

STAGES AND RITUALS OF THE RCIA

1. Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate

This is a time of no fixed duration or structure, for inquiry and introduction to Gospel values, an opportunity for the beginnings of faith.

First Rite: The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

This is the liturgical rite, usually celebrated on some annual date or dates, marking the beginning of the catechumenate proper, as the candidates express and the Church accepts their intention to respond to God's call to follow the way of Christ.

2. Period of the Catechumenate

This is the time, in duration corresponding to the progress of the individual but at least one year, for the nurturing and growth of the catechumens' faith and conversion to God; celebration of the word and prayers of exorcism and blessing are meant to assist the process.

Second Rite: Election or Enrollment Of Names

This is the liturgical rite, usually celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent, by which the Church formally ratifies the catechumens' readiness for the sacraments of initiation and the catechumens, now the elect, express the will to receive these sacraments.

3. Period Of Purification and Enlightenment

This is the time, immediately preceding the elects' initiation, usually the Lenten season preceding the celebration of this initiation at the Easter Vigil; it is a time of reflection, intensely centered on conversion, marked by celebration of the scrutinies and presentations and of the preparation rites on Holy Saturday.

Third Rite: Celebration Of The Sacraments Of Initiation

This is the liturgical rite, usually integrated into the Easter Vigil, by which the elect are initiated through baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist.

4. Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy

This is the time, usually the Easter season, following the celebration of the initiation, during which the newly initiated experience being fully a part of the Christian community by means of pertinent catechesis and particularly by participation with all the faithful in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration.