

R.C.I.A.

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults
Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.
2009/2010

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R.C.I.A. Team:

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R.C.I.A. Overview:

“R.C.I.A.” is an acronym for Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The process here at The Madalene is designed to give all inquirers to the Catholic Church an opportunity to explore its teachings, ask questions, and discern whether or not it is their desire to become members of the Catholic Church.

Emphasis is placed on experiencing the Catholic community way of life by immersion into the parish community by attending Mass, church dinners, socials, information meetings, a variety of prayer experiences, opportunities for social outreach, and through discovery of what it means to live the Catholic way of life firsthand.

When the time comes that one feels ready to move forward in the process, a fuller, deeper look into Church teachings of doctrine and scripture as well as reflection on the scripture readings are offered.

R.C.I.A. Objectives:

A participant who participates fully in all that the RCIA process offers will be able to:

- Understand differences as well similarities in Catholic and other Christian denominations' practices and beliefs.
- Experience the beginnings of the spiritual life and the fundamentals of Catholic Christian teachings.
- Manifest this initial conversion with sincere intention to change their lives and enter into a relationship with God in Christ.
- Develop the practice of calling upon God in prayer, a sense of Church, and some experience of the company and spirit of Catholic Christians through contact with members of the community.

R.C.I.A. Expectations:

Commitment: There is definitely a long-term commitment to the RCIA process. The duration of the individual's faith journey can be as long as a year or more.

Inquirers/Candidates/Catechumens: Participants will be expected to attend all RCIA sessions as scheduled, usually bi-weekly early in the process, and weekly after the first months. Attendance at Sunday Mass is strongly encouraged as our Sacred Liturgy (the Mass) is a very basic requirement of all Catholics and is the most fundamental way to come to know what it means to be a Catholic. Become involved as much as possible in the life of the parish. Attend all retreats and rites.

Sponsors: Each Inquirer will be assigned a Parish Sponsor to accompany them throughout the RCIA process. When the candidate or catechumen prepares for the Rite of Election it is time to designate a Sacramental Sponsor for Confirmation which may or may not be their Parish Sponsor. Unbaptized catechumens also need to name their baptismal godparent(s), again which may or may not be their Parish Sponsor. Sponsors are expected to attend all RCIA sessions and always sit with their candidate or catechumen, retreats and rites once they are assigned a Candidate or Catechumen. Sponsors are expected to accompany their candidate or catechumen to Sunday Mass, invite them to parish events, and spend time getting to know their partner by inviting them to lunch or coffee or even a sporting or other entertainment event. We hope sponsors will be creative and proactive in their new relationship with a candidate or catechumen.

R.C.I.A. Participation:

Stages and Rites. Included in the RCIA process are (4) stages: 1) Precatechumenate, 2) Catechumenate, 3) Purification and Enlightenment, and 4) Mystagogy. Each stage of the process is introduced by a specific rite: Rite of Acceptance/Rite of Welcoming; Rite of Election/Rite of Continuing Conversion; and the Easter Sacraments of Initiation/Reception into the Church.

Breaking Open of the Word. After the first rite, the Rite of Acceptance/Rite of Welcoming, the Candidates and Catechumen participate in Sunday Mass with a 30 minute Reflection on Scripture, sometimes called "Breaking Open of the Word" to more fully flesh out the implications or teachings from the Mass Readings, the Gospel and the homily for their lives. Breaking Open continues until one week before Reception into the Church.

Retreats. Two Saturday day-long retreats are planned for the participants, one in the fall and one in late winter or early spring. These are special days of prayer and reflection to enhance the relationship between the elect, candidates and sponsors, and to assist in the ongoing discernment process.

Discernment. Interviews are offered for everyone who is inquiring into the Catholic Church. These interviews may be initiated by the candidates or requested by the RCIA Director. These discernment interviews are opportunities for one-on-one discussions with the pastor, the deacon, the director or another RCIA team member to enhance the candidate's RCIA experience and to offer assistance with any difficulties they may be experiencing or answer questions yet unanswered.