God led me to start a radio ministry in Canton, 

Ohio, the first home of Mother Angelica, founder of EWTN, a 

Catholic radio-television network. It seemed that everywhere I 
turned, I met Catholics who encouraged me to study the faith.

One of my listeners even gave me the Catechism of the Catholic 
Church. I bought a short-wave radio and began listening to all 

of the great teaching on this network.

Ever since seminary, I would periodically attend Mass. On 
one particular Saturday evening, I entered a Catholic church 
where the celebrant was Fr. Doug Long of St. Anne’s, Gilbert, 
Arizona, a convert from the Episcopal Church. As Fr. Doug cel-

erated Mass, his radiant witness of hope gave me much-needed 
spiritual direction. He gave me a crucifix and two books, Rome 
Sweet Home by Scott and Kimberly Hahn and Surprised by Truth, 

edited by Patrick Madrid. A few days after reading these books, I

sat next to a faithful Catholic on a plane going to Canton who 

witnessed to me about the need for "ongoing" apostolic authority 
in Bible study. My mind returned to Matthew 18:15-17.

I began to see a beautiful tapestry that only God can weave. 

Canton is ninety minutes from the Franciscan University in 

Steubenville, home of Dr. Scott Hahn. I had to meet the man 

whom his wife Kimberly called "Luther in reverse."

I called Scott and told him of my desire to become Catholic. 

He told me that I was not alone and that many Protestant pas-
tors were coming home to Rome. I soon was welcomed into 
an RCIA program to study the faith, under apostolic author-

ity. I was a lame man who received the grace of God at work 
in faithful Catholics who carried me to "that gate of the temple which is 
called Beautiful… [Then] Peter said, 'I have no silver and gold, but I give you 
what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk’" (Acts 5:2, 6).

The well-prepared lessons and the inspiring testimonies of 

changed lives made the doctrine I was learning come alive. The 

"Latter Rain" began to fall upon my "dry bones." I felt that I was 
at home. I experienced the faith of "apostolic authority," the hope of "prophetic gifts," the joy of "singing in the Spirit," and the love of faithful Catholics. At the Easter Vigil of 1998, the same Apostle Peter who had called me to convert when I was six years old in 1945, took me by the hand into the waters of Holy Baptism and raised me up on my 

feet: "If immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leap-
ung up he stood and walked and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God" (Acts 5:7-8). I had been to literal-

ly thousands of miracle meetings and healing services in Pen-
tecostal churches, but none like this one. The Body, Blood, 

Soul, and Divinity of Jesus became "bone of my bones and 
flesh of my flesh" (Gn 2:23).

From Diocesan Manual & Book Samples  *  ACM 83
Angels — Suggested Questions for Discussion:
1. How have angels worked to carry out God’s plan of salvation?
2. How do we know that angels exist? Why are they Christ’s angels?
3. We are each given our own Guardian angel to watch over us and guide us. How can we co-operate with our Guardian angels to help us follow the way of Christ?
4. Angels always see the face of God. How can this help us to overcome the temptations of the Devil?

Anointing of the Sick and Redemptive Suffering — Suggested Questions for Discussion:
1. How does the Christian view of suffering differ from that of our culture?
2. How does Christ’s suffering and death take our sin and illness and use it as a means of our own redemption?
3. Jesus healed the body and the soul. How is this healing manifested in the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick?
4. How does Christ make sense of suffering? How can suffering help us in our calling to holiness?

Baptism — Suggested Questions for Discussion:
1. Why is Baptism called a sacrament of initiation?
2. If Baptism gives us new life, why does the celebration of the sacrament immerse us in water to symbolize burial in Christ’s death?
3. When we are baptized, we receive sanctifying grace; the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity; and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. How can these help us to live a Christian life?
4. How can the Church help us to unfold our baptismal graces?
5. If all sins are forgiven at Baptism, why do we need to go to the sacrament of Reconciliation after Baptism?

The Battle of Prayer — Suggested Questions for Discussion:
1. Why is prayer a struggle? What can we do to overcome the difficulties of prayer?
2. Why is it important that we pray? Is it possible that God will answer your prayer with a “no”?
3. Which attitudes to prayer may discourage us from praying?
4. What effect will it have if your prayer is filled with petitions but lacks adoration and thanksgiving?
5. What do we need to pray, besides our own efforts, and why?

The Blessed Trinity — Suggested Questions for Discussion:
1. How do we know that there are three Persons in one God?
2. How is the Blessed Trinity the central mystery of Christianity?
3. How does God’s nature (a community of Persons whose life is love) determine what he does?
4. The inner life of God: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is characterized by mutual love. How can we reflect this in our own Christian life, and relationships?

The Blessed Virgin Mary — Suggested Questions for Discussion:
1. Why do Catholics honor Mary? Why is she considered the Mother of the Church?
2. Why is Mary’s Assumption into Heaven a source of hope for Christians?
3. Does it detract from God’s power that he often relies on a free response in faith from human beings? What does it show us about God’s respect for his creation and the importance of our faith response?
4. What privileges did God give to Mary to prepare her for her role in salvation?
5. Jesus gave Mary to us as our Mother. How can Mary’s example and her faith, help us in our own daily lives?
6. What does the role of Mary in God’s plan of salvation say about the dignity of women?
ACM conducts seminars for dioceses according to a three-tier program. The first seminar, one day in length, is for the clergy (priests, deacons, seminarians) of a diocese. The second seminar is for clergy as well as lay members of RCIA teams (including sponsors, liturgy personnel, etc.) and is two to three full days. The third seminar, also two to three full days of training, is for catechists who teach in RCIA, both clergy and laity. This series of seminars is based on the strategy of serving the Church in a distinctively ecclesial manner. ACM’s seminars work through the office of the Bishop, and are directed to serve his intentions and desires for the full implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation among his parishes. Out of respect for the sovereignty of each Ordinary, ACM does not come to do training in a diocese unless invited by the Bishop.

**Existing ACM Publications:**
- RCIA Leader’s Manual
- RCIA Catechist’s Manual
- RCIA Participant’s Book
- RCIA Overview Chart (English & Spanish)
- RCIA Godparent & Sponsor Handbook
- RCIA Ritual Book Tabs

**Current ACM Publishing Projects:**
- Team Training Module (distance learning)
- Catechist Formation Module (distance learning)
- RCIC Books
- Spanish Translations
- Catechumen Bible Study (Gospel of Mark)
- Neophyte Bible Study (Acts of the Apostles)

**Dioceses and Seminaries ACM has served:**
- Diocese of Duluth (1999, 2000)
- Diocese of Lincoln (1999, 2000, 2001)
- North American College in Rome (2001)
- Diocese of Peoria (2000, 2002)
- Diocese of La Crosse (2003, 2008*)
- Diocese of Bridgeport (2004, 2005*)
- Diocese of Harrisburg (2006)
- Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph (2007)
- Archdiocese of Kansas City (2007)
- Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia (2007)
- Archdiocese of San Antonio (2007)
- Diocese of Phoenix (2007)
- Archdiocese of Newark (2009)
- Diocese of Fort Worth (2009)

**Spread of ACM’s Books (since publication in 2005):**
- In use in all 50 States, all U.S. dioceses, all Provinces of Canada
- Two overseas U.S. military bases in Japan and two U.S. Territories
- Twenty-six other countries: Australia, Canada, China, United Kingdom, France, Ghana, India, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Lithuania, Malta, New Zealand, Nigeria, Republic of Ireland, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, St. Lucia, West Indies, Suriname, Sweden, Taiwan, Togo, Zambia

**ACM presence in ecclesial media:**
- Ongoing articles in The Sower (Maryvale Institute), articles in 13 previous issues
- EWTN: ACM speakers were on five of the 13-part program ‘Handing on the Faith’ (aired in 2007)
- Catholic Answers Radio interview in 2006
- Relevant Radio (Midwest) interviews on the Drew Mariani Show in 2007 and 2008
- Positive reviews of ACM’s books in The Sower, The Catholic Answer, Columbia, Crisis Magazine, Our Sunday Visitor, and the National Catholic Register
- ACM publications are primarily distributed by Liturgy Training Publications (LTP) of Chicago, as well as four other major catalogs, and many Catholic bookstores
ACM SEMINARS

FULL SET OF THREE SEMINARS FOR A DIOCESE (normally with at about 2 months between each event):

- **CLERGY DAY SEMINAR** (1 training day, 2 ACM presenters, Leader’s Manual for all participants)
- **TEAM TRAINING SEMINAR** (2-3 training days, 3 ACM presenters, Leader’s Manual for all participants)
- **CATECHIST TRAINING SEMINAR** (2-3 training days, 3 ACM presenters, Leader’s Manual & Catechist’s Manual for all participants)

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<tr>
<th>Number of persons served</th>
<th>Fee per person served</th>
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<tr>
<td>0 to 75 participants</td>
<td>Special (see below)</td>
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<tr>
<td>76 to 125 participants</td>
<td>$160 per person served</td>
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<tr>
<td>126 to 200 participants</td>
<td>$115 per person served</td>
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<tr>
<td>201 and over participants</td>
<td>$95 per person served</td>
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The above per person figures include the following:
1) 7 days of training spread over 3 major seminars
2) Speaking stipends for 8 ACM presenters
3) Flights for these 8 presenters (up to $500 per presenter)
4) An RCIA Leader’s Manual for all participants
5) An RCIA Catechist’s Manual for Catechist Training Seminar participants
6) Both books made available at a significant discount off their retail prices
7) An RCIA Overview Chart and a set of Ritual Book Tabs for all participants
8) Shipping and handling for these published resources to the host diocese
9) ACM’s administrative expenses for preparing for the events

HYBRID SEMINARS FOR A DIOCESE (with 75 or fewer attendees, or a follow-up event held after the first three seminars):

- Diocese pays for airfares at $500 per presenter
- Diocese pays stipends ($500 for one day, $750 for two days, $1,000 for three days, per presenter)
- Diocese pays ACM’s Leader’s Manuals (LM) at $30 (40% discount from the retail price)
- Diocese pays ACM flat fee of $15 per person served

Here is an example for a 2-day hybrid for 40 people with 2 presenters assuming that 10 of the participants already possess Leader’s Manuals (LM), and therefore do not need to acquire them at the event:

- Flights @ $500 x 2 = $1,000
- Speaker Stipend @ $750 x 2 = $1,500
- 30 LM @ $30 = $900
- ACM flat event fee @ $15 = $600
- Total cost: $4,000 = $100 per person served

Participant cost for 5 days at a National Conference for Catechetical Leadership *(travel/meals/lodging not included)*: $259
Participant cost for 5 days at a St. John Bosco Conference *(travel/meals/lodging not included)*: $205
Participant cost for 4 days at a Beginnings Plus Institute *(travel/lodging not included)*: $225
Participant cost for 3 days at a Defending the Faith Conference *(travel/meals/lodging not included)*: $110
Participant cost for 2 days at a National Catholic Family Conference *(travel/meals/lodging not included)*: $75
Participant cost for 1 day at a Yankee’s Baseball Game, main seating section: $55
“So often we get immersed in details without a clear overview. I think this day has given me a broader sense of what we should be about.”

~ Participant in ACM’s Clergy Day Seminar in the Archdiocese of Denver, CO

“Very intense, but so informative. Your ACM team members were so spiritual. They have helped me make up my mind to undertake this work for God. Fantastic!”

~ Participant in ACM’s Combined Team and Catechist Training Seminar in the Archdiocese of Birmingham, England

“The outline of the RCIA given by ACM is the only thing I’ve seen that makes sense of that Rites book. Brilliant!”

~ Participant in ACM’s Clergy Day Seminar in the Diocese of Peoria, IL

“The workshop very effectively broke open a central and beautiful part of our Tradition that I had previously known literally nothing about. Thick, rich, also motivated by love, made my writing hand hurt. Truly excellent!”

~ Participant in ACM’s Seminarian Seminar at the Pontifical North American College in Rome

“I will be starting a new RCIA process in our parish, you have shared all the basics I need to get started.”

~ Participant in ACM’s Team Training Seminar in the Diocese of Wichita, KS

“Excellent. A life changing weekend. I came here as an accident, but who knows where it will end. God knows.”

~ Participant in ACM’s Combined Team and Catechist Training Seminar in the Archdiocese of Birmingham, England

“I’m new at this. I just hope if I’m ever called that I can show the love and enthusiasm you all have shown us. I’ll savor your words for a long time.”

~ Participant in ACM’s Team Training Seminar in the Diocese of Fargo, ND

“Very knowledgeable, available and wonderful presenters. I feel you are friends.”

~ Participant in ACM’s Team Training Seminar in the Diocese of Wichita, KS

“This three-day seminar really brought things together from the Team Training Seminar. It also helped rejuvenate me to want to evangelize and catechize.”

~ Participant in ACM’s Team Training and Catechist Training Seminars in the Diocese of Lincoln, NE

“I am new to this, even though I have a Masters in Religious Education. I was greatly helped and deeply moved. God has touched these presenters and they in turn ignited a fire within me.”

~ Participant in ACM’s Team Training Seminar in the Diocese of Bridgeport, CT

“I’ve been to many workshops in the Diocese, this was the most organized and definitely the most prayer centered.”

~ Participant in ACM’s Catechist Training Seminar in the Diocese of Fargo, ND

“Presenters were superb models of authentic witness beyond their expertise, which was also extraordinary!”

~ Participant in ACM’s Catechist Training Seminar in the Diocese of La Crosse, WI
“The ACM team members were truly gifted, talented and filled with the Holy Spirit. They are truly a gift to the Church! I have been deeply impressed by their faith. How alive they are!!”  
~ Participant in ACM’s Catechist Training Seminar in the Diocese of Fargo, ND

“Overall, this was the most excellent program I have ever attended for the Church. It was life-changing. The Team Training in Altoona was wonderful and this was a great follow-up.”  
~ Participant in ACM’s Team Training and Catechist Training Seminars in the Diocese of La Crosse, WI

“So much content, excellent delivery, very challenging, and needs a great deal of reflection time. A truly amazing weekend!”  
~ Participant in ACM’s Combined Team and Catechist Training Seminar in the Archdiocese of Birmingham, England

“It has been an honor to have been part of this training.”  
~ Participant in ACM’s Catechist Training Seminar in the Diocese of Lincoln, NE

“Wow! Across the board this was a GREAT DAY! Content, presentations and personalities!”  
~ Participant in ACM’s Clergy Day Seminar in the Archdiocese of Denver, CO

“Thirty years of ups and downs in my own faith and evangelization experience; the lifelong consistency of people like these presenters in the ACM ministry leaves me in awe. Thank you!”  
~ Participant in ACM’s Team Training Seminar in the Diocese of Bridgeport, CT

“Your speakers had a confidence and a professionalism we must now strive to establish here. They not only informed, but enriched and cheered me enormously.”  
~ Participant in ACM’s Combined Team and Catechist Training Seminar in the Archdiocese of Birmingham, England

“I can’t tell you how impressed we were, or what a breath of fresh air your devout, authentic, gentle presentation style was. My husband and I took note of that for our own presentations (for this first year, we are the RCIA team), as well as of the content you shared. It was so nice to “let our filters down” and relax and absorb, knowing we were getting a taste of Reality.”  
~ Participant in ACM’s follow-up training in the Diocese of La Crosse, WI

“I have found the whole weekend to be a profoundly moving experience and feel challenged and stimulated to work in my own church. The teaching has been excellent, presentations practical and stimulating. I loved the emphasis on Scripture and the Holy Spirit as central to catechesis.”  
~ Participant in ACM’s Combined Team and Catechist Training Seminar in the Archdiocese of Birmingham, England

“All of the presenters were excellent in presentation, content, and inspiration. Thank you for sharing yourselves and your faith. Bless you all!”  
~ Participant in ACM’s Catechist Training Seminar in the Archdiocese of Denver, CO
Outline for a Diocesan Clergy Day
Outline for a Diocesan Clergy Day

Welcome by the diocesan bishop (10 min)
Introduction of ACM team by diocesan official (10 min)

Morning Session

Detailed Overview of the Modern Catechumenate: a Liturgical, Catechetical, and Pastoral Process (60 min)
Solicitation of Questions (in written form) (15 min)

Lunch

Afternoon Session

Answers for All Solicited Questions (90 min)
The Essential Roles of the Bishop and Clergy in the RCIA Process (20 min)
Explanation of ACM resources (20 min)
Explanation and Outline of RCIA Team Training Seminar and Catechist Training Seminar (15 min)
Closing remarks by the diocesan official and/or the bishop (10 min)
LOGISTICS FOR A DIOCESAN CLERGY DAY SEMINAR
The Purpose of the Clergy Day is Twofold:

- To educate the clergy of the diocese on the catechumenate and ACM
- To motivate the clergy to bring their parish catechumenate team members to the Team Training Seminar

Personnel Involved in the Clergy Day are as Follows:

*From ACM:*
- Two ACM presenters (normally a priest and a lay person)
- One ACM assistant (optional except in very large dioceses)

*From the host diocese:*
- Diocesan bishop (see below)
- Diocesan official(s) (see below)
- Musician(s), readers, etc. for the prayer times and Mass

Preparations:

The following components will be useful in conducting a successful Clergy Day:

*Prior to the Clergy Day:*
- Public relations – story for the diocesan newspaper prior to the event
- Invitation to clergy – sent out at least two months prior to the event (preferably from the Bishop directly)
- Call individual pastors (especially heads of deaneries) to encourage them to come to the event
- Call key RCIA directors in the diocese to enlist their aid in encouraging their pastors to attend
- Participants should be asked to bring three books: RCIA Manual, Bible, and Catechism

*Following the Clergy Day:*
- Letter from the bishop inviting all clergy and parish teams to the upcoming Team Training Seminar, with enclosed Prayer of the Faithful to be said at Masses on Sunday prior to that event
- ACM resources are deliver to parishes that have placed orders

The ACM team presenters will need the following items for the Clergy Day:

- Two sets of newsprint and easels (or blackboards/whiteboards)
- Name tags and registration table
- The diocese should consider purchasing a case of RCIA Manuals to have on hand to sell to participants
- RCIA Leader’s Manual for each participant (purchased from Liturgy Training Publications)

Role of the Diocesan Bishop in the Clergy Day (in addition to celebrating Mass if possible):

Brief opening and closing remarks by the bishop of the diocese should mainly cover two areas:

- Importance of and enthusiasm for evangelization and Christian initiation in the diocese
- His vision for roles of clergy and laity in RCIA

Role of the Diocesan Official(s) in the Clergy Day:

The official or officials charged with orchestrating the Clergy Day should be prepared to do the following:

- Give introductions for the ACM presenters
- Facilitate transitions between sessions; handle all logistical issues
- Answer questions along with the ACM presenters (particularly about policies specific to the diocese)
- Become known to the clergy as the contact for RCIA in the diocese
Outline for Diocesan Team Training Seminar
OUTLINE FOR DIOCESAN TEAM TRAINING SEMINAR

Introduction of the ACM team by the diocesan official (10 min)
Introduction by bishop of the diocese (15 min)

A Vision for Christian Initiation
The Purpose and End of the Christian Life: Participation in Divine Life (30 min)
Christ: The Means for Participating in Divine Life (40 min)
Making Christians: The Modern Catechumenal Process (50 min)
The Realization of the Father’s Plan: Our Salvation and Sanctification (50 min)

Liturgical Aspect
Liturgy of the Word according with the first session (with explanation) (10 min)
Liturgy: Communion with God (50 min)
Liturgical Components of the Process: Gateways & Sources of Grace for Conversion (60 min)
Question and Answer Session (30 min)
Explanation and Demonstration of the Rite of Acceptance/Rite of Welcoming (60 min)
Question and Answer Session (15 min)
Living the Liturgy in the Christian Initiation Process (30 min)
Small Group Session I (60 min)

Catechetical Aspect
Catechesis: Delivering What God Has Revealed (50 min)
Catechetical Components of the Process: Illuminating & Securing the Path of Faith (40 min)
Scripture: Catalyst for Conversion (30 min)
Truths of the Faith: Lights for the Path (30 min)
Question and Answer Session (30 min)
Small Group Session II (60 min)

Pastoral Aspect
The Challenge of Charity: Life in the Family of God (60 min)
Pastoral Components of the Process: From Initial Motivation to Firm Conviction to a Catholic Worldview (50 min)
Signs and Stages of Conversion (30 min)
Companions on the Journey: Sponsors and Godparents (30 min)
The Evangelizing and Welcoming Parish (40 min)
Small Group Session III (60 min)
Addressing Pastoral Issues (extended Question and Answer Session) (60 min)
Explanation of ACM resources (20 min)
Closing remarks by the diocesan official and/or the bishop (10 min)
Logistics for a Diocesan Team Training Seminar
The Purpose of the Team Training Seminar is Threefold:
- To educate parish catechumenal teams of the diocese on the catechumenate and ACM
- To provide an opportunity for clergy and laity to gain a better understanding of their complementary roles
- To facilitate the proper use of ACM’s publications as a means to perpetuate and apply seminar training

Personnel Involved in the Team Training Seminar are as Follows:

From ACM:
- Three or four ACM presenters
- One ACM assistant (optional in certain circumstances)

From the host diocese:
- Diocesan bishop (see below)
- Diocesan official(s) (see below)
- Musician(s), readers, etc. for the prayer times and Mass
- Personnel to assist as needed in other logistical areas (set-up, registration, lodging, meals, small groups, etc.)

Preparations:
The following components will be useful to diocesan officials in conducting a successful Team Training Seminar:

Prior to the Team Training Seminar:
- Public relations – story for the diocesan newspaper prior to the event
- Invitation to parishes – sent out at least two months prior to the event
- Letter from the bishop inviting all clergy and parish teams to the upcoming event, with enclosed Prayer of the Faithful to be said at Masses on Sunday prior to that event
- Call certain individual pastors (especially heads of Deaneries) to encourage attendance for the event
- Call key RCIA directors in the diocese to enlist their aid in encouraging other laity to attend
- Participants should be asked to bring three books: RCIA Manual, Bible, and Catechism

Following the Team Training Seminar:
- Letter from the bishop inviting all clergy and parish catechists to the upcoming Catechist Training Seminar, with enclosed Prayer of the Faithful to be said at Masses on Sunday prior to that event
- ACM resources are deliver to parishes that have placed orders

The ACM team presenters will need the following items for the Team Training Seminar:
- Two sets of newsprint and easels (or blackboards/whiteboards)
- Overhead projector and screen
- Sacred space items (such as a standing crucifix, appropriately colored liturgical cloth, Bible stand, candles)
- Name tags and registration table
- The diocese should consider purchasing a case of RCIA Manuals to have on hand to sell to participants
- RCIA Leader’s Manual for each participant (purchased from Liturgy Training Publications)

Role of the Diocesan Bishop during the Event (in addition to celebrating Mass if possible):

Brief opening and closing remarks by the bishop of the diocese should mainly cover two areas:
- Importance of and enthusiasm for evangelization and Christian initiation in the diocese
- His vision for roles of clergy and laity in RCIA

Role of the Diocesan Official(s) during the Event:
The official or officials charged with orchestrating the event should be prepared to do the following:
- Give introductions for the ACM presenters
- Provide copies of the Liturgy of the Hours for all participants from this website: http://www.liturgyhours.org/
- Arrange for a priest or deacon to lead the Liturgy of the Hours at places indicated by the schedule
- Arrange for Mass to be celebrated each day
- Facilitate transitions between sessions; handle all logistical issues
- Answer questions along with the ACM presenters (particularly about policies specific to the diocese)
- Become known to the parishes as the contact for RCIA in the diocese

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Outline for Diocesan Catechist Training Seminar
**OUTLINE FOR DIOCESAN CATECHIST TRAINING SEMINAR**

- Introduction of the ACM team by the diocesan official (10 min)
- Introduction by bishop of the diocese (15 min)

**The Context of Catechesis**
- Revelation, Grace, and the Response of Faith (50 min)
- Faith: How We Get It and How it Grows (30 min)

**Elements of Catechesis ~ Methodology**
- Catechetical Methodology: Catechesis that Changes Hearts (60 min)
- Question and Answer Session (30 min)
- Forming Faith for Life: The Work of Adult Catechesis (50 min)
- Question and Answer Session (30 min)
- Small Group Session I (60 min)

**Elements of Catechesis ~ Content**
- Liturgical Catechesis (30 min)
- The Centrality of Scripture in Teaching for Conversion (45 min)
- The Catechist: Witness to the Truth (50 min)
- Question and Answer Session (30 min)
- Salvation History: The Catholic Family Story (60 min)
- Analyzing Doctrine: So Much to Learn, So Little Time (40 min)
- Question and Answer Session (30 min)
- Small Group Session II (60 min)

**Themes for Catechesis in Each of the Periods**
- Catechesis in the Precatechumenate: Delivering the Gospel (40 min)
- Speaking the Truth in Love: Apologetics in the Precatechumenate (40 min)
- Catechesis in the Catechumenate: Faith, Hope, and Love (60 min)
- Question and Answer Session (30 min)
- Catechesis in Purification and Enlightenment: Preparing to Receive the Life of God (40 min)
- Catechesis in Mystagogy: Deepening in the Graces Received (40 min)
- Small Group Session III (60 min)
- Explanation of ACM resources (20 min)
- Closing remarks by the diocesan official and/or the bishop (15 min)
Logistics for a Diocesan Catechist Training Seminar
The Purpose of the Catechist Training Seminar is Threefold:
- To train parish RCIA catechists, priests and deacons of the diocese in methods and content of RCIA catechesis
- To provide an opportunity for clergy and laity to gain a better understanding of their complementary roles
- To facilitate the proper use of ACM’s publications as a means to perpetuate and apply seminar training

Personnel Involved in the Catechist Training Seminar are as follows:

From ACM:
- Three or four ACM presenters
- One ACM assistant (optional in certain circumstances)

From the host diocese:
- Diocesan bishop (see below)
- Diocesan official(s) (see below)
- Musician(s), readers, etc. for the prayer times and Mass
- Personnel to assist as needed in other logistical areas (set-up, registration, lodging, meals, small groups, etc.)

Preparations:
The following components will be useful to diocesan officials in conducting a successful Catechist Training Seminar:

Prior to the Catechist Training Seminar:
- Public relations – story for the diocesan newspaper prior to the event
- Invitation to parishes – sent out at least two months prior to the event
- Letter from the bishop inviting all clergy and parish teams to the upcoming event, with enclosed Prayer of the Faithful to be said at Masses on Sunday prior to that event
- Call certain individual pastors (especially heads of Deaneries) to encourage attendance for the event
- Call key RCIA directors in the diocese to enlist their aid in encouraging other laity to attend
- Participants should be asked to bring three books: RCIA Manual, Bible, and Catechism

Following the Catechist Training Seminar:
- ACM and diocese provides necessary information to seek follow-up materials, additional training, and other resources for helping catechists in their formation
- ACM resources are deliver to parishes that have placed orders

The ACM team presenters will need the following items for the Catechist Training Seminar:
- Two sets of newsprint and easels (or blackboards/whiteboards)
- Digital projector and DVD/VCR player with cables appropriate to make the two machines compatible
- Overhead projector and screen
- Sacred space items (such as a standing crucifix, appropriately colored liturgical cloth, Bible stand, candles)
- Name tags and registration table
- The diocese should consider purchasing a case of RCIA Manuals to have on hand to sell to participants
- RCIA Leader’s Manual for each participant (purchased from Liturgy Training Publications)

Role of the Diocesan Bishop during the Event (in addition to celebrating Mass if possible):
Brief opening and closing remarks by the bishop of the diocese should mainly cover two areas:
- Importance of and enthusiasm for evangelization and Christian initiation in the diocese
- His vision for roles of clergy and laity in RCIA

Role of the Diocesan Official(s) during the Event:
The official or officials charged with orchestrating the event should be prepared to do the following:
- Give introductions for the ACM presenters
- Provide copies of the Liturgy of the Hours for all participants from this website: http://www.liturgyhours.org/
- Arrange for a priest or deacon to lead the Liturgy of the Hours at places indicated by the schedule
- Arrange for Mass to be celebrated each day
- Facilitate transitions between sessions; handle all logistical issues, registration, meals, etc.
- Answer questions along with the ACM presenters (particularly about policies specific to the diocese)
- Become known to the parishes as the contact for RCIA in the diocese
SPECIAL RCIA TOPICS SEMINARS
The Association for Catechumenal Ministry (ACM) has received many requests from dioceses for seminars on particular aspects of RCIA ministry. We are always willing to accommodate the specific training needs of a diocese. Over the years ACM has developed the following specialty seminars that address the most common requests. These seminars can vary in length according to what depth of training a diocese desires. Most are designed for a single day, beginning in the morning and concluding prior to dinnertime. Pricing for these seminars would depend upon the number of expected participants, the number of speakers requested, and the resources used (typically this would include at least the RCIA Leader’s Manual). The pricing on the opposite page for specialty and follow-up seminars can be used as a general guide.

Developing the Catechumenate for Children
- Assessment of need of seminar participants
- Why is this process needed?
- Who belongs in this process?
- How to begin?
- How to inform and form parents?
- Why peer sponsors?
- Questions and answers

The Catechumenate for Rural Parishes
- Assessment of need of seminar participants
- Overall principals
- Forming a rural catechumenate team
- Suggestions for the pastoral aspect
- Suggestions for the liturgical aspect
- Suggestions for the catechetical aspect
- Questions and answers

Strategies to Have a Great Neophyte Year
- Assessment of need of seminar participants
- Why the neophyte year?
- What is the role of the team?
- Role of the sponsor?
- Role of the parish community?
- Suggestions for integration into the community
- Handling difficult needs
- Questions and answers
Serving Conversion in the Four Periods of the RCIA Process
- Assessment of need of seminar participants
- Why different periods?
- What should be happening?
- Teaching to and from the rites
- What about candidates in the annulment process?
- Suggestions for those “in waiting”
- Questions and answers

Making RCIA Catechetical Gatherings Work
- Assessment of need of seminar participants
- Developing annual calendars
- Choosing catechetical topics
- Discerning of catechists
- Training of catechists
- On-going support of catechists
- Format of catechetical gatherings (for various periods)
- Questions and answers

Developing an Evangelizing and Welcoming Parish
- Assessment of need of seminar participants
- Role of the parish community in RCIA
- Ways for catechizing the community about RCIA
- Suggestions for parish involvement
- Challenges (opportunities for growth)
- Questions and answers

Finding, Training, and Working with Sponsors
- Assessment of need of seminar participants
- Role of sponsors in the RCIA process
- Forming a sponsor community
- Initial training of sponsors
- Discerning sponsors
- On-going support
- Questions and answers

The RCIA Rites in Action
- Assessment of need of seminar participants
- Why rites?
- Discernment process for participant’s readiness
• Liturgical details before the celebration timeline
• Handling the details
• Reflection after the celebration of rites
• Questions and answers

**Going Deeper: Team Formation Seminar**

- Assessment of need of seminar participants
- Why a team approach?
- Writing team job descriptions
- Forming a RCIA team
- Facilitating team meetings
- On-going support for team members
- Questions and answers