

Welcome, prayer and opening song

What will tonight look like:

- It will be a general overview of the RCIA program, and you'll shuffle through a bunch of pieces of paper along the way
- Much less structured than most nights
- First we'll introduce ourselves
- Then I'll talk about the general flow of the year
- Along the way I'll describe what Wednesday nights will look like in more detail
- And then I'll give a little historical background on the rich tradition behind the process you're going through
- And we'll close with a prayer

Introduction of self, background

Definitions

- Inquirer
 - not everyone here will continue
 - the more open you are to the movement of the Spirit, the more you'll receive
 - conversion process does not just happen on Wednesday nights
 - the more you apply your growing Spirit outside of RCIA, the more you'll grow
- Companion
 - try to get to a 1:1 ratio between inquirers and companions, but that's not always possible
 - some have been doing this for years, some are brand new
- Supporter

Introduction of everyone

What will **Wednesdays and Sundays** look like

- First need to understand brief history of RCIA

	Content	Experience
<314		X
<800	X	X
<1975	X	
>1975	X	X

- Wednesday nights attempt to combine some content and experience, focusing mostly on content
 - Learning by doing
 - Prayer – forming the spirit
 - Education – forming the intellect
 - In more detail
 - Come together with a brief prayer
 - Start with presentation on a parish ministry in order to understand the larger life of a parish community beyond each of us as individuals
 - Presentation for the night of about an hour, interspersed with a break. We'll talk about the topics specifically in just a little bit.
 - Close through a variety of different prayer forms each night in order to expose you to a rich variety of prayers styles in order to hopefully find one that fits for you

- Sundays focus mostly on experience
 - Learning by being
 - Your choice for the next several months on whether you want to attend mass or not
 - However, if you do choose to go to mass, you should refrain from receiving communion, for it is a sign of unity, and you are not yet united in your faith with the rest of the believing community, even though you may be eager to be.

What will this **year as a whole** look like?

- Recognizes your growth as a spiritual person
 - **Go over schedule**
 - Begins with individual experience, moving to understand the basic ways God has communicated with His people, and then the learnings we have codified since then.

- Recognizes conversion
 - **Go over conversion table**

Stages of the RCIA Process

- Precatechumenate:
 - Inquirer
- Catechumenate: (rite of acceptance)
 - Candidate (baptized)
 - Catechumen (unbaptized)
- Purification and Enlightenment (rite of election)
 - Elect
 - (rite of the scrutinies)
 - (rite of initiation)
 - **Go over Confirmation Name and Sponsor**
- Mystagogia
 - Neophyte

Retreat and Rites

- Presentation of the Lord's Prayer
- Rite of Acceptance
- Rite of Elections
- Day of Reflection and Presentation of the Creed
- Rites of the Scrutinies
- Rite of Initiation

Questions?

Prayer Sessions Intro and First Prayer (Lamb of God)

Those who haven't filled out questionnaire fill out questionnaire

I used to give this presentation, but I believe it is better covered during the Sacrament talks.

Introduction to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

In 1972, the Catholic Church changed its assumptions about initiation into the church. It focused on how new members were initiated into the Church in the first few centuries of its existence.

At that time, there were no formal classes that people could go through, no set of laws, no clearly defined books of beliefs, no one place where someone could go to gain the knowledge of what it meant to be Christian. All that existed were communities of believers, usually organized and ordered by a priest or deacon.

New members of the church were not normally infants ready to receive baptism, but instead were adults seeking to enter into the value system that was making so much sense for their friends, family or acquaintances. Becoming Christian was an adult decision, not a decision made for an infant. You see, it was illegal to be a Christian in the Roman empire. Christians were persecuted and killed for entertainment and political reasons.

And since the Church wasn't so intent on defining exactly *what* it meant to be Christian, but more importantly *how* it meant to be Christian, they taught these inquirers into the faith by example. They didn't focus on educating the inquirers about the faith, but rather on forming them to be Christian. Christianity wasn't something you learned. It was something you became.

And so in the 2nd century, as the Church began to see greater and greater numbers of people seeking to become Christians, they established the *catechumenate*, an appropriate period of formation. Between the 2nd and 4th centuries, the catechumenate focused on experience with very little content.

But beginning in the year 314, everything about Christianity began to change. In that year, Constantine, the Roman Emperor, was converted to Christianity and at the same time, made it the state religion. With official recognition came time to ponder and discuss what Christianity was about. Church councils were called in which leaders from different parts of the world gathered to discuss what their churches believed. And together they began to form a central set of beliefs that began to define Christianity.

Thus, between 314 and the 6th century, the focus of the catechumenate was formalized and added more content to the experience. The period of time that it took was usually 3 years, consisting of living in the Christian community and experiencing and learning about its ways.

This is the time that the Church looked back to for guidance on what initiation into the Church meant. For as time went on, the catechumenate was broken down into individual rites called Baptism, Confirmation, and first Eucharist. These rites would take place at different times in a person's life and their relation to each other and to initiation into the church was gradually lost. In 1972, the Church looked back to its roots to reunite the full experience of becoming Christian. It called this experience the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

Imagine this scenario...As an adult, you hear about a set of beliefs and values that have made a profound difference in the life of someone you know. As you learn more and more about these values, you begin to think that they might be of value for you. So you inquire about learning more and enter into a community of people like you, *inquirers*, who are beginning to address life's issues from a perspective that gives things meaning and importance, and reduces the worries of life to mere chatter at the boundaries of what concerns you. This community gathers occasionally, year round. At times it comforts you in your confusion, while at other times it challenges you to change. And after a while, perhaps a year or more, you start to realize that this set of beliefs can really make a difference in your life, too.

And you move to another community, this time consisting of *candidates (or catechumens)* like you who are committed to taking on the values and beliefs that you dabbled with earlier. This community meets more regularly than the previous one and asks you to start making a commitment in your life to taking on and acting out the beliefs and values you hear about. Little by little you begin to learn more and more what it means to live out the values and beliefs that are discussed. Again, sometimes they are a comfort, but more and more often they are a challenge to change the way you think and act. However, some things about the faith are openly discussed, while other things, especially the central ceremony called the *agape meal* or love feast, are shrouded in enticing mystery.

At some point, you decide that you are ready to commit to these values and beliefs and you begin to prepare for full initiation into the community of believers. Initiation happens once a year and is full of anticipation of finally being able to participate in the central mystery: the agape meal.

So beginning on a day in Spring, you begin to prepare your heart for receiving the the Holy Spirit and the grace of God. Along the way, you and the other *elect* who are ready to make the commitment to being Christian, hear more and more stories about Jesus Christ and about the trials he faced until the week called Holy Week. During that week, the triumph and trials of Jesus are exemplified in three days called the *Triduum*. On the first of these days, Holy Thursday, the last meal that Jesus shared with his followers is celebrated. But a sense of mournfulness is present as the celebration ends with the image of Jesus being arrested by the Roman guard. On the second of these days, Good Friday, the trial, torture and death of Jesus are celebrated. Mournfulness is at a height and bittersweet songs are sung – and silence weighs heavily upon the believers hearts. On the third of these days, Holy Saturday, the mournfulness continues, but you are at the same time excited that that evening you will be fully initiated into the Church.

That night, you gather in the courtyard of the worship place, full of eagerness to understand the mystery. A whole crowd of believers is present and story after story is told about the special relationship of God and the Hebrew people. In this relationship, the people consistently forsake God in their human weakness, but God consistently rescues them from danger and welcomes them back into his arms. After several hours of readings and prayers, the Bishop calls deacons of the Church to lead you and the other candidates to the baptismal chapel. You are confused and yet still full of anticipation. The deacons are big and strong and as they lead you to the baptismal chapel, the whole assembly of believers begins to pray for you. You feel a rush of excitement and at the same time the fullness of humility in the presence of so many people praying for you.

In the chapel, you are led to a shallow pool and shed your old clothing. Deacon on both sides of you dunk you into the pool holding your head under the water until you are about to burst. Then they let your head up only long enough for you to gasp a breath before they plunge you under again. 3 times this is repeated.

You are flushed with energy now and a deacon anoints you with oil, saying *ephphetha*, "be opened." And finally a white robe is wrapped around you to replace the clothing you wore previously.

A candle is handed to you to lead you back to the church. You travel there as a group, where you are greeted by the assembly of believers, who rise in unison and give praise. For in you, the newly baptised and initiated, in you the *neophytes*, they see the risen Christ. You are no longer just a person to them, you are a symbol of the sacramentality of our lives. And you join in the celebration and prayer as the sun rises to proclaim that this day, this Easter day, Christ is risen. Alleluia! Alleluia! He who was dead is alive. He who was lost is found. He who was gone from us is returned -- closer and more profound than ever before.

That day you celebrate and sing songs of praise in your elation. In fact, you and the church celebrate the rising of Christ for 50 more days until the day of Pentecost, the day when the Holy Spirit was given to the followers of Christ. As you celebrate, you are ready for the last phase of full initiation: the *mystagogical catechesis* -- the learning through being that makes you truly a Christian. Now you can fully participate in the mystery of the agape meal. Now you can begin to live and act like a true Christian. And in order to provide you with a comfortable springboard into this new way of living life, you continue to meet for a short while longer with those who became Christians along with you, in order to piece together as best you can what it really means to be Christian. The mystagogical catechesis slowly and informally fades as you begin to immerse yourself in the community of believers.

RCIA Introduction Supplemental Material

Conversion: *to turn around frequently*

Type	From	To
Affective	Blockage of feelings	Acceptance and ability to use feelings
Intellectual	Knowledge of facts	Knowledge of meaning
Moral	Satisfaction of law as criteria of choices	Values and criteria of choices
Religious	Life as series of problems	Life as mystery and gift
Theistic	God is a force	Personal relationship with God
Christian	Historical Jesus	God's love for me is the living, risen Christ
Ecclesial	Church is "they," an institution	Church is "we," a community
Gospel	Concern for my own personal salvation	Commitment to the Kingdom of God

Stages of the RCIA Process

Stage	Description	Roles	Length
Precatechumenate	This is a time, of no particular length or structure, for introductions, asking questions and study of gospel values. It is an opportunity for the beginnings of faith.	Inquirer	No particular length, but formally begins in September and ends in November
Rite of Acceptance			
Catechumenate	This is a period for the Catechumens and Candidates to grow in their faith and conversion to God.	Catechumen (not baptized) Candidate (baptized)	November to February
Rite of Election			
Purification and Enlightenment	This period takes place during Lent, immediately before the Easter Vigil. It is a time of reflection, centered on conversion and marked by prayers called the Scrutinies.	Elect	February to Easter
Rite of Initiation			
Mystagogia	Formally, the Mystagogia takes place between the Easter Vigil and Pentecost. The newly initiated experience deeper study of the Sacraments and being fully a part of the Christian community. They are full participants in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration.	Neophyte	Easter to Pentecost

By our Day of Reflection in the Spring, you will need to have chosen a Sponsor and a Confirmation Name. Here is some help on these choices.

- Choosing a Sponsor
 - Choose someone who:
 - has nurtured your faith and perhaps your decision to be confirmed
 - is at least 16 years old
 - is a fully initiated Catholic (have celebrated Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist)
 - Preferably, the baptismal sponsor should be the Confirmation sponsor whenever possible.
 - leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken and is not bound by any Church penalty
 - is not your parent
 - A sponsor is
 - a model of how a person of faith lives in the world today
 - a guide, confidant, listener
 - one who will walk the faith journey with you after the RCIA process is complete

- Choosing a Confirmation Name
 - you may want to choose your baptismal name (middle name) as a way to both assert the fact that Confirmation is the fullness or completion of the Sacrament of Baptism. Neither the Rite of Confirmation nor the Code of Canon Law refers to the custom of selecting a Confirmation name. The Rite simply refers to the candidate being “called by name.” The presumption is that the candidate is called by the name given at the time of Baptism. Confirmation is the renewal of the Baptismal promises your parents made on your behalf when you were a baby and choosing your baptismal name is a way to affirm who you are and have been as a Christian.
 - you may want to choose a name other than your baptismal name because you want to mark out the fact that you are beginning a new stage in your life (just as Abram became Abraham, Jacob became Israel, Simon became Peter, Saul became Paul, etc.), or that you are drawn to the role model that a particular saint offers in terms of how to live, or that a particular saint has a close affinity to your goals and challenges in life (e.g. patron saints).
 - either way, you should use this occasion as an opportunity to learn more about the saint whose name you are choosing. Some good links on the internet for doing so are:

American Catholic	http://americancatholic.org/Features/SaintofDay/default.asp
Catholic Online	http://www.catholic.org/saints/
Catholic Community Forum:	http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/indexsnt.htm
Saints.com	http://www2.webmagic.com/saints.com/
Saints recognized by John Paul II	http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/index_saints_en.html#

Glossary of Terms Used in the RCIA

CANDIDATE One who is already baptized in another Christian faith and who now is preparing to be received into full communion in the Catholic Church. At the time of full communion, he or she will make a profession of faith, be confirmed, and receive the Eucharist. In the Rite, candidate is also used for those participating in the pre-catechumenate (baptized and unbaptized) and also in reference to a catechumen.

CATECHUMEN One who is not baptized and is preparing for full initiation at the Easter Vigil through baptism, confirmation and Eucharist.

CATECHUMENATE Second period of the RCIA (see below) which involves intense preparation in word, worship, community life and apostolic works.

CHILDREN The catechumenate with children has as its foundation the adult rite. Special rites have been developed for use with children of catechetical age which usually means seven years and older.

CHRISTMAS CYCLE Cycle within the liturgical year (see below) that begins with the first Sunday of Advent and ends with the baptism of Jesus in January.

CYCLE A, B, C The three year cycle of liturgical readings: Cycle A, Matthew; Cycle B, Mark and some of John; Cycle C, Luke. All three cycles incorporate John.

EASTER CYCLE Cycle within the liturgical year (see below) that begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with Pentecost. Includes Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Ascension Thursday and the weeks in between.

EASTER SEASON Part of the Easter Cycle which includes seven weeks after Easter to Pentecost.

ELECT The name given to catechumens on the first Sunday of Lent signifying being chosen by God.

EVANGELIZATION The task of the Church during the pre-catechumenate which involves the inviting, the welcoming, the witness, the sharing of faith and the proclamation of the gospel to inquirers/candidates.

INQUIRERS Those who participate in the pre-catechumenate of a parish. They are inquiring into Catholicism.

LECTIONARY The book used in liturgical celebrations that contains all the readings of the liturgical year (see below).

LITURGICAL YEAR The seasons and cycles of the Christian year. It is the instrument and means for leading God's people along the way of the Lord. The readings introduce us and invite us into the paschal mystery. It includes Christmas Cycle, Easter Cycle and Ordinary Time.

MINOR RITES Rites during the catechumenate which include Rite of Exorcism, Rite of Blessing, Rite of Anointing.

MYSTAGOGY Final period of the RCIA which is from Easter to Pentecost.

NATIONAL STATUTES Particular law for the implementation of the RCIA in the United States presented by the Conference of Catholic Bishops.

NEOPHYTE One who is initiated at the Easter Vigil. It comes from the word meaning twig as in a new sprout on a limb/branch. At Pentecost the new Catholic is no longer called neophyte.

NINETY (90) DAYS Occasionally used to mean the combination of the Period of Purification and Enlightenment (see below) and the Period of Mystagogy (see above) which corresponds with Lent (40 days) and the Easter Season (50 days).

ORDINARY TIME Cycle within the liturgical year that is outside the strong seasons of Christmas and Easter. This time provides us an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of God's gift to us. In Christ our attitudes, our prayer life, and our service to others.

PRECATECHUMENATE The first period of the RCIA which is the initial introduction of an Inquirer into the Catholic way of life. It is also a period of evangelization on the part of the Church.

PRESENTATIONS During the period of purification and enlightenment a catechumen is presented with the Creed and the Lord's Prayer through special rites. Both prayers could be presented during the Catechumenate when it is more convenient.

PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT This is the third period of the RCIA which usually coincides with the Lenten season of the Easter Cycle. It is the final period of preparation for initiation at the Easter Vigil.

RCIA Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. This is the official rite of the Roman Catholic Church for initiation of children and adults and the reception of baptized candidates. Full initiation through baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist are the norm presented in the Rite. Reception is through profession of faith, confirmation, and Eucharist.

RITE OF...

Acceptance Into the Order of Catechumens: the bridge between the precatechumenate and the catechumenate for the unbaptized.

Welcome: the bridge between the inquiry period and the period of pastoral formation that coincides with the catechumenate. It is for those already baptized.

Election: Presided over by the Bishop, the rite inaugurates the final period of preparation before initiation. It is a bridge between the catechumenate and purification and enlightenment.

Call to Continuing Conversion: Coincides with Election but is the rite for candidates already baptized.

Initiation: Customarily at the Easter Vigil, it includes baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist.

Scrutiny: Three rites of examination of conscience and cleansing for catechumens during Lent.

Penitential Rites: Similar to rite of scrutiny for candidate.

SUNDAY The first day in the Christian liturgical year, the original feast day, the heart of the calendar, the basis and nucleus of the liturgical year.

TRIDUUM The "three days of the celebration of Easter which begins with Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday evening and ends with evening prayer on Easter Sunday evening. Includes the liturgies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, and Easter Sunday.