

PERIOD OF THE CATECHUMENATE

Leave your country, and come into the land I will show you

- 75 The catechumenate is an extended period during which the candidates are given suitable pastoral formation and guidance, aimed at training them in the Christian life.¹ In this way, the dispositions manifested at their acceptance into the catechumenate are brought to maturity. This is achieved in four ways.
1. A suitable catechesis is provided by priests or deacons, or by catechists and others of the faithful, planned to be gradual and complete in its coverage, accommodated to the liturgical year, and solidly supported by celebrations of the word. This catechesis leads the catechumens not only to an appropriate acquaintance with dogmas and precepts but also to a profound sense of the mystery of salvation in which they desire to participate.
 2. As they become familiar with the Christian way of life and are helped by the example and support of sponsors, godparents, and the entire Christian community, the catechumens learn to turn more readily to God in prayer, to bear witness to the faith, in all things to keep their hopes set on Christ, to follow supernatural inspiration in their deeds, and to practise love of neighbour, even at the cost of self renunciation. Thus formed, the newly converted set out on a spiritual journey. Already sharing through faith in the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, they pass from the old to a new nature made perfect in Christ. Since this transition brings with it a progressive change of outlook and conduct, it should become manifest by means of its social consequences and it should develop gradually during the period of the catechumenate. Since the Lord in whom they believe is a sign of contradiction, the newly converted often experience divisions and separations, but they also taste the joy that God gives without measure;²
 3. The Church, like a mother, helps the catechumens on their journey by means of suitable liturgical rites, which purify the catechumens little by little and strengthen them with God's blessing. Celebrations of the word of God are arranged for their benefit, and at Mass they may also take part with the faithful in the liturgy of the word, thus better preparing themselves for their eventual participation in the liturgy of the eucharist. Ordinarily, however, when they are present in the assembly of the faithful they should be kindly dismissed before the liturgy of the eucharist begins (unless their dismissal would present practical or pastoral problems). For they must await their baptism, which will join them to God's priestly people and empower them to participate in Christ's new worship.
 4. Since the Church's life is apostolic, catechumens should also learn how to work actively with others to spread the Gospel and build up the Church by the witness of their lives and by professing their faith.³ [19]
- 76 The duration of the catechumenate will depend on the grace of God and on various circumstances, such as the programme of instruction for the catechumenate, the number of catechists, deacons, and priests, the cooperation of the individual catechumens, the means necessary for them to come to the site of the catechumenate and spend time there, the help of the local community. Nothing, therefore, can be settled a priori.

The time spent in the catechumenate should be long enough — several years if necessary — for the conversion and faith of the catechumens to become strong. By their formation in the entire Christian life and a sufficiently prolonged probation the catechumens are properly initiated into the mysteries of salvation and the practise of an evangelical way of life. By means of sacred rites celebrated at successive times they are led into the life of faith, worship, and charity belonging to the people of God. [20, 98]

- 77 It is the responsibility of the bishop to fix the duration and to direct the programme of the catechumenate. The conference of bishops, after considering the conditions of its people and region,⁴ may also wish to provide specific guidelines. At the discretion of the bishop, on the basis of the spiritual preparation of the candidate, the period of the catechumenate may in particular cases be shortened (see nos. 307, 308-311); in altogether extraordinary cases the catechumenate may be completed all at once (see nos. 308, 312-345). [20, 98]
- 78 The instruction that the catechumens receive during this period should be of a kind that while presenting Catholic teaching in its entirety also enlightens faith, directs the heart toward God, fosters participation in the liturgy, inspires apostolic activity, and nurtures a life completely in accord with the spirit of Christ. [99]
- 79 Among the rites belonging to the period of the catechumenate, then, celebrations of the word of God (nos. 81-89) are foremost. The minor exorcisms (nos. 90-94) and the blessings of the catechumens (nos. 95-97) are ordinarily celebrated in conjunction with a celebration of the word. In addition, other rites may be celebrated to mark the passage of the catechumens from one level of catechesis to another: for example, an anointing of the catechumens may be celebrated (nos. 98-102) and the presentations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer may be anticipated (see nos. 103-104). [103]
- 80 During the period of the catechumenate, the catechumens should give thought to choosing the godparents who will present them to the Church on the day of their election (see no. 11; also *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, nos. 8-10).

Provision should also be made for the entire community involved in the formation of the catechumens – priests, deacons, catechists, sponsors, godparents, friends and neighbours – to participate in some of the celebrations belonging to the catechumenate, including any of the optional 'rites of passage' (nos. 98-104). [104, 105]

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- 1 See Vatican Council II, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*, no. 14.
 - 2 Ibid., no. 13.
 - 3 Ibid., no. 14.
 - 4 See Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, art. 64.

rites belonging to the period of the catechumenate

CELEBRATIONS OF THE WORD OF GOD

- 81 During the period of the catechumenate there should be celebrations of the word of God that accord with the liturgical season and that contribute to the instruction of the catechumens and the needs of the community. These celebrations of the word are: first, celebrations held specially for the catechumens; second, participation in the liturgy of the word at the Sunday Mass; third, celebrations held in connection with catechetical instruction. ^[100]
- 82 The special celebrations of the word of God arranged for the benefit of the catechumens have as their main purpose:
1. to implant in their hearts the teachings they are receiving: for example, the morality characteristic of the New Testament, the forgiving of injuries and insults, a sense of sin and repentance, the duties Christians must carry out in the world;
 2. to give them instruction and experience in the different aspects and ways of prayer;
 3. to explain to them the signs, celebrations, and seasons of the liturgy;
 4. to prepare them gradually to enter the worship assembly of the entire community. ^[106]
- 83 From the very beginning of the period of the catechumenate the catechumens should be taught to keep holy the Lord's Day.
1. Care should be taken that some of the special celebrations of the word just mentioned (no. 82) are held on Sunday, so that the catechumens will become accustomed to taking an active and practised part in these celebrations.
 2. Gradually the catechumens should be admitted to the first part of the celebration of the Sunday Mass. After the liturgy of the word they should, if possible, be dismissed, but an intention for them is included in the general intercessions. ^[107]
- 84 Celebrations of the word may also be held in connection with catechetical or instructional meetings of the catechumens, so that these will occur in a context of prayer. ^[108]

Model for a Celebration of the Word of God

- 85 For the celebrations of the word of God that are held specially for the benefit of the catechumens (see no. 82), the following structure (nos. 86-89) may be used as a model.
- 86 **SONG:** An appropriate song may be sung to open the celebration.
- 87 **READINGS:** One or more readings from Scripture, chosen for their relevance to the formation of the catechumens, are proclaimed by a baptised member of the community.
- 88 **HOMILY:** A brief homily that explains and applies the readings should be given.
- 89 **CONCLUDING RITES:** The celebration of the word may conclude with a minor exorcism (no. 94) after the homily or with a blessing of the catechumens (no. 97) or with both; if a rite of anointing (nos. 101-102) is adopted as an option, it may replace the minor exorcism and may also be followed by one of the blessings (no. 97).¹

1 Celebrations of the word that are held in connection with instructional sessions may include, along with an appropriate reading, a minor exorcism (no. 94) or a blessing of the catechumens (no. 97) or both. The meetings of the catechumens after the liturgy of the word of the Sunday Mass may also include a minor exorcism (no. 94) or a blessing (no. 97) or both.

MINOR EXORCISMS

- 90 The first or minor exorcisms have been composed in the form of petitions directly addressed to God. They draw the attention of the catechumens to the real nature of Christian life, the struggle between flesh and spirit, the importance of self-denial for reaching the blessedness of God's kingdom, and the unending need for God's help.
- 91 The presiding celebrant for the minor exorcisms is a priest, a deacon, or a qualified catechist appointed by the bishop for this ministry (see no. 16).
- 92 The minor exorcisms take place within a celebration of the word of God held in a church, a chapel, or in a centre for the catechumenate. A minor exorcism may also be held at the beginning or end of a meeting for catechesis. When there is some special need, one of these prayers of exorcism may be said privately for individual catechumens.
- 93 The formularies for the minor exorcisms may be used on several occasions, as different situations may suggest.

BLESSINGS OF THE CATECHUMENS

- 95 The blessings of the catechumens are a sign of God's love and of the Church's tender care. They are bestowed on the catechumens so that, even though they do not as yet have the grace of the sacraments, they may still receive from the Church courage, joy, and peace as they proceed along the difficult journey they have begun.
- 96 The blessings may be given by a priest, a deacon, or a qualified catechist appointed by the bishop (see no. 16). The blessings are usually given at the end of a celebration of the word; they may also be given at the end of a meeting for catechesis. When there is some special need, the blessings may be given privately to individual catechumens.

OPTIONAL RITES DURING THE CATECHUMENATE

ANOINTING OF THE CATECHUMENS

- 98 During the period of the catechumenate, a rite of anointing the catechumens, through use of the oil of catechumens, may be celebrated wherever this seems beneficial or desirable. The presiding celebrant for such a first anointing of the catechumens is a priest or a deacon. [103, 127]
- 99 The anointing ordinarily takes place after the homily in a celebration of the word of God (see no. 89), and is conferred on each of the catechumens; this rite of anointing may be celebrated several times during the course of the catechumenate. Further, for particular reasons, a priest or a deacon may confer the anointing privately on individual catechumens. [128]
- 100 The oil used for this rite is to be the oil blessed by the bishop at the chrism Mass, but for pastoral reasons a priest celebrant may bless oil for the rite immediately before the anointing.¹ [129]

1 See *Rite of Blessing of Oils, Rite of Consecrating the Chrism*, Introduction, no. 7.

PRESENTATIONS

- 103 The presentations normally take place during Lent, the period of purification and enlightenment, after the first and third scrutinies. But for pastoral advantage and because the period of purification and enlightenment is rather short, the presentations may be held during the period of the catechumenate, rather than at the regular times. But the presentations are not to take place until a point during the catechumenate when the catechumens are judged ready for these celebrations. [125]
- 104 Both the presentation of the Creed and the presentation of the Lord's Prayer may be anticipated; each may be concluded with the ephphetha rite.¹ When the presentations are anticipated, care is to be taken to substitute the term 'catechumens' for the term 'elect' in all formularies. [126]

Presentations

Presentation of the Creed: see nos. 144-149.

Presentation of the Lord's Prayer: see nos. 165-170.

Ephphetha Rite: see nos. 184-186.

1 But if the rite of recitation of the Creed (nos. 180-183) is also anticipated as one of the 'rites of passage' (see no. 33,6), the ephphetha rite is used only to begin this rite of recitation and not with the presentations.

SECOND STEP: ELECTION OR ENROLMENT OF NAMES

Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant

105 The second step in Christian initiation is the liturgical rite called both election and the enrolment of names, which closes the period of the catechumenate proper, that is, the lengthy period of formation of the catechumens' minds and hearts. The celebration of the rite of election, which usually coincides with the opening of Lent, also marks the beginning of the period of final, more intense preparation for the sacraments of initiation, during which the elect will be encouraged to follow Christ with greater generosity. ^[134]

106 At this second step, on the basis of the testimony of godparents and catechists and of the catechumens' reaffirmation of their intention, the Church judges their state of readiness and decides on their advancement toward the sacraments of initiation. Thus the Church makes its 'election,' that is, the choice and admission of those catechumens who have the dispositions that make them fit to take part, at the next major celebration, in the sacraments of initiation.

This step is called election because the acceptance made by the Church is founded on the election by God, in whose name the Church acts. The step is also called the enrolment of names because as a pledge of fidelity the candidates inscribe their names in the book that lists those who have been chosen for initiation. ^[22, 133]

107 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 a 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. ^[23]

108 The election, marked with a rite of such solemnity, is the focal point of the Church's concern for the catechumens. Admission to election therefore belongs to the bishop, and the presiding celebrant for the rite of election is the bishop himself or a priest or a deacon who acts as the bishop's delegate (see no. 12).

Before the rite of election the bishop, priests, deacons, catechists, godparents, and the entire community, in accord with their respective responsibilities and in their own way, should, after considering the matter carefully, arrive at a judgment about the catechumens' state of formation and progress. After the election, they should surround the elect with prayer, so that the entire Church will accompany and lead them to encounter Christ. ^[135]

109 Within the rite of election the bishop celebrant or his delegate declares in the presence of the community the Church's approval of the candidates. Therefore to exclude any semblance of mere formality from the rite, there should be a deliberation prior to its celebration to decide on the catechumens' suitability. This deliberation is carried out by the priests, deacons, and catechists involved in the formation of the catechumens, and by the godparents and representatives of the local community. If circumstances suggest, the group of catechumens may also take part. The deliberation may take various forms, depending on local conditions and pastoral needs. During the celebration of election, the assembly is informed of the decision approving the catechumens. ^[23, 137]

- 110 Before the rite of election godparents are chosen by the catechumens; the choice should be made with the consent of the priest, and the persons chosen should, as far as possible, be approved for their role by the local community (see no. 11). In the rite of election the godparents exercise their ministry publicly for the first time. They are called by name at the beginning of the rite to come forward with the catechumens (no. 117); they give testimony on behalf of the catechumens before the community (no. 118); they may also write their names along with the catechumens in the book of the elect (no. 119). ^[136]
- 111 From the day of their election and admission, the catechumens are called ‘the elect.’ They are also described as *competentes* (‘co-petitioners’), because they are joined together in asking for and aspiring to receive the three sacraments of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit. They are also called *illuminandi* (‘those who will be enlightened’), because baptism itself has been called *illuminatio* (‘enlightenment’) and it fills the newly baptised with the light of faith. In our own times, other names may be applied to the elect that, depending on regions and cultures, are better suited to the people’s understanding and the idiom of the language. ^[24]
- 112 The bishop celebrant or his delegate, however much or little he was involved in the deliberation prior to the rite, has the responsibility of showing in the homily or elsewhere during the celebration the religious and ecclesial significance of the election. The celebrant also declares before all present the Church’s decision and, if appropriate in the circumstances, asks the community to express its approval of the candidates. He also asks the catechumens to give a personal expression of their intention and, in the name of the Church, he carries out the act of admitting them as elect. The celebrant should open to all the divine mystery expressed in the call of the Church and in the liturgical celebration of this mystery. He should remind the faithful to give good example to the elect and along with the elect to prepare themselves for the Easter solemnities. ^[138]
- 113 The sacraments of initiation are celebrated during the Easter solemnities, and preparation for these sacraments is part of the distinctive character of Lent. Accordingly, the rite of election should normally take place on the First Sunday of Lent and the period of final preparation of the elect should coincide with the Lenten season. The plan arranged for the Lenten season will benefit the elect by reason of both its liturgical structure and the participation of the community. For urgent pastoral reasons, especially in secondary mission stations, it is permitted to celebrate the rite of election during the week preceding or following the First Sunday of Lent.
- When, because of unusual circumstances and pastoral needs, the rite of election is celebrated outside Lent, it is to be celebrated about six weeks before the sacraments of initiation, in order to allow sufficient time for the scrutinies and presentations. The rite is not to be celebrated on a solemnity of the liturgical year (see no. 29). ^[139]
- 114 The rite should take place in the church or, if necessary, in some other suitable and fitting place. ^[140]
- 115 The rite is celebrated within Mass, after the homily, and should be celebrated within the Mass of the First Sunday of Lent. If, for pastoral reasons, the rite is celebrated on a different day, the texts and the readings of the ritual Mass ‘Christian Initiation: Election or Enrolment of Names’ may always be used. When the Mass of the day is celebrated and its readings are not suitable, the readings are those given for the First Sunday of Lent or others may be chosen from elsewhere in the Lectionary.

When celebrated outside Mass, the rite takes place after the readings and the homily and is concluded with the dismissal of both the elect and the faithful. ^[140, 141]

Adult Methodologies & Effective Adult Catechesis

One of the constant concerns whose urgency is confirmed by present day experience throughout the world, is the catechesis of adults. This is the principal form of catechesis because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibility and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form. ~ St. John Paul II, CT 43



In the world, not of the world . . .

So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. ~ John 16:22

“It does seem to me, that herein we see the rare virtue of a strong individual vitality, and the rare virtue of thick walls, and the rare virtue of interior spaciousness. Oh, man! admire and model thyself after the whale! Do thou, too, remain warm among ice. Do thou, too, live in this world without being of it. Be cool at the equator; keep thy blood fluid at the Pole. Like the great dome of St. Peter’s, and like the great whale, retain, O man! in all seasons a temperature of thine own.”
~ Herman Melville, Moby-Dick

Ultimate goals of adult catechesis . . .

The ultimate and unifying goal of adult catechesis is to help the mature Christian to live as an adult by acquiring certain qualities.

~ Adult Catechesis in the Community, 34

✧ **Attitude of conversion to the Lord (ACCC 36) . . .**

- ✓ Promotes an openness of heart to the mystery of the Lord’s greatness and grace by encouraging sincere reconciliation with the Lord and one another
- ✓ Practices discipleship of Jesus by means of a life aimed at being like him (see Mark 1:15, CT 20)

✧ **Service and fellowship in the Christian community (ACCC 35, 37) . . .**

- ✓ Encourages them to live the gift and choice of faith through membership in the Christian community
- ✓ Explains and establishes their co-responsibility for the community’s mission (see Acts 2:42)

✧ **Christian discipleship in the world (ACCC 38) . . .**

- ✓ Draws others into a life of faith-working-in-love (see Gal.5:6)
- ✓ Provides reasons for the hope that is in us (see 1 Pet 3:15)
- ✓ Takes effective steps in favor of the transformation of marriages and families social, and professional life in light of the Gospel
- ✓ Seeks harmonious and vital synthesis of the essential characteristics of the Christian life

Judge the Catholic Church not by those who barely live by its spirit, but by the example of those who live closest to it.

~ Archbishop Fulton Sheen



Ten key principles of adult catechesis . . .

And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him . . . “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” ~ Mark 10:21; Matthew 19:21



The *content* of adult catechesis are offered to men and women of every social and cultural background as the nourishing and satisfying bread of life so that, filled with Divine wisdom, they might radiate this wisdom in all areas of life (ACCC 47):

1. **Get to know them.** Must begin by accepting adults “where they are”, keeping in mind, “the specific adults with whom one is working, their cultural background, human and religious needs, their expectations, faith experiences, and their potential” (ACCC 56)
2. Ensure that the **great themes of Christianity** are clear, as well as how they can *participate* and *respond* to these truths
3. Provide **experiences of the Christian community** to reinforce concepts. The communitarian dimension of the contents of faith will be thoroughly developed . . . to know and experience the “mystery of the Church” . . . incarnate in a particular community (ACCC 53)
4. Incorporate **prayer**, opportunities for **service**
5. Say it so they *hear it* — find ways to break through. Enables them to gradually become more aware of **their value and dignity as human beings**, as a result of a careful and stimulating exposition of the great truths of faith (ACCC 49)
6. **Expect and encourage questions.** A meaningful faith response will be biblical, reasonable, and attentive to signs of the times (see ACCC 48)
7. Help them respond to you and to God. Catechesis of adults seeks to provide formation in a **spirituality suitable for the Christian laity**. Special attention should be reserved for teaching adults how to pray (ACCC 50)
8. Prepare them to **share their faith**, not just remain recipients (ACCC 51, 52)
9. Assist them in **living in the Church** in relevant and practical ways
10. Count on the **power of God** as dynamic and ever present

Methodological considerations for discipling adults . . .

It is a sin to bore people with the Gospel. ~ Frank Sheed

- ✦ Create a **friendly and dialogical** rapport so that they can make known their needs and can participate . . . as subjects or agents in their own catechesis (ACCC 54, 57)
- ✦ Imbue all catechesis with a clear, **personal witness** to the Christian life (ACCC 58)
- ✦ Focus on expressing truths of the faith in practical and convincing ways. Knowledge and facts should not have to be ‘stored-up’, but should be **immediately applicable** to their lives and personal struggles (ACCC 58)
- ✦ Present truths of the faith as **certitudes** (ACCC 58)
- ✦ Ensure that catechesis has an **obvious, organic and systematic development**, and is not merely episodic or random. Connections between doctrines must be clear and deliberate at all stages (ACCC 59)
- ✦ Take advantage of the **diversity of means and instruments for imparting knowledge** of the faith and for maintaining communion in the faith. Don’t just lecture or talk (ACCC 64, 65)
- ✦ Look to **create links** between their experience of the local community, their participation in the liturgy, their charitable service, and their awareness of the Church’s life beyond the parish (ACCC 59)

Adult Catechesis must give priority to the proclamation of salvation, drawing attention to the many difficulties, doubts, misunderstandings, prejudices and objections of today. It must introduce adults to a faith-filled reading of Sacred Scripture and the practice of prayer. ~ GDC 175

Adult Catechist Evaluation Form

CATECHIST _____

TEACHING _____

DATE _____

Scale of Evaluation: 1 = needs to be addressed as a weak area, 2 = needs improvement, 3 = acceptable, 4 = good, 5 = outstanding.

Preparation and Proclamation

- Teaching was planned and organized; catechist was clearly ready to go _____
- Appropriate arrangement of environment and sacred space _____
- Suitable opening prayer/Liturgy of the Word/music for this doctrine/topic _____
- Delivered a statement of truth to "ring in their ears" _____



*My teaching is not mine,
but his who sent me.
~ John 7:16 ~*

Explanation and Application

Content:

- Focused the teaching on how it helped someone get closer to God/Jesus _____
- Use of Scripture was well-paced, and with adequate context _____
- Used stories in a functional and succinct manner _____
- Included some element of personal witness in the teaching _____
- Incorporated a knowledge of participants lives' into the teaching _____
- Connected the teaching with real life (what does this mean for them?) _____
- Included some reference to the importance of the liturgy/sacramental life _____
- Made reference to previous teachings (if applicable) to create connections _____
- Avoided unfamiliar terms/defined essential new terms _____
- Clearly was thinking about the participants while teaching _____
- Displayed a clear mastery of the subject matter _____
- Explanations were clear and helpful for those not used to "churchy" culture _____

Method:

- Maintained eye contact with participants on both sides of the room _____
- Used hand-motions, expressions, and movement _____
- Evidenced independence from written notes where appropriate _____
- Teaching given in a faith-filled way (these truths are certitudes to me!) _____
- Teaching given in a hope-filled way (Heaven is real; God is trustworthy!) _____
- Teaching given in a loving way (good teacher = humble, friendly teacher) _____
- Teaching given in a respectful way towards other faiths/individuals _____

Teaching Tools

- Scripture _____
- Catechism _____
- Own Stories _____
- Saint Stories _____
- Other Stories _____
- Analogies _____
- Dialogue _____
- Apologetics _____
- Humor _____
- Art _____
- Props _____
- Handouts _____
- Music _____
- Video _____
- Computer _____
- Board _____
- Resources _____
- Q & A _____
- Exercises _____

Celebration

- Suitable concluding prayer/music for this topic or for the liturgical calendar _____
- Upbeat closing (thanking God; acclaiming his wonderful truth together) _____

What most impacted you in a positive way about this teaching?

Overall comments:

Total teaching time: _____ minutes

*The most precious gift that the Church can offer the bewildered and restless world of our time
is form within it Christians who are confirmed in what is essential and who are humbly joyful in their faith.
~ Guide for Catechists, Pontifical Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, para. 8 ~*

The Rites of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion

This next liturgical “gateway” requires that conversion is already complete and the participants have the intent to receive the sacraments of initiation that Easter. (see RCIA 120) These Rites lead them into solemn preparation during the “retreat time” of Lent. It should be spent in reflection, spiritual reading, prayer, fasting, penance, and acts of charity.



The Period of Purification & Enlightenment

(Teaching to the Rites: see RCIA 573, 580 and 591 ✦ Teaching from the Rites: see RCIA 558)

The focus of the catechesis is now on spiritual preparation for the sacraments of initiation. The themes of repentance and holiness are constant throughout this period. Interior reflection (on God’s love for us, his faithful provision for us, and our need to turn to him fully) should lead to repentance and penance, thanksgiving, and more fervent fraternal charity. The elect and candidates for full communion should turn once again to a study of Christ the Savior, especially the events of the Paschal mystery – Jesus’ Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. (see RCIA 118, 121, 138, 139)

The Catechetical components of this period include the following:

- ✦ Meditations and exhortations
- ✦ Spiritual reading of Scripture and the lives of the saints
- ✦ Prayer times such as intercession for the needs of the Church, meditation on the life of Christ in the rosary, recitation of Evening Prayer or Night Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
- ✦ A retreat weekend is especially appropriate during this time (This might be the first opportunity offered for the sacrament of Reconciliation for the candidates for full communion)
- ✦ Participation in the Lenten activities of the parish should certainly be part of this time. With all of the above and explanations of such devotions as the Stations of the Cross there would certainly be continuing education, but not in the same manner as in the previous stages

The Liturgy and the Community as Means of Insertion in Christ:

Participants are learning all the time during their experience of the catechumenate, not just in the formal teaching. Attendance at the ceremonies for Holy Week with godparents, sponsors, and team members will be an experience of the liturgy as the prime teacher.

“The unique catechetical value of the liturgy essentially derives from the way in which it contains and makes us familiar with the heart of the Christian religion the mystery of Christ... The liturgy gives what it teaches.” ~ *Johannes Hofinger, S.J., et al, The Good News and Its Proclamation, pp. 53, 56*

Without the teaching and converting aspects of the liturgy and the witness of the community, formal instruction runs the risk of becoming just information, instead of light for the path of faith. (see CCC 89)



Discernment Interview Prior to the Rite of Election or the Rite of the Call to Continuing Conversion

Interviewer: Before beginning, read RCIA 120 and the questions that are asked of the catechumens and candidates during the Rite of Sending (RCIA 537-542) and the Rites of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion (RCIA 551-557). This meeting should be preceded by a discussion with any members of the RCIA community (clergy, team members, godparents, sponsors, etc.) who have assisted in the formation of the individual regarding the person's readiness to take this step.

Use the following questions as a guide for a conversation with the catechumen or candidate. As you talk, let him or her know how you have seen God at work in his or her life during the initiation process. Be sure to explain that, while some individuals may be ready to celebrate the sacraments at this time, others may not, and that if someone needs more time to learn about and decide to live the Catholic way of life, that is fine. If the individual is interested in celebrating these Rites, and you or others with whom you have spoken have concerns about his or her readiness, explain your concerns and say that it might be in the person's best interest to delay celebrating the sacraments for a period of time. At the conclusion of your conversation, unless you or the catechumen/candidate needs more time to come to a decision, let the person know whether or not he or she will participate in the Rite of Sending and Rite of Election or the Rite of the Call to Continuing Conversion. Notes on the conversation should be taken as needed.

Name: _____

Catechumen Candidate for full communion Candidate for completion of initiation

Godparent(s)/Sponsor(s): _____

- 1) What has been your experience during the initiation process? What has affected you the most? What have you enjoyed the most? What has challenged you the most?
- 2) How has your life changed in the time that you have been in the catechumenal process?
- 3) What changes have occurred in your relationship with God or with your family or friends during this time?
- 4) How has your relationship with your godparent/sponsor been working out?
- 5) Tell me about some of the people in the parish whom you have come to know or experiences in the parish you have had during the initiation process.
- 6) How comfortable are you reading the Scriptures?
- 7) Tell me about how you pray.
- 8) How would you describe your relationship with Jesus Christ?
- 9) Do you find yourself relating to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints?
- 10) Do you understand what it means to be faithful to the teachings and magisterium of the Church?
- 11) Do you feel that you have a good grasp of the teachings of the Church? Do you have questions about any of them? What areas do you wish to learn more about?
- 12) Do you understand what becoming a member of the Catholic Church entails? How would you describe what being a Catholic/living a Catholic life means?
- 13) To what degree do you see yourself turning away from sin and developing a desire for virtue?
- 14) How do you understand the call to holiness? What does it mean to you that a Catholic is called to live a life of charity?
- 15) Do you desire the sacraments? Specifically the Eucharist?

Explain to the initiate what will take place at the Rite of Sending (RCIA 537-542) and the Rite of Election or the Rite of the Call to Continuing Conversion (RCIA 551-557), then ask:

- 16) Do you understand what is being asked of you in these Rites? Are you prepared to take this step?
- 17) Do you wish to be baptized/be received into full communion/complete the sacraments of initiation?