



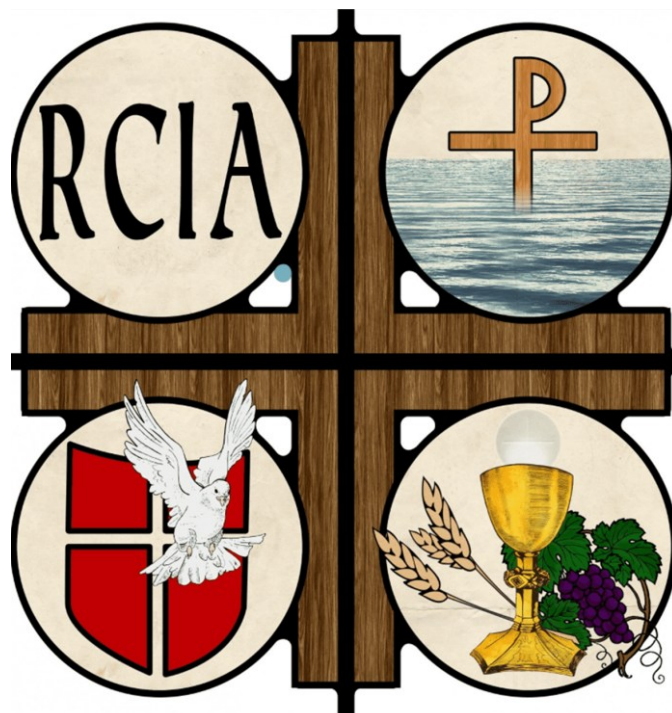
Diocese of Westminster

AGENCY FOR EVANGELISATION

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

RCIA

Preparation Pack for Priests and Catechists 2026-27



"I came so that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

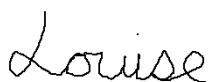
Since the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults was restored to the Church in 1972 after the Second Vatican Council, our parishes have endeavoured to implement it and we have witnessed the entry of many people into the Church through Baptism, and the reception of many others into full communion with the Church.

The RCIA is the sacramental process established by the Church for the initiation of adults. The beautiful rituals of this process, properly celebrated in the midst of our parish communities, call everyone in the parish to conversion and renewal, not just those seeking initiation. There are diverse roles involved in the process and the whole Catholic community is asked to participate.

One of the joys many of us experience is meeting with Catechumens, Candidates and the RCIA Teams when they gather with Archbishop Richard in the Cathedral on the first weekend of Lent for the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion. After Easter each year, those who were initiated at the Easter Vigil - the neophytes – and those received into full communion with the Church, gather with the Archbishop at the Cathedral but this time for the Eucharist in the Mass for New Catholics. Having been nourished on their journey by the Word of God, they witness to their faith with joy as full members of the Church, now nourished by the Bread of Life in our parish communities.

This RCIA resource pack is designed to assist clergy and catechists to celebrate the RCIA process and the Rites of the Church which are key parts of the RCIA process. Please do contact us if we can be of assistance to you and RCIA process in your parish. We look forward to seeing you in the Cathedral for the Rite of Election in 2027.

On behalf of the Catechesis support team,



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Acknowledgements

Cover image: This image is free to use for charitable purposes and copied from Clipart Library at <https://clipart-library.com/clipart/faith-formation-cliparts-53.htm>

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: Roman Ritual, Burns & Oates, Veritas Publications, reprinted 2004. (currently out of print).

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: Study Edition (US Edition) LTP, 1988 (now replaced with OCIA - Order of Christian Initiation of Adults in USA).

The RCIA: Transforming the Church by Thomas H. Morris ©1989, 1997, Paulist Press.

Please note: While this document sets out to be a useful aid to the RCIA it is not meant to replace suitable formation and training which clergy and catechists should undertake. The Catechesis support team will arrange this formation on request at parish or deanery level. Contact the Agency for Evangelisation, Vaughan House, 46 Francis St., London, SW1P 1QN. Tel: 020 7798 9152. Email: catadmin@rcdow.org.uk

Contents

Understanding the RCIA Process	4
<i>A Prayer for Catechists</i>	5
Key Resources	
RCIA and Rite of Election preparation for 2026-27.....	6
RCIA Practical Checklist.....	8
Marriage Status Chart.....	9
Suggested Newsletter Inserts for the RCIA Process.....	10
Key Forms	
Initial Enquiry Form for those wishing to join the parish RCIA	11
Sacraments of Initiation Application form.....	12
Rite of Election Attendance Form.....	13
Key Moments (dates and events)	
Key moments for 2026-27	14
Rite of Election details 2027.....	15
Sample letter explaining the arrangements for the Rite of Election.....	16
Information about <i>Continuing the Journey</i> for new Catholics.....	17
Other Resources	
Online resources for support and formation of catechists.....	18
Published resources.....	19
Resource – <i>Sycamore</i>	24
RCIA Glossary of Terms.....	25
RCIA 2026-27 Dates, deadlines and contacts.....	29
The RCIA Icon.....	30

Understanding the RCIA Process

The RCIA Process for Enquirers (of catechetical age or older)



It may not always be necessary or appropriate for a baptised person (one seeking reception into the Catholic Church or a Catholic adult seeking Confirmation) to go through the whole RCIA and receive the Sacraments at the Easter Vigil. Baptised adults may be received into the Catholic Church at other times in the year. Candidates from Orthodox Churches should be received into the equivalent Eastern Catholic Church in a simple liturgy by the recitation of the Creed. For more information, please contact the Catechesis team or the Chancery.

A Prayer for Catechists

God of all truth,
 Our minds are muddled,
 Our bodies strive in vain,
 When we try to speak of your mysteries.
 Be for us the God of infinite clarity!
 Help us to say what we mean,
 And mean what we say.
 Bring light to our lives
 That they may tell of your Light.

Inspire us to leave the shelters and the shields we have built for ourselves.
 By the power of the Holy Spirit make us open to you
 And open to each other so that in all we do and say
 The world may see and know
 The Word who is life,
 Jesus Christ, your Son.
 Amen

*(Conference prayer "Loud & Clear - Revealing God's Word Today"
 Exeter University July 2004)*



Image taken from the RCIA Icon (see page 30). © Agency for Evangelisation, RCDOW.

RCIA and Rite of Election Preparation 2026-27

Important steps in the RCIA process, related documentation and interviews

Before you start the RCIA process

The parish priest should interview each person who asks to join the parish RCIA process before it starts to make sure they are able and free to begin the process. As this is confidential and may involve them talking about painful memories, this task should not be delegated by the priest to anyone other than to another priest of the parish.

In a gentle and pastoral way, the parish priest will be able to:

- ascertain the 'state of life' of each potential Catechumen and Candidate. He will be able to ask about their marriage and any previous marriage(s) and any other issues which might be inconsistent with being a Catholic Christian (cf, *RCIA* 5, 13, 35, 43, 108, Canon Law 530 and 865). (See page 9: *Marriage Status Chart*). If the person has been married and divorced, they should be referred to the Marriage Tribunal, even if they have not entered another union nor have any immediate plans to do so.
- discern what catechesis or process is most appropriate for those who have already been baptised, exploring their understanding of the Baptism they have already received and their knowledge and practice of life as a Christian (cf *RCIA* 75) (See page 4: *Understanding the RCIA Process*)
- **Documentation:** Complete an *Initial Enquiry Form* for all enquirers (page 11).

At end of the Pre-Catechumenate period

Before the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens (or at the end of the time of enquiry before the Rite of Welcome), the priest should interview each Catechumen and Candidate again. At this point the weight of discernment on whether or not an individual should go forward rests with the individual; nonetheless, before the Rite is celebrated, it is important for the priest to evaluate the person's motives and dispositions (cf *RCIA* 43).

- NB: Canon Law grants prerogatives to Catechumens which are proper to all Christians. They may participate in some activities proper to Christians, but not in those that are exclusive to Christians. (Can. 206§2; cf *RCIA* 47).
- **Documentation:** Once they have been accepted into the Order of Catechumens the new Catechumens should be registered in the parish in a *Book of Catechumens*, together with the names of their Sponsors, the minister, and the date and place of celebration should also be included.
- Candidates are not received into the Order of Catechumens because they are already baptised, but you may want to keep a record in a parish book.

Before the Rite of Election

The parish priest should interview each person again. This time the weight of discernment on whether to proceed rests with the Church (cf *RCIA* 75). In his discernment, therefore, the priest might fruitfully collaborate with Godparents, Sponsors and catechists.

Documentation

If the decision is to proceed with Baptism or Reception, the parish priest should ensure the *Sacraments of Initiation Application* form is completed for every Catechumen over the age of 14 (those who will be initiated by Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil) and every Candidate over the age of 14 (those already baptised, who are preparing for Reception, Confirmation and to receive the Eucharist). This form can be found on page 12. The completed form must be signed by every Catechumen or Candidate and must be witnessed and dated by the parish priest, then sent to the Chancery (not the Agency for Evangelisation) by **Friday 19th February 2027**. The Chancery will only accept the original signed forms, not scanned or photocopied versions.

Please return the completed **Rite of Election 2027 Attendance form** to the Agency for Evangelisation (see page 13) by **Monday 1st February 2027**. It can be completed online at <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/bpgL3LdySa> or completed paper copies can be emailed to Warren Brown at catadmin@rcdow.org.uk or posted to him at :

**Agency for Evangelisation,
Vaughan House,
46 Francis Street,
London SW1P 1QN.**

After the Easter Vigil (or when the Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated), please remember to enter the information into the Parish Registers as below:

Documentation

Catechumens (now called 'Neophytes')

- are registered in the Baptismal register (noting their Confirmation too)
- are also registered in the Confirmation register.

Candidates

- are registered in a special book of those received into the Church (Register of Receptions). A note of their place and date of Baptism should also be included.
- are also registered in the Confirmation register

If you have any questions about the RCIA, please contact the Agency for Evangelisation:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|--|
| • Louise Walton | 020 7931 6090 | louisewalton@rcdow.org.uk |
| • Anna Maria Dupelycz | 020 7798 9026 | annadupelycz@rcdow.org.uk |

or contact Brenda Roberts and Laura Dale in the Chancery:

- 020 7798 9037 or 020 7931 6042 chancery@rcdow.org.uk

To assist you, you will find in this pack (amongst other things):

- a practical checklist of things that need to be done during the RCIA process on page 8;
- a list of key moments for the RCIA in 2026-27 on page 14;
- details of the Rite of Election on page 15 and a template letter to Catechumens and Candidates explaining the arrangements for the Rite of Election on page 16;
- details of *Continuing the Journey: Supporting New Catholics* on page 17.

RCIA Practical Checklist

Before you begin the RCIA process:

- ☐ Have you interviewed each enquirer and filled out an Initial Enquiry form (page 11)?
- ☐ Have you ascertained the enquirer's 'state of life'?
- ☐ Have you discerned what catechesis is desirable for the Candidates? (page 4)
- ☐ Have you told the parish community there are people asking about becoming Catholic?

At the end of the pre-catechumenate period:

- ☐ Have you interviewed each enquirer again to evaluate their motives and dispositions?
- ☐ Have you informed the parish community that there are people preparing to celebrate the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens (or the Rite of Welcome)?
- ☐ Have you registered the Catechumens in the Book of Catechumens?

Before the Rite of Election:

- ☐ Have you interviewed each Catechumen and Candidate again to discern whether they should proceed?
- ☐ Have you completed and sent the original, signed Sacraments of Initiation Application form to the Chancery (page 12)? This needs to be done before **Friday 19th February 2027**. for every Catechumen and Candidate being baptised and/or confirmed at the Easter Vigil.
- ☐ Have you completed and sent the Rite of Election 2027 Attendance form (page 13) to the Agency for Evangelisation? This needs to be done by **Monday 1st February 2027**.
- ☐ Have you celebrated a Rite of Signing in your parish or deanery during the two weeks before the Rite of Election?
- ☐ Have you sent forth your Catechumens and Candidates from one of the parish Masses to the Cathedral for the Rite of Election? This can be done on the day or the week before.

On the day of the Rite of Election:

- ☐ Have you brought the signed card for Catechumens to be put in the Book of the Elect?

After the Easter Vigil (or after the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation):

- ☐ Have you entered the Catechumens' and Candidates' names into the parish registers?

Catechumens:

- ☐ Are they entered in the Baptismal register (where their Confirmation should be noted)?
- ☐ Are they entered in the Confirmation register?

Candidates:

- ☐ Are they entered in a special book (such as a *Register of Receptions*) of those received into the Church, noting the date and place they were baptised?
- ☐ Are they entered in the Confirmation register?

During the period of Mystagogy (the reflection and formation time after the Easter Vigil):

- ☐ Have you invited the new Catholics to the Mass for New Catholics? (Sat 8th May 2027)?
- ☐ Have you encouraged them to join *Continuing the Journey* (see page 17)?

Marriage status chart

VALID MARRIAGES				
Status of person → ↓	UNBAPTISED	BAPTISED CATHOLIC(i)	BAPTISED EASTERN NON-CATHOLIC	BAPTISED CHRISTIAN
UNBAPTISED	Public exchange of vows	Catholic service (2)		Public exchange of vows
BAPTISED CATHOLIC(i)	Catholic service (2)	Catholic service (2)	Catholic service (2)	Catholic service (2)
BAPTISED EASTERN NON-CATHOLIC		Catholic service (2)	Eastern non-Catholic service	Eastern non-Catholic service
BAPTISED CHRISTIAN	Public exchange of vows	Catholic service (2)	Eastern non-Catholic service	Public exchange of vows
(2) Catholic Service: Exchange of vows in a Catholic Church before a priest or deacon delegated by the parish priest, with two witnesses (Unless a dispensation has been granted by the bishop). (Public Exchange of vows = legal marriage before a registrar or equivalent.)				
Summary of Marriages which needs investigation or declaration of freedom is required				
Status of person → ↓	UNBAPTISED CATECHUMEN	BAPTISED EASTERN NON-CATHOLIC	BAPTISED CHRISTIAN CANDIDATE	BAPTISED ROMAN CATHOLIC CANDIDATE
FORMER SPOUSE: UNBAPTISED	Public exchange of vows: Annulment needed or Pauline privilege.	Eastern non-Catholic service: Annulment needed or Petrine privilege. Outside Eastern non-Catholic service: No annulment needed.	Public exchange of vows: Annulment needed or Petrine privilege.	Catholic service: Annulment needed or Petrine privilege. Outside Catholic Church without permission. (i) Declaration of Freedom is required
FORMER SPOUSE: BAPTISED CATHOLIC	Catholic service: Annulment needed or Petrine privilege. Outside Catholic Church without permission. (i) Declaration of Freedom is required	Eastern non-Catholic/Catholic service: Annulment needed Outside Eastern non-Catholic or Catholic service: (i) Declaration of Freedom is required	Catholic service: Annulment needed Outside Catholic Church without permission. (i) Declaration of Freedom is required	Catholic service: Annulment needed Outside Catholic Church without permission: (i) Declaration of Freedom is required
FORMER SPOUSE: BAPTISED EASTERN NON-CATHOLIC	Outside Eastern non-Catholic service. (i) Declaration of Freedom is required	Eastern non-Catholic service: Annulment needed Outside Eastern non-Catholic service: (i) Declaration of Freedom is required	Eastern non-Catholic service: Annulment needed Outside Eastern non-Catholic service: (i) Declaration of Freedom is required	Catholic / Eastern non-Catholic service: Annulment needed Outside Catholic Church without permission: (i) Declaration of Freedom is required
FORMER SPOUSE: BAPTISED CHRISTIAN	Public exchange of vows: Annulment needed or Petrine privilege.	Eastern non-Catholic service: Annulment needed Outside Eastern non-Catholic service: (i) Declaration of Freedom is required	Public exchange of vows: Annulment needed	Catholic service: Annulment needed Outside Catholic Church without permission: (i) Declaration of Freedom is required
(i) Please contact the Chancery: chancery@rcdow.org.uk				
If you are in any doubt about the status of a marriage, please always contact the Chancery				

Priests should always submit a **Sacraments of Initiation Application form** to the Chancery for all adult Candidates for Reception and Confirmation.

Suggested newsletter inserts for RCIA moments

At end of the pre-Catechumenate period

(Generally, the beginning of Advent – but whenever is appropriate):

At the *[please specify the time]* Mass this Sunday, we will celebrate the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, a liturgical rite for those who wish to become Catechumens – when they will express publicly their desire to follow the way of Jesus. We will also celebrate the Rite of Welcome for those Christians who want to become Roman Catholics. Please pray for *[N]* as we accept their intention and welcome them into our parish community.

For the Rite of Signing

(First Sunday of Lent or the week before):

At the *[please specify the time]* Mass this Sunday [or in the deanery this week], we will celebrate the Rite of Signing with our Catechumens. We will then send them forth to the Cathedral, where the Archbishop will formally acknowledge their readiness and will call them to the Sacraments of Initiation. The Catechumens will now be called the Elect. Please pray for *[N]* as they prepare prayerfully for full communion with the Catholic Church.

After the Easter Vigil (or when the Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated)

At the Easter Vigil *[or whenever]*, the Elect and the Candidates became full members of the Body of Christ, the Church. The Elect celebrated the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist and the Candidates celebrated the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. Please pray for our new Catholics.

During the Period of Mystagogy

(Before Pentecost)

The final stage of the RCIA is called Mystagogy – understanding the mysteries – and this takes place during the Easter season and beyond. Our new Catholics will ponder the experience and meaning of the Sacraments and participate with the faithful in the eucharistic life of the church and its mission for justice and peace. Please pray for our new Catholics and make them feel welcome in our community.

Initial Enquiry Form

Confidential Information Enquiry Form for all enquirers

First name _____ Family name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Telephone number _____

E-mail _____

If you are not Catholic:

Are you baptised? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, in which denomination? _____

(Please let us have a copy of your baptismal certificate as soon as possible.)

Do you go to your Church on an occasional ☐ or weekly ☐ basis?

Do you come to a Catholic Church on an occasional ☐ or weekly ☐ basis?

If you are Catholic:

Do you come to a Catholic Church on an occasional ☐ or weekly ☐ basis?

Have you received the following Sacraments? *(Please tick where appropriate)*

☐ Baptism? Please give the name and address of the church where you were baptised:

☐ Eucharist (Communion) ☐ Reconciliation (Confession/Penance)

☐ Confirmation (Church: _____ Date: _____)

☐ Marriage (Place: _____ Date: _____)

For all candidates:

Have you any friends who are Catholic? If you wish, you may give their names:

Tick any of the following boxes which are appropriate:

☐ I am married to a Catholic ☐ I am married; but not to a Catholic

☐ I have been married before ☐ I am divorced but not remarried

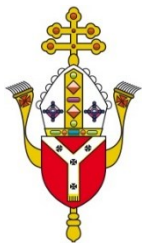
☐ I have been married once ☐ I am presently separated

☐ I have never been married ☐ I am divorced and remarried

Is there any other information you would like to add about yourself?

Signature _____ Date _____

Protecting your privacy Your personal details will be held on file/stored on the parish computer securely. After the completion of the RCIA process your details will be entered into the parish Registers. You can read our full privacy policy at <https://rcdow.org.uk/privacy/>



Diocese of Westminster

SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION APPLICATION

This form is to be used for:

- (i) Those to be baptised (over 14 years old)
- (ii) Those baptised in a non-Catholic church or ecclesial community and who now wish to become Catholic (over 14 years old)
- (iii) Those baptised Catholic who wish to be Confirmed (over 18 years of age)

Date granted:

Surname *(in block capitals)*:

First Names:

Date of Birth: *If under 18, indicate whether parents or guardians have given their consent: 'Yes' ☐ OR 'No' ☐*

Marital Status:

*(i.e. single, married, widowed, separated, divorced or *remarried)*

**If in a second marriage, the validity of that marriage should be investigated to make sure it does not require validation before Baptism / Reception / Confirmation*

Has the person been baptised?*: 'Yes' ☐ or 'No' ☐ If '*yes' please state:

(a) The denomination:

(b) The name and address of the church:

(c) The date of baptism:

***Evidence of Baptism should be seen by the priest**

- if there is doubt about validity please contact chancery@rcdow.org.uk before completing the form

I request permission to baptise / receive / confirm the individual named above, who I believe to be ready to receive the sacrament:

Signature of Priest:

.....

Parish:

Petitioner's (candidate / catechumen)

Signature:

.....

DATE:

Protecting your privacy

Your personal details are required to comply with canonical and statutory requirements for the specific purpose of processing your request. The information will be held on file/stored on a Diocesan Chancery computer securely. **You can read our full privacy policy on rcdow.org.uk/diocese/privacy-policy**

RITE OF ELECTION CEREMONY 2027 ATTENDANCE FORM

The Rite of Election takes place on Saturday 13 February 2027 at 2:30pm

This form can now be completed online [here](#)

Will your parish RCIA group be attending the Rite of Election on 13 February 2027?

☐ **Yes.**

☐ **No.**

Please tick the relevant box

How many will be attending the Rite of Election from your RCIA group?:

Number of Catechumens: _____ (A 'Catechumen' is a person who is not yet baptised who wishes to be baptised in the Catholic Church).

Number of Candidates: _____ (A 'Candidate' is a person who has been baptised in another Christian tradition who now wishes to become Catholic).

Number of Adult Confirmands _____ (An 'Adult Confirmand' is a person who was baptised as an infant in the Catholic Church and who now wishes to be confirmed).

We have no RCIA group in our parish this year ☐ *Please tick the box if this is correct.*

Please complete and return this form by Monday 1st February even if you do not have any Catechumens, Candidates or adult confirmands this year.

Who is your lead RCIA Catechist/Contact Person (Block capitals please)

Name:

Email:

Tel:

PLEASE GIVE THE FULL NAME AND ADDRESS OF YOUR PARISH:

(Block capitals please)

NAME OF PARISH:

ADDRESS:

DEANERY:

Please return this form by Monday 1st February 2027 to:

Tel: 020 7798 9152 Email: catadmin@rcdow.org.uk

**Warren Brown
Agency for Evangelisation
Vaughan House
46 Francis Street
London, SW1P 1QN.**

Key moments for RCIA 2026-27

(For details and references, please see *A Guide to the RCIA*)

Autumn (no fixed date):

Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens (in parishes)

Monday 1st February:

Deadline for returning the completed form for the Rite of Election to the Agency for Evangelisation*

Saturday 13th February:

Rite of Election (2.30pm in Westminster Cathedral)

Friday 19th February 2027

Deadline for returning completed *Sacraments of Initiation* forms to the Chancery*

Sunday 28th February (3rd Sunday of Lent):

First Scrutiny (in parishes)

- During this week: *The Presentation of the Creed*

Sunday 7th March (4th Sunday of Lent):

Second Scrutiny (in parishes)

Sunday 14th March (5th Sunday of Lent):

Third Scrutiny (in parishes)

- During this week: *The Presentation of the Lord's Prayer*

Saturday 27th March:

Easter Vigil (in parishes)

Saturday 8th May:

Gathering and Mass for New Catholics (Vaughan House and Westminster Cathedral)

* **The two forms for the RCIA are:**

1. Rite of Election Attendance Form.

Please complete and return this form by **Monday 1st February 2027** to Warren Brown either by email to catadmin@rcdow.org.uk or by post to:

Agency for Evangelisation

Vaughan House

46 Francis Street

London, SW1P 1QN.

Alternatively, the form can be completed online [here](#).

2. Sacraments of Initiation Application.

Please return this form (the original signed versions) by **Friday 19th February 2027** to:

The Chancery

Archbishop's House

Ambrosden Avenue

London, SW1P 1QJ.

Rite of Election details 2027

**There is only one celebration of the Rite of Election for all parishes in the Diocese:
Saturday 13th February, Westminster Cathedral at 2.30pm.**

Names and Signatures of Catechumens

When parishes return their completed Rite of Election Attendance Form (page 13) to the Agency for Evangelisation, they will be sent a copy of the Rite of Signing Ceremony and a Card which is to be completed with **the names of Catechumens** (*those to be baptised*) only.

The Catechumens should sign their names on this card at a parish/deanery Rite of Signing.

On the day of the Rite of Election, parishes should bring this completed card from the parish to the Cathedral and hand in to the Agency for Evangelisation. This card will be placed in the Book of the Elect, which is then brought forward to the Archbishop to be blessed during the Rite of Election.

Who can come to the Rite of Election?

- Catechumens (*those who will be initiated fully by Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil*) and their Godparents;
- Candidates (*those already baptised, who are preparing to receive the Eucharist and then be confirmed*) and their Sponsors;
- Parish representatives (normally the catechists and parish priest)
- Relatives and friends of the Catechumens and Candidates.

Where can people sit?

There are no reserved seats in the Cathedral. In order to avoid disappointment or your group being separated you are advised to arrive at the Cathedral in plenty of time. **You will not be allowed to reserve seats for groups of people who will arrive later** so we advise that you arrive together. We suggest everyone is seated by 2pm and we shall introduce the service and the music at around 2.15pm.

Godparents and Sponsors should sit next to their respective Catechumens and Candidates, but should remain in their seats when the Catechumens and Candidates are called forward to the front of the Cathedral to be greeted by the bishops. Each group of Catechumens and Candidates should be led forward by their parish priest or one of the catechists.

Order of Service

An order of service will be provided on the day. It will include a step-by-step guide of what happens during the Rite and include italicised notes telling Catechumens, Candidates, Godparents and Sponsors what to do at various times during the Rite.

Sample letter explaining arrangements for the Rite of Election at Westminster Cathedral

Dear

This letter explains the arrangements for the Rite of Election in Westminster Cathedral on Saturday 13th February 2027 at 2.30pm.

1. Godparents, Sponsors and guests.

Your Godparent(s)/Sponsor should accompany you to the Cathedral. Other members of your family are welcome to attend. The role of the Sponsor will have been explained during our RCIA preparation meetings in the parish, and they would usually have been chosen well before this event at the Cathedral.

2. Travel

We will need to be in our seats at the Cathedral by 2pm for the introduction to the Rite of Election. In order to be in our seats by 2pm we will need to leave our Church by at the latest.

3. The Rite

The Rite lasts about an hour and a half. It is divided into four parts:

- a. Introductory Rites,
- b. Liturgy of the Word,
- c. Celebration of Election and Affirmation and
- d. Concluding Rite.

An order of service will be provided. It will contain a step-by-step guide of what happens during the Rite including helpful notes about what Catechumens, Candidates, Godparents and Sponsors should do at various times during the Rite.

4. Act of Recognition

The name of each parish will be called out by the deans, deanery by deanery. Please wait for the name of our parish to be called, and then the Elect and the Candidates and one of our catechists will go forward to meet the Archbishop or one of the assistant bishops. Their greeting of you is a mark of the affection and support the whole Church wishes to offer you.

5. Dress

The Cathedral tends to be on the cold side in February so please dress accordingly. There is no formal dress code for those who will be meeting the Bishops, but most people would wear smart casual clothing.

6. If you have any outstanding questions

Please contact our parish priest or RCIA Coordinator.

With best wishes...

After Easter, all new adult Catholics are invited to join:

Continuing the Journey: Supporting new adult Catholics

<https://rcdow.org.uk/evangelisation/continuing-the-journey/>



The Agency for Evangelisation has created an initiative called “*Continuing the Journey*” to support new* adult Catholics in their first years since being baptised or received into the Church. (*“New” means anyone over 18 who has been baptised or received since 2020.)

We know that many new Catholics fall away from the Church in their first years since being baptised or received for various reasons. So, we offer a series of events to help them stay in contact with their parish, deepen their relationship with Jesus and the Church, grow in faith, find resources and get to know other new Catholics. These events are open to any new adult Catholic living, working or worshipping in the Diocese of Westminster.

We launched this initiative in 2025 with those who became Catholics at Easter that year, and have continued to relaunch this annually. Each year our *Continuing the Journey* events for new adult Catholics include a Gathering and Mass for New Catholics in the Cathedral in the summer; a time to reflect on our journey with God so far and where it might lead; an introduction to praying with the Bible (*Lectio Divina*), an Advent Day of Reflection, a session about the Bible and the Mass, an opportunity to reflect on how we live our faith in daily life, and a Lent Day of Reflection.

This year, the Gathering and Mass for New Catholics will take place in Vaughan House and Westminster Cathedral on Saturday 8th May 2027.

As part of the initiative, we also contact the new adult Catholics regularly with details of these events, useful resources and information about things they have requested.

We therefore need the help of parish clergy and RCIA catechists in promoting this initiative to new Catholics in your parish and encouraging them to register for it.

More information about this initiative and its events can be found at <https://rcdow.org.uk/rcia/#continuing-the-journey> or using the QR code.



Online resources for the support and formation of RCIA Catechists

These websites are based in the USA where the RCIA has been adapted and renamed the OCIA. The RCIA continues in England and Wales but a similar development is expected here.

Team Initiation: <https://teaminitiation.com/>

Team Initiation.com is a membership organization for Catholic parishes and dioceses that want to form Christians for life.



We provide accessible and relevant resources through courses, webinars, video trainings, and articles filled with practical, doable guidance for all aspects of initiation ministry.

- We also offer a variety of online and in-person training for church ministers and volunteers, led by experts in the field of initiation ministry.
- We make the best printed resources available to RCIA ministers and pastoral leaders and publish original material that helps ministers serve the mission of the church.

Team Initiation has given us permission to give access to one of their downloadable resources: an e-book on the *Mystagogia*: <https://teaminitiation.com/presents/mystbook/>

OCIA: Coordinators and Catechists: <https://ltp.org/ocia>

From LTP's (Liturgy Training Publications) OCIA website:

'On March 5, 2025, new translations of the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* (OCIA) and *Ritual de la Iniciación cristiana de adultos* (RICA) were promulgated for use in the United States. The information on this site provides resources for ongoing formation and training on the vision of Christian Initiation for catechists and coordinators. We hope you find it useful as you continue to serve and minister to those seeking a relationship with Christ and the Church.'

In addition, they offer some excellent free online events, at times accessible to UK users, but for which you will need to use Adobe Connect desktop app.

The Association for Catechumenal Ministry (ACM): <https://acmrcia.org>

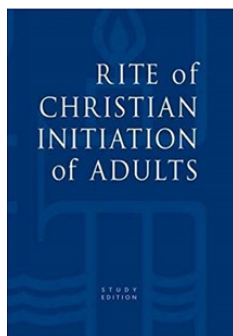
From the ACM's website:

'We focus on fostering a full understanding of the complexities and beauties of the Catholic Church. We recognize that when teaching about the Church, it is not only catechetical, but also pastoral and liturgical. We provide training seminars, workshops, videos, articles, books, and one-on-one consultations to help you through each aspect of the OCIA process. Our goal is to give you the confidence and understanding to transform the lives of your candidates and catechumens. Join our community of educated and passionately faithful CLs so we can continue to spread the beauty of the Catholic faith to others.'

Catechetical Leaders deserve a community to support them through the beautiful complexities of the Catholic Church and effectively evangelize to their Catechumens and Candidates. We are committed to supporting you with clarity and understanding because we have been where you are.'

Published Resources (by no means an exhaustive list)

Where no website is given these books are out of print but used copies are available from online booksellers (e.g., Amazon, AbeBooks, ebay). For many published resources the publishers or Google Books offer a 'Look Inside'. Where resources are available from UK booksellers the UK website is given. McCrimmons are the UK distributor for Liturgy Training Publications.

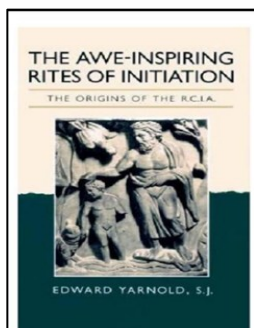
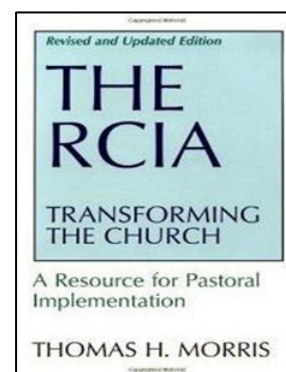


The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

This is an essential for all RCIA catechists. There are a number of versions of the Rite but a useful copy is: *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – A Study Book*. As the new Order of Christian Initiation of Adults is in preparation versions of the Rite are currently out of print but used copies are available from various online booksellers.

The RCIA – Transforming the Church

Thomas H. Morris,
Paulist Press, 1997. Also available in a Kindle edition.

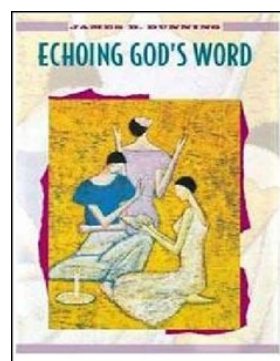
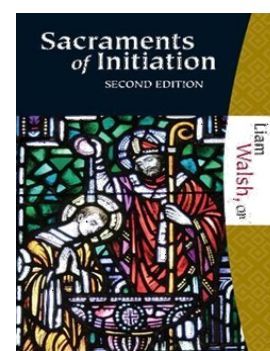


The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation – The Origins of the RCIA

Edward Yarnold, S.J.
Publishing LTP 1994

Sacraments of Initiation, 2nd Ed.: A Theology of Life, Word and Rite

Liam Walsh O.P.,
Liturgy Training Publications, U.S.; 2011



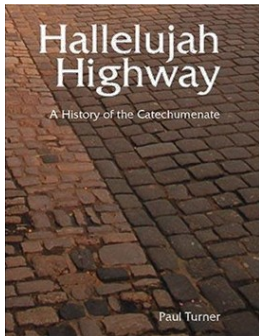
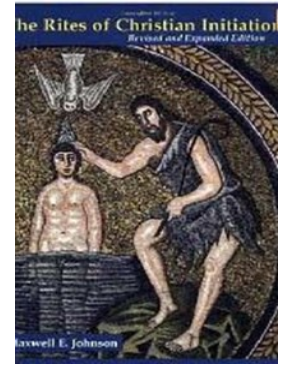
Echoing God's Word: Formation for Catechists and Homilists in a Catechumenal Church

James Dunning,
Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago, 1993.

The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation

Maxwell E. Johnson

Pueblo Publishing Co ,U.S.; Rev Ed edition 2000.



The Hallelujah Highway: A History of the Catechumenate

Paul Turner

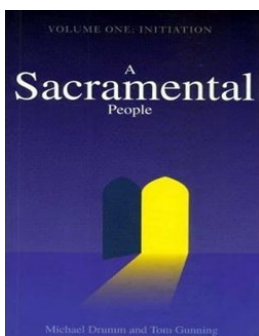
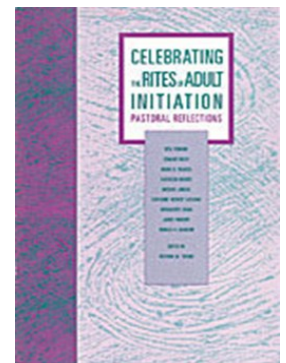
Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago, 2000.

<https://www.ltp.org/products/details/HWY>

Celebrating The Rites of Adult Initiation: Pastoral Reflections

Victoria M. Tufano (Editor)

Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago, 1986



A Sacramental People: Initiation Vol. 1,

Michael Drumm and Tom Gunning

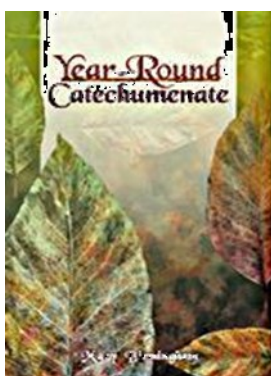
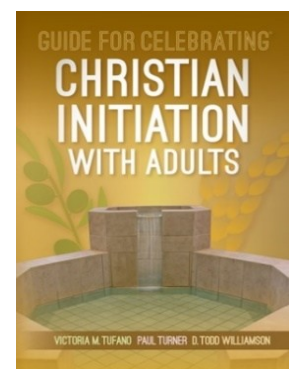
Columbia Press, Dublin, 1999.

Guide For Celebrating Christian Initiation with Adults

Victoria M. Tufano, Paul Turner, D Todd Williamson

Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago 2016.

<https://www.mccrimmons.com/shop/ltp-liturgy-training-publications/guide-for-celebrating-christian-initiation-with-adults/>



Year-Round Catechumenate

Mary Birmingham

Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago, 2002

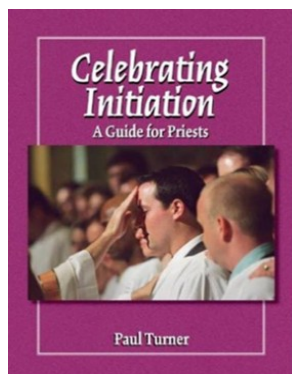
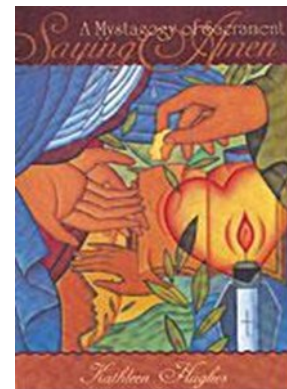
<https://www.mccrimmons.com/shop/books/year-round-catechumenate/>

Saying Amen – A Mystagogy of Sacrament

Kathleen Hughes

Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago, 2007

<https://www.mccrimmons.com/shop/books/saying-amen-a-mystagogy-of-sacrament/#1736>



Celebrating Initiation: A Guide for Priests

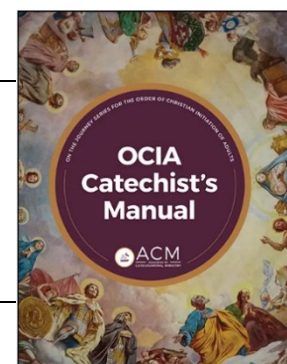
Paul Turner

Published by World Library Publications, Illinois, 2008

<https://giamusic.com/resource/celebrating-initiation-a-guide-for-priests-book-017189>

OCIA Catechists' Manual Association for Catechumenal Ministry,
ALSO available: *OCIA Overview Chart*, *OCIA Participant's Book* and *USB Flash drive*, *OCIA Godparent and Sponsor Handbook* and the *RCIA Leader's Manual* (to be updated soon)

<https://acmrcia.org/resources/>



Foundations in Faith (a set of RCIA resources)

Bob Duggan, Carol Gura et al.

Catechists' Manual, *Director's Guide*, *Handbooks for Catechists, for Sponsors Precatechumenate, Catechumenate (Years A, B & C), Purification and Enlightenment, Mystagogy* etc, Allen, Texas, 1998

<https://store.rclbenziger.com/program/foundations-faith>

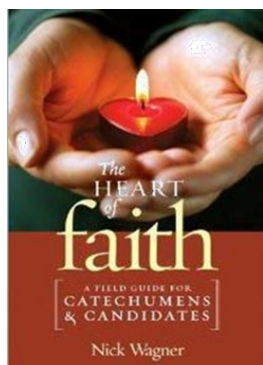
***Evangelium Presenter's Guide* and *Participant's Book* (2nd Edition)**

Fr. Michael Holden and Fr. Andrew Pinsent

Catholic Truth Society, London 2010

<https://www.ctsbooks.org/product/evangelium-presenters-guide/>





The Heart of Faith, A Field Guide for Catechumens & Candidates

Nick Wagner

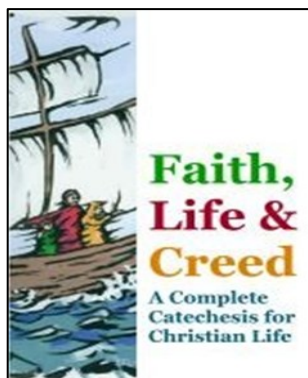
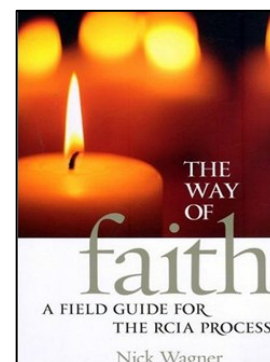
Twenty-Third Publications (2010)

The Way of Faith: A Field Guide to the RCIA Process

Nick Wagner

Twenty-Third Publications, New London, CT, 2008

<https://teaminitiation.com/store/wayoffaith/>



Faith, Life, & Creed: A Complete Catechesis for Christian Life

Mary Birmingham

Twenty-third Publications, New London, CT, 2011

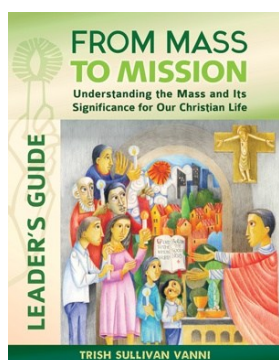
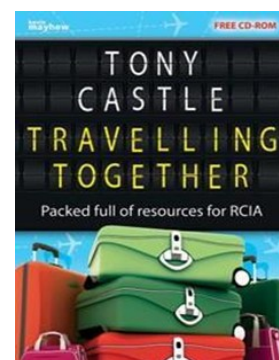
<https://teaminitiation.com/resources/faith-life-creed/>

Travelling Together: Packed full of resources for RCIA

Tony Castle

Kevin Mayhew, Stowmarket, Suffolk, 2011

<https://www.kevinmayhew.com/products/travelling-together-1501270>



***From Mass To Mission: Understanding The Mass And Its Significance For Our Christian Life* (a series by Trish Sullivan Vanni)**

Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago 2016

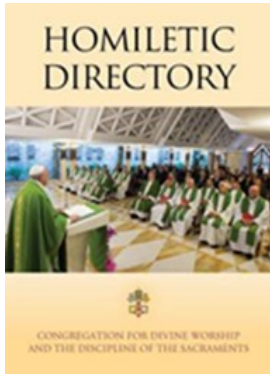
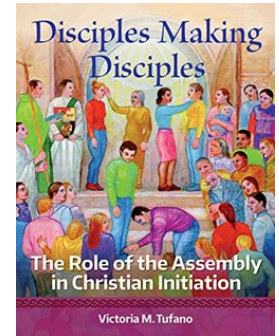
<https://www.mccrimmons.com/shop/ltp-liturgy-training-publications/from-mass-to-mission-leaders-guide-adults/>

Disciples Making Disciples: The Role of the Assembly in Christian Initiation

Victoria M. Tufano

Training Publications Chicago 2018

<https://www.mccrimmons.com/shop/church/disciples-making-disciples-print-and-digital-resource-for-forming-the-assembly/parentref-17280.html>



Homiletic Directory

Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments Catholic Truth Society, 2015. [In Appendix 1 references are given to the Catechism according to various doctrinal themes in the readings for the Sundays and Feasts of the three-year cycle. Download at:

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_c_on_ccdds_doc_20140629_direttorio-omiletico_en.html

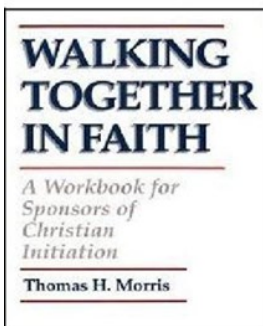
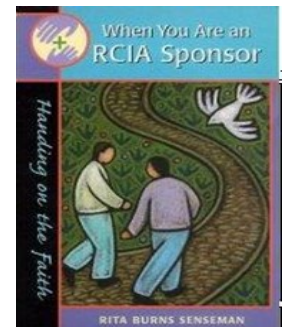
Sponsors and Godparents

In addition to the books below, resources such as *Foundations in Faith* and the Association for Catechumenal Ministry (ACM) above include booklets for sponsors in their series

When you are an RCIA Sponsor: Handing on the Faith series

Rita Burns Senseman

St Anthony Messenger Press, CN, OH, 2001



Walking Together in Faith: A Workbook for Sponsors

Thomas H. Morris

Paulist Press International, U.S., 1992

A useful resource produced in our Diocese by Bishop Stephen Wang

SYCAMORE

<https://www.sycamore.fm/>

Written, presented and produced by Bishop Stephen Wang

Filmed by Higham & Co.

Sycamore is an informal course about the Christian faith and its relevance for life today. It is free to use (with the option to make donations), adapted for use with online/remote groups and to either stream or download the videos.

- **Sycamore is first of all a stand-alone enquiry course and a tool for “primary evangelisation”.** It seeks to share what is at the heart of the Christian faith with those who have not heard it before or with those whose understanding of Christianity is very limited. It creates a space for honest and open discussion about faith and about life in general. It helps people, if they wish, to respond to what they have heard by taking the first steps of faith.
- **Sycamore can also form part of a wider programme of faith formation, catechesis or sacramental preparation.** It starts with the basics of Christian faith and then goes deeper into the Creed, the Church, Christian living, prayer, and the Sacraments.

Sycamore and Sacramental Preparation

In itself, Sycamore doesn't claim to be a comprehensive presentation of the faith, but offers guidance as to how it can be used as tool as part of sacramental preparation.



In its suggested ‘**Sacramental Pathways**’, the films can be used in an RCIA setting for anything from a short enquiry period to a full 2 year process. There are support materials for those who are using the films as part of RCIA and other areas of sacramental preparation. See ‘**Sacramental Pathways**’ at: <https://www.sycamore.fm/pathways/c-sacramental-pathways/>

Sycamore is now currently offered in 27 languages.

Further information

For more information about Sycamore please see <https://www.sycamore.fm/>.

The films can be found there, including how to enable subtitles currently available in 27 languages. There is a wealth of information and guidance as to how the films can be used and how the content can be supplemented with *YouCat: The Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

RCIA Glossary of terms

Advent

The beginning of the Liturgical Year. These four weeks before Christmas have a dual focus: preparing for the Second Coming of Christ and for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Acceptance into the Catechumenate may take place on the First Sunday of Advent.

Adult

An adult of legal age, or a child who has attained the use of reason and is of catechetical age. Catechetical age is defined as “in or around 7 years of age” (Canon 97:2)

Candidate (or Enquirer)

1. Any person in the period of the pre-Catechumenate; *or*.
2. One who is baptised as a Catholic but did not receive further catechetical formation, nor the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist; *or*
3. One who is already baptised in another Christian community who now is preparing to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church. At the time of full reception, he or she will make a profession of faith, be confirmed, and receive the Eucharist.

Catechumen

An unbaptised adult who has been accepted into the Order of Catechumens through the Rite of Acceptance.

Catechumenate

1. The entire initiation process is sometimes called the Catechumenal process, in reference to “one in instruction” (see Galatians 6).
2. The second period of the Catechumenal Process in which, after the Rite of Acceptance, Catechumens enter into an extended period of time and are given a suitable pastoral formation and guidance, aimed at training them in the Christian life.

Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

The third step in the Catechumenal process is the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist). Through this final step the Elect, receiving pardon for their sins, are admitted into the people of God, led by the Holy Spirit and share in the Eucharist. This normally coincides, by ancient tradition, with the Easter Vigil.

Children

There is a form of the RCIA (242 -306) which is adapted for children aged 7 to 14. That is, those children not baptised as infants who have attained the use of reason and are of catechetical age. The age of reason is defined by Canon Law as in or around the age of 7 (CIC 97:2).

Cycle A, B, C

The three-year cycle of liturgical readings: A Cycle: Gospel of Matthew; B Cycle: Gospel of Mark; C Cycle: Gospel of Luke. All three cycles incorporate the Gospel of John.

Easter Season

The period of seven weeks beginning with Easter Sunday and ending with the feast of Pentecost. An expected time of post-Baptismal catechesis known as the Mystagogy.

Elect

The name given to Catechumens who after completing an apprenticeship in the Christian life, celebrate the Rite of Election on the first Sunday of Lent signifying their being chosen for initiation at the Easter celebration.

Evangelisation

1. "The carrying forth of the Good News to every sector of the human race" (*EN* 18)
2. The lifelong process of conversion to Jesus Christ (*GDC* 47)
3. The first period of Evangelisation and pre-Catechumenate, which seeks to introduce Candidates to Christ, by:
 - a. proclaiming faithfully and constantly the living God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent for the salvation of all;
 - b. a suitable explanation of the Gospel; and
 - c. an opportunity for the beginnings of faith.

Godparents

Those selected by the Catechumen to accompany them on the day of Election, at the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation, and during the Mystagogy. They must be fully initiated Catholics and should be able to perform the responsibilities as outlined in the Rite.

Enquirers

Those who participate in the pre-Catechumenate. They are "inquiring" into Christianity in the Catholic Tradition.

Lectionary

The book used in liturgical celebrations that contains all the scripture readings of the Liturgical Year.

Lent

A six-week period from Ash Wednesday to sundown on Holy Thursday. It is a retreat time in preparation for the Easter Triduum. For the Elect who are preparing to receive the Sacraments of Initiation at Easter Vigil, and the Candidates who are preparing to receive initiation during Easter, Lent correlates with the period of Purification and Enlightenment.

Liturgical Year

The seasons and cycles of the Christian year that follow the life of Christ. It is the means and instrument for leading God's people along the way to the Lord. The readings introduce and invite us into the Paschal (Easter) Mystery.

Minor Rites

Rites during the period of the Catechumenate which include special prayers, blessings, and anointings.

Mystagogy / post-Baptismal Catechesis

The final period of the Catechumenal process in which the newly baptised and the newly initiated grow in understanding of the Paschal Mystery and make it part of their lives through reflecting on the Gospel, sharing in the Eucharist, and charitable works. The immediate period of Mystagogy is from Easter to Pentecost but it is recommended to last for one year. Thus the Agency for Evangelisation offers *Continuing the Journey* to support new adult Catholics up to their first anniversary of Baptism or Reception. (See page 17).

Neophyte

One who is initiated at the Easter Vigil. This comes from Greek, meaning “newly planted”.

Ninety Days

Occasionally used to mean both the period of Purification and Enlightenment, and the Mystagogy which correspond with Lent (40 days) and the Easter Season (50 days).

Ordinary Time

The parts of the Liturgical Year which are outside the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. The readings during this time follow the ministry of Jesus, his teachings and miracles. This time provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of God's gift to us in Christ, our attitudes, prayer life, and service to others.

Pre-Catechumenate and Evangelisation

The first period of the Catechumenal process is evangelisation, which seeks to introduce Candidates to Christ, by:

- a. proclaiming faithfully and constantly the living God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent for the salvation of all;
- b. a suitable explanation of the Gospel;
- c. an opportunity for the beginnings of faith.

Presentation of the Creed / Presentation of the Lord's Prayer (aka the 'Our Father')

During the period of Purification and Enlightenment, the Elect are presented with the Creed and the Lord's Prayer through special Rites that usually coincide with the Scrutinies.

Purification and Enlightenment

The third period of the Catechumenal process, coinciding with Lent, after the Rite of Election, in which the Elect and Candidates are supported by intense spiritual preparation, consisting of interior reflection rather than catechetical instruction. It is the final period of preparation before reception of the Sacraments of Initiation.

Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

The First Step in the Catechumenal process, in which the unbaptised are officially accepted into the Order of Catechumens. It is of the utmost importance that assembling publicly for the first time, the Candidates who have completed the period of the Pre-Catechumenate declare their intention to the Church, and the Church in turn accepts them.

Rite of Call to Continuing Conversion

An optional rite for Candidates who have completed an extended period of preparation and now seek to be received into, or initiated fully into the Church at Easter.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

English title of *Ordo initiationis christianae adultorum* (*Order of Christian Initiation of Adults*)
The latest English translation edition was published in 1987, reprinted in 2004.

Rite of Election

The Second Step in the Catechumenal process. Presided over by the Bishop, the Rite of Election inaugurates the completion of the Period of the Catechumenate and the final period of preparation before initiation at the next Easter Vigil.

Rite of Recognition

The Rite by which the local Bishop receives Candidates for recognition and calls them to continuing conversion. Celebrated in the Diocese at the same time as the Rite of Election.

Rite of Scrutiny (aka 'The Scrutinies')

Three special Rites for the Elect during the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent. These are celebrated solemnly on Sundays and are reinforced by an exorcism (a prayer of protection). They are for self-searching and repentance and above all have a spiritual purpose. Presentations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer may coincide with the Scrutinies.

Rite of Sending

An optional Rite by which the parish community sends the Catechumens to the Rite of Election, and Candidates for recognition by the Bishop to the Call to Continuing Conversion.

Rite of Welcome

An optional rite welcoming those Candidates who were previously baptised but uncatechised to begin their preparation. The Church acknowledges that such Candidates are already part of the community by Baptism, and now surrounds them with special care and support. The RCIA provides a combined Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens and the Rite of Welcoming for those baptised but previously uncatechised adults. However, care must be taken to maintain the distinction between the Catechumens and the baptised Candidates.

Rite, Penitential

Celebration for Candidates, similar to the Scrutinies.

Sponsor

1. The term given to the person who accompanies someone who is seeking admission as a Catechumen. They assist that person, stand as witness to their moral character and present them at the Rite of Acceptance. They may also be chosen to be their Godparent.
2. The term for a fully initiated Catholic who will journey with a Candidate (a baptised but previously uncatechised adult) through their preparation and be present at their full initiation into the Church.

The Triduum

The three days which begin at sundown on Holy Thursday evening and end with evening prayer on Easter Sunday evening. The Triduum includes the Liturgies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunday.

RCIA 2026-27 Dates, Deadlines and Contacts:

THE RITE OF ELECTION 2027

Saturday 13th February 2027, Westminster Cathedral at 2.30pm

Rite of Election Attendance Form

Please return this form by **Monday 1st February 2027** to:

*Warren Brown
Agency for Evangelisation
Vaughan House
46 Francis Street
London, SW1P 1QN.*

or by email to catadmin@rcdow.org.uk

or complete the form online [here](#)

Sacraments of Initiation Application form

Please return this form by **Friday 19th February 2027** to:

*The Chancery
Archbishop's House
Ambrosden Avenue
London, SW1P 1QJ.*

GATHERING AND MASS FOR NEW CATHOLICS 2027

Vaughan House, Westminster, concluding with Mass in Westminster Cathedral at 6pm, Saturday 8th May 2027.

Further Assistance

For specific advice and training for the RCIA please contact the Catechesis team:

Louise Walton (Catechesis Coordinator), 020 7931 6090 louisewalton@rcdow.org.uk

Anna Maria Dupelycz (Catechesis Adviser), 020 7798 9026 annadupelycz@rcdow.org.uk

Formation for Parish Teams:

While this document sets out to be a useful aid to the RCIA it is not meant to replace suitable formation and training which clergy and catechists should undertake. The Catechesis team will arrange this formation on request at parish or deanery level.

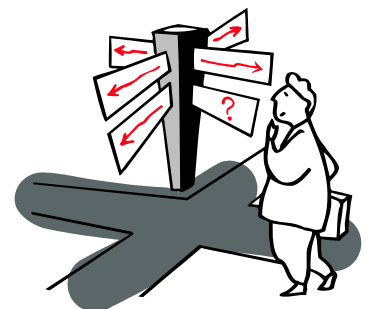
Contact details for the Agency for Evangelisation:

Vaughan House, 46 Francis Street, London, SW1P 1QN.

Telephone: 020 7798 9152

Website: <https://rcdow.org.uk/resources-for-catechists/>

Email: catadmin@rcdow.org.uk



The RCIA Icon

