

RCIA NOTES

How does our parish attract inquirers each year who consider becoming Catholic?

The short answer is you! When a parish has inquirers year after year, it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit as parish members open their hearts to welcome others. Members of a welcoming and evangelizing community take seriously their call to share the Divine message of salvation. It happens in parish families, in the workplace, in gatherings with friends and neighbors, and in daily contacts. Give thanks to God as he continuously strengthens each of us who seek to do his will in offering a gentle, humble, and clear welcome to the Catholic faith. *“Go out into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature.”* (Mark 16:15)

What is RCIA?

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is the process established for the universal Church for individuals to become Catholic and receive the sacraments of initiation — Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. This initiation process also involves a parish community experiencing a renewal in faith as it prepares and welcomes new members into the Church.

The Rite speaks of conversion as a “spiritual journey.” Centered on fostering a deep relationship with Jesus and the Church he founded, this journey takes place through distinct stages over a period of time suitable to bring about a thorough catechesis, significant experience of the parish

community, and commitment to the liturgical and moral life of the Catholic faithful. The RCIA process is a restoration of the ancient catechumenate, arising within the first three centuries following the era of the apostles. It was the early Church’s way of Christianizing the pagan Roman Empire. The Second Vatican Council called for the restoration and use of this venerable and powerful method of initiation for the worldwide Church.

What does this mean for our parish?

If you have been attending Mass for a while, and are interested in what steps to take to become a Catholic, consider attending the inquiry sessions that will be held starting in September. If you know someone who has asked you questions about your Catholic faith and who may be thinking about becoming Catholic, the inquiry sessions will provide insight into the doctrines, traditions and history of the Catholic Church. If you’re an adult and have been baptized a Catholic, but have never received First Communion or Confirmation, the RCIA sessions can help you prepare for these sacraments. If you were baptized in another denomination, but would now like to join the Catholic Church, the faith formation during the RCIA process will prepare you for entering into full communion with the Catholic faith.

If any of these situations apply to you or someone you know, please contact the parish office at 503-792-4231 so we can determine how many inquirers to expect. We’ll provide details in future bulletins about specific dates and times of the 2011 RCIA inquiry sessions.