

Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church
**ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION
OF ADULTS**



OCIA

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults

A Journey of Faith

OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION

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OCIA - OCIC

The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults And Children

Saint Catherine of Siena parish community welcomes you. We are here to share with you our catholic faith and the richness of our sacramental way of life.

The following information is formulated to help in understanding the process of the order of Christian Initiation in the Catholic Church.

Christian Initiation is a journey, but it is not a journey to a destination but to a person, the person of Jesus Christ. "Becoming Catholic" is a response to God's invitation by answering the call to follow Jesus as his disciple. This is a process of conversion, communion, and discipleship.

The goal of our OCIA process is to simply provide opportunities to experience and encounter the love of God through prayer, teaching, and community.

WHO IS OCIA FOR:

- Non-Catholics who want to find out more about the Catholic Faith
- Those who want to join the Catholic Church through Baptism, or Profession of Faith
- Those who were baptized Catholic as infants but never received religious education, Confirmation, or First Eucharist.

OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults), formerly called "Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)," is the process through which one becomes a full member of the Roman Catholic Church. Full membership in the Catholic Church involves a whole formation process, which includes the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and the Most Holy Eucharist. While coming to know Jesus and His invitation to become a disciple, the OCIA process involves the journey of faith and conversion. A person is introduced to the beliefs, life, liturgy, and apostolic work of the Catholic Church.

The OCIA is a process and not a program, so the time frame is flexible according to the needs of the individual, preparing to be received into the life of the Church.

OCIA is also designed to prepare candidates already baptized for entry into **full communion** with the Church. Our OCIA program not only helps to facilitate conversion and growth in intimacy with Christ, it

provides a complete means of educating people in the belief and teaching of the Church.

Non baptized in the OCIA are known as catechumens. They undergo a process of conversion as they study the Gospel, profess faith in Jesus and the Catholic Church, and receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and/or the Holy Eucharist.

BAPTISMAL VERIFICATION: The Catholic Church recognizes baptisms performed by other Christian faiths performing a Trinitarian Baptismal ceremony. Each Candidate is required to provide evidence of their baptism. It can take the form of a Baptismal Certificate issued by the church where you were baptized, a letter from a church official attesting to the baptism, and in certain circumstances, written statements from witnesses attesting to the baptism. Please contact your Church of Baptism as soon as possible!

This process of OCIA consists of **four stages**, each ending with a ritual that marks the end of one step and the beginning of another. There is never any pressure to proceed, but each step along the way follows from a deeper commitment and informed decision.

INQUIRY

This stage of the OCIA is a time of unhurried reflection and discovery, whereby a person begins to search out God's call to enter more fully into the life of the Church. Helping the inquirer in this process are members of our own parish family who form the OCIA team.

THE PERIOD OF CATECHUMENATE

This stage begins with the **Rite of Acceptance**. Those who enter this stage are claimed for Christ and marked with the sign of the cross. They are then called **catechumens** if they are unbaptized or **candidates** if they have already been baptized in another tradition.

This period of the OCIA is a time for the catechumens and candidates to deepen in faith and commitment to Christ. Although they are not yet able to share at the table of the Eucharist, they can participate in the Liturgy of the Word each Sunday. This stage of the OCIA usually lasts for several months until the Easter Vigil. It includes formal sessions on Catholic teaching and practice and is an opportunity for the individual to grow in prayer and to mature in faith.

PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

This stage begins on the first Sunday of Lent with the **Rite of Election** and the **Call to Continuing Conversion**. In local parishes, catechumens inscribe their name in a book which is presented to the Bishop in a ceremony at the cathedral later that day.

At the Rite of Election, the Bishop elects (chooses) the catechumens in the name of Christ to receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist at Easter. The Bishop also calls (exhorts) the candidates to continue growing in their faith as they prepare for Confirmation and Eucharist.

This period of the OCIA culminates at the Easter Vigil with baptism for those who are unbaptized, a profession of faith for those who are baptized, confirmation, and the reception of Eucharist. This completes the third stage of the journey.

MYSTAGOGIA

This final stage of the OCIA is a period of rejoicing in the awareness of God's presence by praying and eating at the banquet of the Eucharist. This stage concludes with the Feast of Pentecost where, through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, we are sent into the world to do the work of the Lord. There is also an opportunity to share prayer and community with others in the parish by participating in ministries of service both within and outside of Saint Catherine of Siena.

SPONSORS AND GODPARENTS: Each Candidate and Catechumen is required to have a sponsor. The sponsor must be a practicing Catholic in good standing who attends Mass regularly and who would provide a good example and support in a life of Discipleship. A sponsor could be a spouse, relative, friend, etc. For Catechumens, the sponsor can also serve as your Godparent. Though a spouse can fill the role of sponsor, they should not fill the role of Godparent, and in this case, you may have two separate people for a Godparent and a Sponsor.

I have called you by name: you are mine.

Isaiah 43:1

JOURNEY OF FAITH - THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

PERIOD OF EVANGELIZATION AND PRECATECUMENATE

Starting the Journey: The period of evangelization and pre-catechumenate is a time of inquiry when an individual begins to respond to some stirrings within to seek out life with Christ in the community of Catholic Christians. This is a period of searching, asking questions, and the initial stirrings of faith. During this period, inquirers form relationships with one another and with their catechists. Each inquirer will examine the Church and the ways in which its members worship together and live the Christian Faith. No commitments or promises are made. The period can last as long as you desire.

SESSIONS
Inquiry Session 1 - Welcome to the OCIA
Inquiry Session 2 - What is Faith?
Inquiry Session 3 - Trinity: Three in one
Inquiry Session 4 - Who is Jesus Christ?
Inquiry Session 5 - The Bible
Inquiry Session 6 - Divine Revelation
Inquiry Session 7 - Your Prayer Life
Inquiry Session 8 - Catholic Prayers and Practices
Inquiry Session 9 - The Mass & The Eucharist
Inquiry Session 10 - The Church year/Places in the Church
Inquiry Session 11 - Who Shepherds the Church"
Inquiry Session 12 - Mary and The Saints
Inquiry Session 13 - Eschatology: the "last Things"
Inquiry Session 14 - The OCIA Process & Rites

PERIOD OF CATECHUMENATE

The word “**Catechumenate**” comes from the ancient Greek, the language of the early Church. Catechumen means “a person receiving instruction.” During this period, you will study and discuss most of the Church’s main beliefs. You will also have a godparent or sponsor join you on your journey. This person can be a Catholic family member, a wise and good friend, or someone from the parish suggested by the team. Your sponsor should attend the OCIA sessions with you regularly and continue conversations with you outside of OCIA. They also serve as your representative and advocate to the Church.

SESSIONS
Catechumenate Session 1 - The People of God
Catechumenate Session 2 - The Early Church & Church History
Catechumenate Session 3 - Sacrament. Matrimony/Holy Orders
Catechumenate Session 4 - The Sacrament of Baptism/Confirmation
Catechumenate Session 5 - Sacrament of Anointing of the sick
Catechumenate Session 6 - Sac. Reconciliation & Penance Anointing of the Sick
Catechumenate Session 7 - Christian Moral Living/Dignity of Life
Catechumenate Session 8 - A Consistent Ethic of Life/Social Justice

PERIOD OF PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

During the period of purification and enlightenment, the focus becomes a stronger emphasis on the spiritual and mystical life in preparation for the sacraments. The guidelines for this period (which normally coincides with Lent) as well as the rites associated with them, enable catechists to shift the focus of teaching to reflection and meditation.

SESSIONS
Rite of Sending for Catechuminate
Purification and Enlightenment: Session 1 - LENT
Rite of Election for Catechuminate: Enrollment of names for Catechuminate
Purification and Enlightenment: Session 2 – The Creed
Rite: First Scrutiny - Samaritan woman at the well
Purification and Enlightenment Session 3 – The Way of The Cross
Rite: Second Scrutiny – Man born blind
Purification and Enlightenment: Session 4 - The Lord’s Prayer
Rite: Third Scrutiny – Raising of Lazarus
Purification and Enlightenment: Session 5 - The Meaning of Holy Week
Sacrament of Reconciliation
Purification and Enlightenment: Session 6 – Holy Thursday Service
Good Friday Service
Sacraments of Initiation
Rehearsal and Rite of Ephetha
Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist
Easter Sunday

PERIOD OF MYSTAGOGY

Sacramental initiation does not end with the celebration of the sacraments of initiation. The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults provides for the final period, the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy (that is, reflection on the mysteries). During this time the neophyte is mentored into living as a Christian disciple in the World. This formal period of reflection and prayer continues until Pentecost Sunday.

Mystagogy Session 1
Conversion: A lifelong Process
Mystagogy Session 2
The Role of The Laity and Family Life
Mystagogy Session 3
Your Spiritual Gifts
Mystagogy Session 4
Discernment: Making Tough Decisions
Mystagogy Session 5
Our Call to Holiness & Living the Virtues
Mystagogy Session 6
Evangelization: Sharing The Good News