

**GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES
FOR THE
RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION
OF ADULTS**

Office of Lifelong Catholic Formation/Education
Diocese of Beaumont

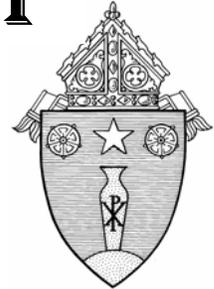
(Effective December 14, 1998)

APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN THE DIOCESE OF BEAUMONT

December 14, 1998

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DIOCESE OF BEAUMONT



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I. Introduction

In writing this document, the members of the Diocesan Commission for the RCIA wanted to create one that would address the following needs:

- To develop guidelines for the Diocese of Beaumont, based on the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* that was promulgated by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops in 1988.
- To prepare a document that explains the RCIA and serves as an educational tool for pastors and team members.
- To discuss common questions and concerns which arise in dealing with catechumens and candidates.
- To be a resource for RCIA teams by containing helpful, practical material.

In developing these guidelines for our diocese, the Diocesan Commission for the RCIA has tried to take into consideration the different sizes and cultures of parishes while still maintaining the integrity of the RCIA process. The general guidelines for the entire RCIA process and the specific guidelines for each period are found in the grey boxes that are interspersed throughout the document.

The material describing each of the four periods of the RCIA is meant to be educational and help new RCIA teams to develop an understanding of the process. It is also hoped that parishes, which presently have active teams, will measure their current RCIA process against this document to determine the strengths of their RCIA and also to discover the areas that need further development.

Lastly, the Appendix was created to provide parishes with a variety of useful information and material that puts into concrete form the description and explanation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults contained in the first part of this document.

Implementation of the Guidelines for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

It is recognized that in order to put these guidelines into effect, parishes need to have a functioning RCIA team, since it would be difficult for the pastor with one or two other people to provide a RCIA process as described in this document. Those parishes who presently do not have a team need time to recruit and train parishioners to take on the different roles of the RCIA team (see page four). It will be the responsibility of the Diocesan Commission for the RCIA to provide training and formation for team members, especially for catechists and sponsors. All other parishes are encouraged to follow these guidelines upon approval for implementation.

II. Overview of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Theology of the Sacraments of Initiation

Initiation into the Roman Catholic Church is completed with the reception of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist through which men and women are freed from the power of darkness and joined to Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Through the power of the Spirit they become adopted sons and daughters of God and members of the people of God, who are then able to fully join in the celebration of the Lord's death and resurrection.¹

Baptism is the initial sacrament one receives and the means by which a person is "incorporated into Christ" freed from sin and death and becomes a new creation, and a child of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit.² Our ability to become more like Christ is strengthened through reception of the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. Through Confirmation, "those who have been born anew in baptism receive the inexpressible Gift, the Holy Spirit himself, by which 'they are endowed with special strength.' Moreover, having received the character of this sacrament, they are 'bound more intimately to the Church' and 'they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ.' Finally, confirmation is so closely linked with the holy eucharist that the faithful, after being signed by holy baptism and confirmation, are incorporated fully into the body of Christ by participation in the eucharist."³ Thus it is through these three sacraments, the Sacraments of Initiation, that a person becomes a full member of the Catholic Church.

What is the RCIA – Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults?

Following the decree of Vatican Council II, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults was restored as the normative way by which adults would be initiated into the Catholic Church, and in 1988 the National Conference of Catholic Bishops mandated the use of this Rite for the United States. This Rite recognizes the existence of a connection between the Sacraments of Initiation, a connection that in the early Church was not only theological but was also expressed through the reception of these three sacraments during the Easter Vigil by those who wanted to become members of the Christian community.

For the first 300 years the Church existed in a pagan world and suffered much persecution, with many of its members being required to give up their lives for the faith they professed. Thus, those who desired to join the Church had to fully understand what it meant to be Christian. They also had to undergo a complete change in their lives, giving up all that tied them to the pagan culture. The process, or catechumenate, by which they underwent this change, often took one to three years so that, upon entrance into the Church, they were ready to take on the full responsibilities of being a follower of Christ.

Christian Initiation – A Process of Conversion

In restoring the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the Church recognizes the need for providing a process of conversion through which an individual can come to grow in his or her faith relationship with Jesus, accept the Gospel message and values, and know what the Church believes and teaches. As a process, the RCIA recognizes that conversion is a free gift from God, which must be nurtured, supported, and allowed to grow with the help of the Spirit until the individual is ready to take the final step of professing his or her faith and becoming a Catholic.

¹ *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, "Christian Initiation, General Introduction," 1.

² *RCIA*, 2.

³ *The Rites of the Catholic Church*, 292.

Since this process or journey towards initiation involves the whole person, it must take into account that we are intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual beings who must include all these aspects of self in our faith commitment.

Christian Initiation, therefore, provides for times in which the candidate learns the doctrinal content and tradition of the Catholic faith. But, beyond this, the person must also come to know and understand the practices of Catholicism – what we do when we gather to worship, how we live and act as Christians in the parish community, and how we do Christ’s work in the world. Since faith and conversion involve more than just knowledge and action, committing to the Catholic Faith also calls for an internal change of heart and ever deepening spiritual growth. The initiation process provides for this journey toward maturity of faith through constant prayer and through ritual that marks an individual’s readiness to take another significant step in the process toward full incorporation into the Body of Christ. This progress is celebrated through specific rites or ceremonies during Sunday Liturgy so that the candidates feel the welcome and support of the parish they will join. Likewise, they benefit as the community prays for their spiritual growth.

Christian Initiation and the Parish Community

When individuals seek to join the Roman Catholic Church they not only become members of the universal Church, but also enter into a specific local, faith community. It is important for candidates to come to know that community - to understand its vision, goals, and those activities of outreach and social action in which it is engaged. Thus, it is the role of the entire community to bear witness to the Gospel, so that the candidates can experience what it means to be a member of the Body of Christ and part of a community rooted in the message and love of the Lord.

As it takes on the task of forming new Catholics, the parish community supports the growing faith of the candidates when it participates in the rites which celebrate the major passages in the journey towards initiation. In doing so, the community is challenged to reflect upon how faithful it has been to the teachings of Christ, and also to experience ongoing conversion and the deepening of its own faith-life.

Besides becoming acquainted with the community as a whole, the candidates should come to know individual members of the parish, so that the community they are joining does not remain merely an anonymous group of people. When parishioners become part of the process of Christian Initiation they join in the journey of faith with the candidates. On this journey they share their faith with the seekers, pray with and for them, and help them to experience the joy and understand the hardships involved in being Catholic – a Catholic who seriously takes on the responsibilities of being a follower of Christ.

Candidates for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

The RCIA is a process for adults who, “after hearing the mystery of Christ proclaimed, consciously and freely seek the living God and enter the new way of faith and conversion as the Holy Spirit opens their hearts.”⁴ Since it is through this process, and all of its accompanying rites, that they are prepared to receive the Sacraments of Initiation, the RCIA is for the following: 1) unbaptized adults, 2) adults baptized in other Christian Traditions, and 3) baptized, but uncatechized adult Catholics who wish to receive the remaining two Sacraments of Initiation (Confirmation and Eucharist).⁵ Those adults who are only seeking Confirmation should not be included in this process, but should be prepared for the sacrament and receive Confirmation when the Bishop confirms in the parish.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults can also be adapted for children of catechetical age who have not yet been baptized, and can be extended over a period of years if necessary. Those children who are catechized through this process should complete their initiation into the Church by receiving all three sacraments at one time.⁶

⁴ RCIA, 1.

⁵ RCIA, 400.

⁶ See pages 16-20 below, for a more detailed discussion of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults adapted for Children of Catechetical Age (children and youth).

Catechesis in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

The RCIA is meant to prepare adults to live the Christian life, through a process that provides an adequate time of preparation and formation. It should 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.”⁷

Central to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is an experience of conversion for the catechumen or candidate, a conversion into a deeper love relationship with Jesus. One comes to this knowledge of the Lord through reflection upon and discussion of Sacred Scripture, always with the understanding that knowing Jesus means responding to his challenge to live as his disciple. One comes to knowledge of what Catholics believe through a clear presentation of Catholic Doctrine, which includes the Four Pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* – Creed, Sacraments, Commandments, and Prayer. One comes to know how to live as a Catholic by participating in the life of the Christian community and by putting into practice what one has learned through scripture and doctrine. Therefore, catechesis in the RCIA should be lectionary based, including both scripture and doctrine, beginning with the Catechumenate Period of the RCIA. This occurs when the doctrinal topic for the week is determined by each Sunday’s Gospel reading, so that what one hears proclaimed in scripture, what one believes as a Catholic, and how one lives as a follower of Christ is all connected.⁸

The RCIA Team

Although it is the role of the entire parish community to evangelize and catechize, it is important to form a RCIA Team whose members directly assist the catechumens and candidates in their process of conversion, by walking with them on their journey. While the most important role for every member of the Team is to be a witness to their faith, the RCIA Team is composed of parishioners who desire to serve in the ministry of initiation by taking on different roles and responsibilities. The RCIA Team consists of the following ministries:

Coordinator

The role of the coordinator is to oversee the RCIA process by gathering the Team together and coordinating people, schedules, meetings and ideas. “Some tasks include understanding the vision of initiation; developing ways to inform and involve the parish, parish groups, and the staff; recruiting and forming a team; and working with those who express an interest in becoming Catholic.”⁹

Catechist

The role of the catechist is twofold; it involves both answering the questions that catechumens and candidates have about being a Catholic, and instructing them concerning the teachings of Christ and the Church. The catechist should have a good grasp of Catholic Doctrine, and also be comfortable with using a process of facilitation that enables participants to reflect upon Sacred Scripture and the Catholic Faith.

Sponsor

The role of the sponsor is to be a guide for a person as he or she journeys through the RCIA process. The sponsor provides support and encouragement to the catechumen or candidate, is an example of what it means to live as a committed follower of Christ, and is the person who acts as a witness to the community concerning the readiness and willingness of the candidate. Of all the roles, the sponsor is the one who develops the most important relationship with the candidate, as together they make the journey of faith toward initiation.

Hospitality

The ministry of hospitality is central to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, because it is important for the catechumens and candidates to feel that the community is looking forward to the time when they will become members. The role of those involved in hospitality is to be hosts and hostesses for the candidates, making them feel welcomed by preparing the environment and refreshments for the sessions, and also for the times when other members of the parish may gather to meet them.

⁷ RCIA, 75.

⁸ See Appendix pages 32-46 for Lectionary based doctrine for the Three-year Cycle of the Church Year.

⁹ *Handbook for Coordinators*, (Resources for Christian Living, Allen, Texas, 1997), 3.

Stages or Periods on the Journey of Faith: An Overview

For all of us, our journey of faith never ends, as throughout life we continue the process of conversion - a process of turning our hearts and minds and lives more towards God and deepening our love relationship with Jesus. For those who embark on the journey of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, this process begins and takes place through stages or periods which have focuses, but all which enable one to grow in the love of the Lord and knowledge of the Catholic Faith.

The RCIA process has four major periods, with special rites that mark passage into the next stage.

I. **Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate**

This is a time of no fixed duration or structure that precedes formal admission into the catechumenate. It is a time of evangelization in which initial faith is awakened and called forth in the catechumens, and the fundamentals of Christian teaching are explored.

First Step: Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

This is the liturgical rite that marks the beginning of the catechumenate, in which the candidates publicly express and the Church accepts their intention to respond to God's call and follow the way of Christ.

II. **Period of the Catechumenate**

This is the time for nurturing the growth of the catechumens' faith and conversion to God, assisted by celebration of the word and prayers of exorcism. The duration of this period depends upon the progress of the individual, and can vary from one to three years.

Second Step: Election or Enrollment of Names

This is the liturgical rite, usually celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent, by which the Church formally ratifies the catechumens' readiness for the Sacraments of Initiation. Through this rite the catechumens become the "elect" and express their willingness to receive these sacraments.

III. **Period of Purification and Enlightenment**

This is the period immediately before the elects' initiation at the Easter Vigil, and is usually the preceding Lenten Season. It is a time for reflection, intensely centered on conversion, marked by celebration of the Scrutinies and Presentation of the Creed and Lord's Prayer, and finally by the Preparation Rites of Holy Saturday.

Third Step: Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

This is the liturgical rite, usually celebrated during the Easter Vigil, by which the elect are initiated into the Catholic Church through reception of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

IV. **Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis or Mystagogia**

This is the time, usually the Easter Season, during which the newly initiated experience what it means to be a full member of the Christian community. This is accomplished through catechesis which focuses on the sacraments they received at Easter, to bring about a deeper understanding of the mysteries they have experienced, and particularly by participation with the faithful in the Sunday eucharistic celebration.¹⁰

¹⁰ This description of the periods and steps was adapted from "Outline for Christian Initiation of Adults," *RCIA*, 14.

General Guidelines for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

1. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the normative way for adults to be initiated into the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Beaumont.
2. In the Diocese of Beaumont, the suggested time for completing the process of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is one year or more.
3. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is a process that should be used only for the following:
 - Unbaptized adults (18 years and older)
 - Adults baptized in other Christian Traditions
 - Baptized adult Catholics who have not received Confirmation and Eucharist.
4. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults should ideally be a year-round process, enabling people to begin the process when they first approach the Church.
5. Catechesis in the RCIA process should include both Scripture and Tradition, and provide a conversion experience that is both formational and educational.
6. Members of the parish community should be invited to become involved in the RCIA process through the different roles of the RCIA team, and should be prepared for their ministry, especially the catechists who should attend the Catechist Formation Process offered by the diocese.
7. All the Stages or Periods and Rites of the RCIA should be experienced by those involved in the process.

III. The Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate

Purpose

The Precatechumenate is a time of evangelization and inquiry. "The goal of this period is to help inquirers come to an initial awareness of God's saving presence in their lives, and to help them discern their readiness to embrace the way of life of Jesus Christ."¹¹ This period allows people, who have an interest in becoming Catholic, to strengthen their relationship with the Lord, become acquainted with a community of faith, and build relationships with individual members of the Christian community. Thus, it is a time for communication and forming relationships based on trust, and the willingness of members of the team to reveal the story of their faith life - a story which relates how Jesus has touched them and called them into deeper relationship.

Catechetical Method

Since this is a period of inquiry, it is important to answer the questions the inquirers have that often range from simple ones about the practices of Catholics to ones which deal with the mystery of sin and evil. But, at the same time, it is necessary to focus on some of the basic beliefs of the Catholic Faith. Many times inquirers have responded to the Lord's initial invitation and are searching for the way to do this. They have not yet articulated their questions, and are open to learning whatever can be shared about the Catholic Faith.

Although it is necessary to address doctrinal issues during this period so that inquirers can have a better sense of what Catholics believe, it is just as important to include scripture in the sessions, especially passages of scripture which underlie and give meaning to our tradition. This will enable the inquirers to come to know the Triune God, and will also show that what we hear proclaimed in the scriptures and what we believe as Catholics comes together to help us live as followers of Christ.

¹¹ Thomas H. Morris, *The RCIA: Transforming the Church*, (Paulist Press, New York, 1989), 55.

Discernment of Readiness for Next Stage

Since each person comes to the RCIA process at different times in his or her life lives, and brings a different experience of God, it is important that discernment take place on an individual basis. The process of discernment enables the individual to reflect upon his or her readiness to continue on in the journey and take the first step of entering into the Catechumenate Period. The Rite states that on the part of the inquirers there must be:

- evidence of initial conversion and intention to change their lives and to enter into a relationship with God in Christ
- the first stirrings of repentance
- a start to the practice of calling upon God in prayer
- a sense of the Church
- some experience of the company and spirit of Christians.¹²

In other words, discernment of readiness focuses on how one has come to understand and begin to live Jesus' great command to love God, other and self (Matthew 22:37-39). Discussing the following questions might be helpful in the discernment process:

"Why do you wish to continue this process into the next stage?"

"Since beginning this process, what change have you seen in

- Your relationship with God – Father, Son, Spirit?
- Your relationship with self?
- Your relationship with others?"

Special Concerns

Establishing an Ongoing RCIA Process:

Since this period is of no fixed duration, entrance into an ongoing Catechumenate should be celebrated several times during the year. It is acknowledged that this is the ideal. Such a situation would require developing a number of ministers to work with inquirers at the time they first approach the parish, rather than waiting to begin in the Fall, which for many has become the traditional time of beginning the RCIA process. Having an ongoing Catechumenate is a goal that should and can gradually be worked towards.

Previous Reception of Sacraments:

When an individual first comes to the parish it is important to inquire into the marital status of the inquirer, and if married or engaged, that of his or her spouse, fiancé, or fiancée. This can be determined by using the initial interview questionnaire.¹³ Early in this period a person who has been divorced and re-married should be directed to discuss the situation with the pastor or another person who knows the marriage laws of the Church, so that if a canonical procedure is necessary the process can begin as soon as possible. Because some Tribunal procedures can be lengthy, the individual must be advised that his or her initiation into the Catholic faith cannot occur until and unless the Tribunal process is completed and an affirmative decision received. If a Tribunal process is necessary, in the Diocese of Beaumont, it must be granted before an individual celebrates the Rite of Election or the Rite of Calling the Candidate to Continuing Conversion and enters the period of Purification and Enlightenment.

During the initial interview it is also important to discover if a person has been baptized before and in which denomination, since according to the law of the Catholic Church those who have been validly baptized are not to be baptized again.¹⁴

Rites

There are no specific rites associated with the Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate. The rituals of the RCIA begin with the Rite of Acceptance into the Period of the Catechumenate, in which the **sponsor**

¹² RCIA, 42.

¹³ See Appendix, page 21, for Sample Interview Form.

¹⁴ See Appendix, page 23, for a list of valid and non-valid baptisms.

presents the candidate to the community and accepts the responsibility of walking with him or her on the journey of conversion.

Those who wish to serve as sponsors in the RCIA should come to the sessions during the Period of the Precatechumenate in order to get to know and be known by the inquirers. This would enable the coordinator of the RCIA to observe and be able to designate a sponsor for a candidate, based on previous interaction. If someone comes to the RCIA process through the evangelization efforts of a particular person, then he or she can choose that person to be sponsor, as long as the person is able to fulfill the requirements of being a sponsor and agrees to participate in the RCIA process.¹⁵

Guidelines for the Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate

1. The Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate, often called the Inquiry Period, should not occur only at one fixed time, but should be available for people throughout the year.
2. When a person in need of a declaration of invalidity of a previous marriage approaches the parish, he or she should be made aware of the approximate time needed to complete the Tribunal process, and be encouraged to begin to do so immediately.

IV. The Period of the Catechumenate

Acceptance into the Catechumenate

The Rite of Acceptance into the Catechumenate is the first of the public rites celebrated in the RCIA. During this important ritual the inquirers publicly declare their intentions to continue their journey toward full initiation into the Catholic Church. This rite can be celebrated at various times during the year depending on need, and can be adapted for those already baptized as Catholics or in another Christian denomination.¹⁶

Purpose

The period of the RCIA called the Catechumenate is an extended period of time for catechumens and candidates during which they receive suitable formation in the faith and life of the Church. Since the process of conversion varies for each individual there is no fixed amount of time for this period. It should be long enough for the conversion and faith of the catechumen and candidate to become strong. The Rite states that since the duration of the Catechumenate depends upon the grace of God, no specific time can be determined in advance, but that it "should be long enough – several years if necessary" for conversion to take place.¹⁷

Catechetical Method

There are four elements in the Catechumenate Period, which together are meant to bring about maturity in commitment to the Catholic Faith. They are:

1. catechesis
2. familiarity with the Christian way of life
3. liturgical rites
4. apostolic works.¹⁸

¹⁵ See page 11 below, concerning qualifications needed to be a godparent or sponsor for Baptism/Confirmation.

¹⁶ RCIA, pp. 241, 291.

¹⁷ RCIA, 76.

¹⁸ RCIA, 75.1-4.

Catechesis

The Church states that catechesis in the Catechumenate must be “gradual and complete in its coverage, accommodated to the liturgical year, and solidly supported by celebrations of the word.”¹⁹

It is important to distinguish between lectionary based catechesis and dismissal catechesis, which is the opportunity to reflect upon the Sunday readings, and the Gospel in particular.²⁰ Both use the lectionary as the primary source of catechesis, however, lectionary based catechesis should flow from the Sunday texts, whether it takes place on Sunday or on another day during the week. In other words, the doctrine taught during the Catechumenate should be determined by the Sunday readings for that week. When the cycle of the Lectionary readings guides the order of the topics to be covered during the catechetical sessions, Catholic dogma and precepts are connected to the mystery of salvation which comes from Jesus and is proclaimed in the Gospels. This also enables the sessions to be in harmony with the entire Church as it prays, reflects upon, and tries to live the weekly message of Christ.

It is important during the RCIA process that all the principal elements of the Christian message be covered. They can be found in Chapter Five of *Sharing the Light of Faith*, (The National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States). These elements are: The Mystery of the One God, Creation, Jesus Christ, The Holy Spirit, The Church, The Sacraments, The Life of Grace, The Moral Life, Mary and the Saints, and Death, Judgement, Eternity.²¹

Likewise, the “four pillars” of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* should be the basis of catechesis. They are: Our Christian Faith as found in the Creed, the Christian Mystery as celebrated in Sacraments, the Christian Life as lived in Commandments and Beatitudes, and Christian Prayer, which culminates in the Lord’s Prayer.

Because not all of the important doctrines of our faith may flow out of the Lectionary readings, additional sessions should be held to cover these topics. This would enable a parish to provide a RCIA process that is lectionary based and also insure that the catechumens and candidates have been introduced to all of the important teachings of the Catholic Church.

Other sources for catechists to use as they prepare the sessions would be the documents of Vatican Council II, and others writings by the pope and bishops of the United States.

The Christian Way of Life

Those seeking to enter the Church need to know more than what we believe; it is important for them to see and experience what it means to live as Catholics in today’s world. Through the example and the support of sponsors, godparents, RCIA team members, and the whole Christian Community, catechumens and candidates should learn the Christian way of life. By seeing what Christians do they will 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 practice love of neighbor, even at the cost of self-renunciation.”²²

Liturgical Rites

The liturgical rites of the period of the Catechumenate are meant to purify and strengthen the catechumens and candidates. The first rite celebrated during the RCIA process is the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens for those who have not been baptized and the Rite of Welcoming for previously baptized adults.²³ This occurs after discernment has taken place to determine a person’s readiness for continuing the journey.

¹⁹ RCIA, 75.

²⁰ See page 10 below, concerning the dismissal.

²¹ *Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory for the Catholics of the United States*, (USCC, Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 1979), No. 82-111. See Appendix, page 30, for Principle Elements of the Christian Message.

²² RCIA, 75.2.

²³ RCIA, 48 ff., 416 ff., 507 ff.

Another rite of this period is the Dismissal Rite celebrated each week. Since the catechumens and candidates have not yet been baptized or received First Eucharist, they can only be fed at the table of God's Word, and wait with anticipation their eventual participation in the table of the Eucharist. The weekly dismissal, after the Liturgy of the Word and homily, is not meant to exclude the catechumens or candidates, but is an act of hospitality to excuse the uninitiated who cannot receive the Body and Blood of Christ. The community sends them forth where they can continue to be fed by God's Word through reflection on the Sunday readings and homily. This is integral to conversion, since only by coming to know Jesus through the scriptures can a person turn one's heart, mind, and soul to the Lord. As they are dismissed the community prays for the catechumens and candidates through the words of the celebrant as he says:

"My dear friends, this community now sends you forth to reflect more deeply upon the word of God which you have shared with us today. Be assured of our loving prayers for you. We look forward to the day when you will share fully in the Lord's Table."²⁴

During this period the catechumens and candidates will have many opportunities to participate in various liturgical experiences. These include such rites as special celebrations of the Word of God, Minor Exorcisms, Blessings, and Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens, and they should not be ignored. They are a sign of God's love and the Church's tender care, and are meant to be a source of God's help and strength as they turn away from their past and turn their whole life towards the Lord.

Apostolic Works

Since we are called to follow Jesus, during this period catechumens and candidates should be given the opportunity to work actively with other members of the Christian community who are witnessing to their faith and bringing the Gospel message to the others through direct action in the world. The catechumens and candidates will become more connected with the parish community if they learn about and become involved in the parish organizations that give service to the needy, visit the sick, and perform other apostolic works. During this period, sponsors can be of great help in introducing their catechumens or candidates to parish life and organizations. By engaging in experiences of outreach, the catechumens and candidates will learn that our faith is not merely one of word but also one of action.

In conclusion, to follow the Church's direction concerning instruction for catechumens and candidates during the Period of the Catechumenate, parishes need to include these four elements as part of the catechesis. Such catechesis would then "be of a kind that while presenting Catholic teaching in its entirety also enlightens the 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."²⁵

Discernment of Readiness for the Next Stage

Just as readiness to continue the journey and enter into the Catechumenate Period requires discernment on an individual basis, the decision to go on to the Period of Purification and Enlightenment, which normally coincides with the Lenten Season, must occur in the same way. During the Period of the Catechumenate, before the Rite of Sending is celebrated, the catechumens and candidates are expected to have "undergone a conversion in mind and action."²⁶ Once again the catechumen or candidate must reflect upon where they have come from and where they are going in their journey of faith. They can do this by answering following questions for themselves, and discussing them with the person or persons responsible for spiritual direction in the RCIA process the:

"Why do you wish to continue this process into the next stage?"

"Since beginning this process, what change have you seen in

- Your relationship with God – Father, Son, Spirit?
- Your relationship with self?
- Your relationship with others?"

²⁴ RCIA, 67.

²⁵ RCIA, 78.

²⁶ RCIA, 120.

“How are you listening and responding to the Word of God?

“How are you joining with the community in prayer?

“How are you sharing in the mission of the Christian community?”

“Are there any concerns you have about Reconciliation or Eucharist?”

“Are there any questions you would still like to have answered about the Catholic faith?”²⁷

This will give each person the chance to reflect upon and discuss how in word, thought and action they have come to and are trying to live the Christian life.

Rites

The parish community celebrates this readiness through the Rite of Sending Catechumens for Election and Candidates for Recognition to the Bishop. This rite is celebrated in the parish at a suitable time prior to the Rite of Election, and offers the local community the opportunity to express its approval of the catechumens and candidates and to send them forth assured of the parish’s care and support.²⁸ It is an affirmation by the community that conversion has taken place within those they are sending to the bishop, and a commitment on the part of the catechumens and candidates to complete their initiation into the Church during the Easter Vigil.

Towards the end of the Catechumenate those catechumens who wish to continue the journey and be initiated at Easter should choose godparents who will present them to the Church on the day of their election and be with them for baptism.²⁹ “Unlike sponsors whose role it is to better acquaint the catechumen with the community and offer initial support and care, the godparents serve the catechumens by helping them integrate into the Catholic community by offering them on-going support, care, and the sharing of faith.”³⁰ The role of godparent should not merely be an honorary role. The godparent should be someone who knows the catechumen well and can witness before God and the parish community as to the person’s readiness to complete initiation during the Rite of Sending, and also witness before God and the Church during the Rite of Election. Thus, to be a godparent one must fulfil the following conditions listed in *The Code of Canon Law*:

The person must:

1. be appointed by the candidate for baptism;
2. not be less than sixteen years of age, unless a different age has been stipulated by the diocesan Bishop, or unless the parish priest or the minister considers that there is a just reason for an exception to be made;
3. be a catholic who has been confirmed and has received the Eucharist, and who lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken;
4. not labour under a canonical penalty, whether imposed or declared;
5. not be either the father or mother of the person to be baptised.³¹

While catechumens may ask their parish sponsors, who have taken the journey with him or her to this point in time to be the godparent, they are also free to choose someone else. In this case, the parish sponsor should not be discarded and should continue to fully participate in the process. Those candidates who are seeking to receive Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil should likewise have a choice of sponsor for Confirmation.³² The sponsor for Confirmation must fulfill the same requirements as those listed above for baptism.

²⁷ Those responsible for discernment as to the readiness of the catechumen or candidate to celebrate the Rite of Sending may vary from parish to parish depending upon who has been involved in the RCIA process. Therefore, discernment may be made by the priest, coordinator, or catechists, with input from the person’s sponsor, in conjunction with the catechumen or candidate.

²⁸ *RCIA*, 107-108.

²⁹ *RCIA*, 80.

³⁰ Morris, 99.

³¹ *The Code of Canon Law*, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1983), Can. 874.

³² *The Code of Canon Law*, Can. 874.

Guidelines for the Period of the Catechumenate

1. Catechesis during this period should be lectionary-based and include both reflection on the Sunday readings and teachings on the principal elements of our Catholic faith. Additional sessions should be held to cover topics not included in scripture or at time appropriate to the Liturgical Year, such as Holy Week or prior to reception of Reconciliation.
2. Catechumens and candidates should be introduced to the apostolic life of the Church during this period.
3. The Dismissal Rite is integral to the RCIA process and should take place each week.
4. The Rite of Sending should take place in the parish prior to the Rites of Election and Recognition at the Cathedral.
5. In the case of a person who has applied for a declaration of invalidity of a previous marriage, only if he or she has received an affirmative decision and no longer is impeded from receiving the sacraments, can that person take part in the Rites of Sending, Election, or Recognition.

V. The Period of Purification and Enlightenment

Acceptance into the Period of Purification and Enlightenment

The Catechumenate period concludes with the celebration of the Rite of Election and the Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion. These rites celebrate the transition in the life of the catechumen or candidate from one who is seeking to one who is ready to stand firm in a commitment, and mark the entrance of the catechumens and candidates into the final period of their preparation for the Easter sacraments.³³ "This step is called election because the acceptance made by the Church is founded on the election of God, in whose name the Church acts. The step is also called the enrollment of names because as a pledge of fidelity the candidates have inscribed their names in the book that lists those who have been chosen for initiation."³⁴ The bishop is the presider of these rites, which take place at the Cathedral on the First Sunday in Lent.

Purpose

This period, from which the Lenten Season developed, was originally a time of retreat for those who were to enter the Church at Easter. In the RCIA Process, the focus of this period is meant to be one of intense spiritual interior reflection rather than catechetical instruction. This, then, is a time of prayer and reflection. It is a time of focusing on God's gifting presence, and how that presence uncovers and reveals attitudes and lifestyles that are contrary to relationship with God --namely, sin--as well as raising up those attitudes and gifts that deepen one's relationship with God. It is intended "to purify the hearts and minds of the elect as they search their own consciences and do penance....and to enlighten the minds and hearts of the elect with a deeper knowledge of Christ the Savior."³⁵

Catechetical Method

The catechetical method used during this period is similar to that of the Catechumenate, in that the Sunday readings continue to determine the content of catechesis, but the experience of this period is meant to be very different. "This is a period of more intense spiritual preparation, consisting in more interior reflection than catechetical instruction, and is intended to purify the minds and hearts of the elect as they search their own consciences and do penance."³⁶ The content of catechesis for the first few weeks will be on the experience of

³³ Morris, p. 96.

³⁴ RCIA, 119. Each parish should have a *Book of the Elect* in which the names of the candidates are inscribed.

³⁵ RCIA, 139.

³⁶ RCIA, 139.

election, and since it is meant to be a period of increased prayer and spirituality the sessions should be more reflective in nature. The period of catechesis following the Scrutinies is primarily a time of support and care for the elect, helping them to see God's operative love in the midst of the painful naming of sin. When there are elect in a parish who are preparing to receive the Easter sacraments, Cycle A readings should always be used on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays. The Scrutinies, along with the Cycle A readings, focus attention on the meaning of Baptism – the sacrament through which Jesus overcomes sin and gives us living water, light, and freedom from death.

Along with the Scrutinies, the presentations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer can lead to catechesis upon our Catholic belief and the need for a life of prayer. Prayer during the sessions of this period, when based upon the Scrutinies, should also be more intense and reflective and lead to a serious examination of the lives of the elect and candidates.

Liturgical Rites

The Scrutinies are three rites for the elect, those preparing to be baptized at Easter, which are celebrated on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent. These rites which focus on self-searching and repentance, help the elect to uncover and then heal all that is weak, defective, and sinful in their hearts, and to bring out and strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good. The Scrutinies are meant to complete the conversion of the elect and deepen their resolve to hold fast to Christ and to carry out their decision to love God above all.³⁷

If, for pastoral reasons, the Scrutinies cannot be celebrated on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent, they can be celebrated within community during the week. It is possible that this entire period can take place outside of Lent, with the six-week time frame of this period being maintained, and the Rites being celebrated on Sundays or weekdays.

During this period there are also two presentations to the elect of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, which usually occur during the third and fifth weeks of Lent. These presentations are meant to be celebrated with the entire community, but should not occur during the liturgies in which the Scrutinies take place. They may be anticipated during the period of the Catechumenate. The Creed, which represents our core beliefs, is presented to the elect by the community, and the elect receives the Creed, commits it to memory, and usually "presents" the Creed back to the community by reciting it during the Preparation Rites on Holy Saturday. During the Preparation Rites the Ephphetha Rite is celebrated, which symbolizes to the elect their lifelong need for God's grace to forever hear the Word of God, be open to it, and profess to live it. The second presentation is the Lord's Prayer, which from antiquity "has been the prayer proper to those who in baptism have received the spirit of adoption. When the elect have been baptized and take part in their first celebration of the eucharist, they will join the rest of the faithful in saying the Lord's Prayer."³⁸

For the candidates, the Penitential Rite usually takes place on the Second Sunday of Lent. This rite proclaims the comforting message of God's forgiveness and pardon of sin, and is similar to the Scrutinies for the elect. It is meant to help the candidates to reflect on their lives as they prepare during Lent to receive the sacrament of reconciliation for the first time.

Those planning to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil should be urged to attend the liturgies of the Easter Triduum. There are no specific rites for the elect during these liturgical services, but these prayerful times could be used as means of final preparation for the celebration of the sacraments.

Special Concerns

Only those persons who are free to receive the Sacraments at Easter are able to celebrate the Rite of Election and the Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continual Conversion and thus enter the Period of Purification and Enlightenment. In the case of a person who has applied for a declaration of invalidity for a previous marriage and has not yet been granted one prior to the celebration of these rites, that person cannot participate in these rites or be initiated or received into the Church at Easter. Once a declaration of invalidity has been granted, he or she does not necessarily have to wait until the next Easter to complete the RCIA process.

³⁷ RCIA, 141.

³⁸ RCIA, 149.

In this situation, or in the case of other unusual circumstances and pastoral need, the Period of Purification and Enlightenment may take place outside of Lent. The Scrutinies should then be celebrated on Sundays or even on weekdays, with the usual intervals occurring between the celebrations, using the Cycle **A** Lenten readings. At other times of the year, the Scrutinies should not be celebrated on solemnities of the liturgical year.

Guidelines for the Period of the Purification and Enlightenment

1. The period of the Purification and the Enlightenment is the final period of preparation to receive the Easter sacraments, and usually takes place during the Lenten Season.
2. If, for a valid reason, one is to be initiated or received into the Church at a time other than the Easter Vigil, the six week time of the Period of Purification is to be maintained and all the Rites belonging to that period are to be celebrated.
3. All of the Rites of this period, the Scrutinies and Presentations which pertain to the elect and candidates should be celebrated.
4. In the years when there are elect to be initiated, during Lent Cycle A readings should be used at the Sunday liturgies where Scrutinies are celebrated.
5. Those who are candidates should receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent, after the celebration of the Penitential Rite and prior to the Easter Vigil.
6. The elect do not celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the Easter Vigil, since they will be receiving the Sacrament of Baptism.

VI. Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation and the Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church

The Easter Vigil is the usual time for celebrating the Sacraments of Initiation. Through these sacraments the elect enter the Paschal Mystery through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, thus beginning their relationship with the triune God as members of the Catholic Church. This is also an appropriate time for celebrating the Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church, and the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist for those candidates who participated in the RCIA process for an extended period of time.³⁹

VII. The Period of Mystagogy

Purpose

The Period of Mystagogy (also called Mystagogia) is a time of postbaptismal catechesis that is meant to help the neophytes (newly initiated) reflect upon the sacraments they received and also for the Christian community to reflect upon the Paschal Mystery celebrated at the Easter Vigil. This period continues until Pentecost Sunday, which marks the end of the Easter Season. It should be seen as a beginning for the neophytes – the beginning of a life of entering ever more deeply into the Eucharistic community and the process of living the paschal mystery in one's daily life, rather than being the end of the RCIA process. Although it is a time for the

³⁹ RCIA, 563.

neophytes to become part of the community the significance of the reflective aspect of this period can be obscured if it only becomes a time for “signing-up” the neophytes for parish ministries or programs.

Catechetical Method

The first task of this period is to allow the newly initiated to pray and reflect upon their experience of the Easter Vigil - the symbols of darkness and light, water, oil, bread and wine. This would enable them to “unpack,” appreciate, and deepen their understanding of the experience and the sacraments they received that evening.⁴⁰ Because of this transition from the Easter Vigil to a less intense time, it is important to build a strong experience in the Period of Mystagogy, beginning with a group processing of and reflection on the experience of the Triduum, and especially the Easter Vigil. The neophytes should also reflect upon the conversion that has gradually taken place during the RCIA process. But, it is not enough to deal with emotions and feelings, the neophytes should be able to verbalize what conversion has meant in their lives in terms of prayer, action, and their relationship with God.

In the Period of Mystagogy, as in the other periods, the Sunday readings and homily are the basis for the ongoing catechesis. In the ancient Church this period was a time to celebrate the presence of the Risen Lord in the sacraments, and thus delving deeper into the meaning of the sacraments that were received at the Easter Vigil was the focus of catechesis. Even though the neophytes participate fully in the Eucharist, they should still gather to reflect upon the homily and readings as they did during the Catechumenate, and to receive further catechesis on the sacraments. But, it is important to remember that this period differs from the Period of the Catechumenate. Now, as neophytes, they are different:

Having been formed and led into the experience of the mystery in which they desire to participate through the Gospel message they have learned and above all through their experience of the sacraments they have received, the neophytes develop new ways of viewing life. The experience of the mystery of God changes how they view faith, church, the world. They do not see new things; rather, they see things in new ways.⁴¹

By this time in the initiation process a significant shift has occurred. The neophytes are not in formation for discipleship - they are disciples, one with us in our shared participation in the Paschal Mystery. The focus of catechesis now is integration and preparation for mission. This is the time for the neophytes to gain further confidence in living the Gospel message in their daily lives as they take on the mission of the Church to be Christ in the world.

Liturgical Rites

There are no liturgical rites connected with this period of the RCIA process, but the neophytes should be encouraged to attend Sunday liturgy in a group, with godparents and sponsors whenever possible. It is here that the neophytes discover anew their baptismal identity, when they are gathered in common worship with their community. While part of the gathered assembly, they should continue to sit in their reserved places, and be recognized and prayed for by the community during the General Intercessions. They may participate in the liturgy by presenting the gifts; one of the greatest gifts the neophytes can give to the community is the witness of their presence.

Special Concerns

Many parishes have difficulty continuing the RCIA process during this period. This may be due to an emphasis during the Catechumenate that points towards the reception of Baptism or entrance into the Church as the culmination of the process, thus creating a “graduation” mentality. Rather, the Catechumenate should be presented as leading to a life of participation in the Eucharist, which is most fully explored during the Period of Mystagogy. Hopefully, this focus will encourage the neophytes to continue the RCIA process until Pentecost, as well as foster continued involvement in the life of the community.

The success of the Period of the Mystagogy is not in how many people show up for the sessions, those gatherings in addition to Sunday Eucharist. Rather it is in how the ordinary men and women—teachers, carpenters, nurses, doctors, dressmakers, plumbers, mothers, fathers—are living the gospel way of life and giving witness to their relationship with God.

⁴⁰ See Appendix, page 30, for sample Session for the Period of Mystagogy.

⁴¹ RCIA, 75.1, 245.

Ideally, the newly initiated should gather at least once a month after Pentecost until the following Easter, after which they will no longer be neophytes. If this is not possible, they should be encouraged to attend other programs of ongoing adult formation, and especially the special Evening Vesper Service held on Pentecost Sunday at Saint Anthony Cathedral.

Guidelines for the Period of Mystagogy

1. The Period of Mystagogy lasts for six weeks, from Easter to Pentecost Sunday.
2. The catechetical sessions of this period focus on the experience of the Easter Vigil, the meaning of the Sacraments of Initiation that the neophytes received, and the living out of their faith through mission.
3. The neophytes, godparents, and sponsors should continue to sit in a prominent place in the assembly as a continuing witness to the community.
4. Ideally, the neophytes should continue to gather on a monthly basis for the next year, for support and to continue their growth in faith.
5. The neophytes are encouraged to attend the Vesper Service held at the Cathedral on Pentecost Sunday.

VIII. Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults Adapted for Teens and Children Who have Reached Catechetical Age

Introduction

The answer to questions concerning the initiation of teens and children can be explored in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults paragraphs 252-330 and other texts in the RCIA Study Edition. It is an opportunity for the beginning of a spiritual and informative journey of faith for those children who are seeking full communion with the Catholic faith.

The children's progress in the formation they receive depends on the help and example of their companions and on the influence of their parents.⁴² We, therefore, have to ask what is the appropriate thing to do with children who are of catechetical age?

The answer lies in our understanding of the RCIA ritual text. We must be familiar with the text of the Adult RCIA and adapt it to fit the needs of the Parish and the children.

The format of this information will be as follows:

1. Candidates for the Catechumenate Adapted for Teens and Children
2. Length of Time of Process
3. Stages and Rites
4. Catechesis
5. Parent Meetings

⁴² RCIA, 254.

Candidates for the Catechumenate Adapted for Children and Youth

Children who have reached catechetical age, third grade through high school, and have not celebrated the Initiation Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist belong in the catechumenate for children. This should not be a process for those children who need to celebrate only the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Candidates for the Catechumenate for children include the following:

1. Children who are unbaptized.
2. Children baptized in the Catholic faith who have not participated in catechetical training nor celebrated the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.
3. Children baptized in another Christian faith who want to become Catholic.

For those who go through the RCIA process adapted for children, all three sacraments should be celebrated at the same time. Confirmation should not be celebrated separately.⁴³

The children may enroll into the Catechumenate at the direction of parents, guardians, godparents, or on their own initiative. The consent of parents or guardians is necessary if children have made this decision on their own. It is necessary to interview the children and parents in order to determine how best to minister to the child's particular needs and to find out the learning ability of the individual child. Flexibility is important when teaching children. Conversion for a child is different than for an adult. Age and child development must be taken into consideration.

Length of Time of Process

The children's initiation is to be extended over several years, if need be, before they receive the sacraments.⁴⁴ The time should be no less than one year and possibly two or more. To determine the child's readiness take into consideration the child's ability, age, attendance in class and other activities, and parent involvement. Conversion can not be measured. Fr. Paul Philibert, a childhood moral development professor at Catholic University, suggested that, for children, "conversion" is more a process of beginning to "belong" to a new community.⁴⁵

Stages

Period of the Pre-catechumenate for Children

Time for this period can be as long as necessary for the inquirer to arrive at the readiness needed to continue the journey of faith. Beginning at the start of the school year works well, because this is usually when Religious Education classes begin. (It is important to have the children coming to class the same time as their peers.) If necessary, another pre-catechumenate may begin after the Rite of Acceptance. These children continue until the next year. It is important for the parents to be involved in the spiritual formation of the children.

Rite of Acceptance

This rite is celebrated in the presence of the church assembly with adults, and reflects passage into the Catechumenate.⁴⁶ Before celebrating the Rite of Acceptance, the child should show some conversion experience, according to the individual age and ability. Each child needs to be evaluated as to the readiness to continue into the Catechumenate. It may be advisable to interview the children before celebrating the Rite of Acceptance. Areas to be discussed are:

- Evidence of first faith – a sense that the beginnings of spiritual life the fundamentals of Christian teaching have taken root.
- Initial conversion and the desire to change one's life
- An entering into relationship with God in Christ

⁴³ RCIA, 215.

⁴⁴ RCIA, 253.

⁴⁵ An excerpt from the commentary on *Christian Initiation of Children Who Have Reached Catechetical Age*, by Rev. Don Neumann.

⁴⁶ RCIA, 260-276.

- Evidence of first stirrings of repentance
- A practice of calling on God in prayer
- A sense of the Church, and some experience of the company and Spirit of Christians
- Contact with a priest and/or some member of the community
- Instruction about the liturgical Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechuminate.⁴⁷

Interview questions:

- Who is God or Jesus to you?
- How do you talk to God? When?
- What do you like best about the Catholic Church? Why?

Period of the Catechuminate

This is a time to share Scripture, the tradition and beliefs of the Catholic faith. It is also a time for catechesis, Sunday dismissal/Word breaking sessions.⁴⁸ Scripture study should be appropriate to the children's ages. Sponsors for children can be family members or members of the community with close family ties, who fulfill the requirements for being a sponsor.⁴⁹

Teen sponsors, who also must fulfill the requirements of being a sponsor, are assigned to the teens. They participate in sessions, when invited, along with the Catechumens and Candidates. The Sponsor is asked to call and invite the Candidate to activities in the Church, whether social or spiritual, share faith experiences, hopes, fears, doubts, and things they don't understand.

Rite of Election

This rite takes place usually on the first Sunday of Lent with the adults. The Bishop is the Presider of this Rite.

Period of Enlightenment and Purification

This period takes place during Lent.⁵⁰ Other minor rituals during this time are the Penitential Rite and Scrutinies Anointings, Presentation of the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer.⁵¹ It is important to remember that the rites have been adapted for children, especially the Scrutinies, which have been worded to meet the needs of children. When children experience these rites separate from adults, the adaptations should be used.⁵²

Initiation⁵³

Initiation should take place at the Easter Vigil with reception of the Sacraments of Initiation--Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

Mystagogia--50 Days of Easter to Pentecost⁵⁴

Parents are encouraged to take an active part in the religious education of the children by nurturing and setting good examples of everyday living. Children register in the Religious Education program in their grade level for the following year.

Catechesis

A lectionary-based catechesis is preferred since it is biblically based and accommodated to the liturgical year. The fundamentals of Catholicism can be found to flow from the scriptures and liturgical context in which they are

⁴⁷ RCIA, 42.

⁴⁸ RCIA, 75.

⁴⁹ See above, page 11, for the requirements necessary for being a sponsor or godparent.

⁵⁰ RCIA, 256.

⁵¹ RCIA, 291-303, 157-162, 178-183.

⁵² See RCIA, 291, ff.

⁵³ RCIA, 303-305, 308.

⁵⁴ RCIA, 330.

proclaimed. For those who might feel a need for it, a more explicit listing of the basics of content can be found in the *National Catechetical Directory* which outlines the following the basics for catechesis.⁵⁵

“This is the synthesis of the teaching of the Church based on Scripture and Tradition. The Christian finds there what he is to believe (the symbol or Creed), to hope for (the Our Father), to do (the Ten Commandments) and the vital space in which all of this is to be accomplished (the Sacraments).” (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger)

From *BASIC TEACHINGS FOR CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION*:

- The mystery of the one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- True worship of God in a world which ignores God
- Knowledge of God and the witness of Christian love
- Jesus Christ, Son of God, the firstborn of all creation and Savior
- Creation, the Beginning of the history of salvation
- Jesus Christ, the center of all God’s saving works
- Jesus Christ, true man and true God in the unity of the divine Person
- Jesus Christ, savior and redeemer of the world
- The Holy Spirit in the Church and in the life of the Christian
- The Sacraments, actions of Christ in the Church (the universal sacrament)
- Religious instruction on the Sacraments
- The Eucharist, center of all sacramental life
- The Sacrament of Matrimony
- The new person in the Spirit
- Human and Christian freedom
- The sins of humanity
- The moral life of Christians
- The perfection of Christian love
- Specifics in the teaching of morality
- The Church, people of God and institution for salvation
- The Church as community
- The quest for unity
- Mary, Mother of God, Mother and model of the Church
- Final reunion with God⁵⁶

Monthly Parent Meetings

All aspects in the formation of the children should be with full participation of the parents or guardians. Monthly parent meetings are essential. They help inform the parents of the beliefs of the Church and the Rites their children will be experiencing. They are asked to be the spiritual educators of their children and to take an active part in their journey of faith. Parents or guardians attend class with their children during the explanation of the Mass, the Sacraments, and the tour of the church.

⁵⁵ See Appendix, page 31, for a listing of the Principal Elements of the Christian Message.

⁵⁶ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Basic Teachings for Catholic Religious Education*. Washington DC: USCC Publications, (1973).

General Guidelines for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults Adapted for Children and Youth

1. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults adapted for children of catechetical ages is the normative way for Children and youth to be initiated into the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Beaumont.
2. In the Diocese of Beaumont, the suggested time for completing the process of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults adapted for Children and Youth is one year or more.
3. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is a process that should be used only for the following:
 - Unbaptized children and youth (Third Grade through High School)
 - Children and youth baptized in other Christian Traditions
 - Baptized children and youth in the Catholic faith who have not participated in catechetical training nor celebrated the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.
4. Catechesis in the RCIA process should be lectionary-based to include both Scripture and Tradition, and provide a conversion experience that is both formational and educational.
5. Parents should participate in the formational and conversion process of their children by attending monthly parent meetings.
6. All the Stages or Periods and Rites of the RCIA should be experienced by the children and youth involved in the process.

Appendix

A. Sample Interview Form

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Place of Birth _____

Home Address _____ Phone _____

Place of Work _____ Phone _____

Father's Name _____ Father's Religion _____

Mother's Name _____ Mother's Religion _____

Have you ever been baptized? _____ In what Denomination? _____

Where? _____ When? _____
(Church) (City, State, Country)

Confirmed? _____ Where? _____ When? _____
(Church)

Eucharist? _____ Where? _____ When? _____
(Church)

Penance? _____ Where? _____ When? _____
(Church)

Marital Status: _____ Single (never married) _____ Married _____ Widowed
_____ Divorced _____ Remarried

If Married: _____ Where? _____ When? _____

Are you planning to be married? _____

Where? _____ When? _____

Spouse's/Fiance(e)'s Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Spouse's/Fiance(e)'s Religion _____

Is this your spouse's/Fiance(e)'s first Marriage? _____

Do you have any children? _____

If yes, please give names, ages, and note whether or not they have been baptized:

Over. Please.....

What has been your own religious education or church background?

What is the source of your interest in the Catholic Church?

Have you heard about the catechumenate (RCIA)? _____ How?

What are your expectations?

Are there any questions that you would like to have answered for you at this time?

For Office Use:

Sponsor's Name _____ **Phone** _____

Address _____

Additional Comments: _____ **Interviewer's Name** _____

Interview 1 – Date _____

Interview 2 – Date _____

Interview 3 – Date _____

B. Valid and Non-valid Baptisms

The following are some non-Catholic Churches that have valid baptisms:

- All Eastern non-Catholics (Orthodox) *
- Adventists
- African Methodist Episcopal
- Amish
- Anglican
- Assembly of God
- Baptists
- Christian and Missionary Alliance
- Church of the Brethren
- Church of God
- Congregational Church
- Disciples of Christ
- Episcopalians
- Evangelical United Brethren
- Evangelical Churches
- Liberal Catholic Church
- Lutherans
- Methodists
- Church of the Nazzerine
- Old Catholics
- Old Roman Catholics
- Polish National Church
- Presbyterian Church
- Reformed Churches
- United Church of Christ

*

“Nothing should be demanded of separated Eastern Christians (Orthodox) who come to Catholic unity under the influence of the Holy Spirit that what the simple profession of the Catholic faith requires.” The candidate is required to recite the Nicene Creed and then adds: “I believe and profess all that the holy catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed by God.”

When separated Eastern Christians who are already baptized are admitted into full communion with the Catholic Church, they are to retain their own rite or be received into the corresponding Catholic rite, i.e. Eastern Orthodox becomes Eastern Rite Catholic.¹

The following are some non-Catholic Churches without valid baptisms:

- Apostolic Church
- Bohemian Free Thinkers
- Christadelphians
- Christian Community (Rudolf Steiner)
- Christian Scientists
- Church of Divine Science
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Masons (no baptism at all)
- Mormons
- Church of the New Jerusalem
- Pentecostal churches
- Peoples Church of Chicago
- Quakers
- Salvation Army
- Unitarians

¹ *Province of Chicago Ecumenical Guidelines*, Chapter VI: The Sacraments and Orthodox Christians, (1986), p. 17.

Sample Sessions

The following pages (29-32) contain some suggestions on catechesis for each of the four periods of the RCIA, including sample sessions. This is only one format, and can be used in combination with some of the sources listed in the Resource Section (pages 50-54).

Possible Topics for the Precatechumenate Period Inquiry Sessions

1. Introduction to the RCIA....
“About the Journey...A Call to Conversion”
2. “So, tell me, who is God?”
3. God Becomes Human: Jesus
4. God Remains with Us: The Holy Spirit

The initial session should introduce people to the RCIA process and allow them to see it as a journey, the next three can be used to enable them to talk about their experience of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The following topics can then be discussed and reflected upon according to the desire of the individual or group. Not all of these topics need to be discussed during this period; letting the person(s) choose from these or suggest others topics will tailor the process to their needs. These topics will be covered again in more depth during the Period of the Catechumenate.

- The Blessed Trinity
- The Sacraments: Seven Signs of God's Love
- The Mass: “Gather the People, Tell the Story, Break the Bread...”
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation: A Sign of God's Love and Mercy
- The Nature of Sin: Original, Mortal, Venial, Social
- The Sacrament of Matrimony, Divorce and Annulment
- What is the Church?
- Statues and Stories: Mary and the Saints

Sample Inquiry Session

JESUS: GOD AND HUMAN

1. Opening Prayer

2. Background Teaching: God Becomes Human: Jesus

Jesus: who he is - human and divine
Jesus as - "Son of God"
- "Lord"

Jesus: what he did - savior
healer
reconciler
challenger



3. Exercise: Who Is Jesus Christ? (see next page)

4. Scripture: Matthew 16:13-17

5. Questions to Ponder and Discuss:

1. Which line or phrase strikes you as the most important? Why?
2. What is the reaction of the disciples to Jesus' question? How would you answer his question?
3. Do they really understand who Jesus is, even Peter?
4. Does knowing Jesus make any difference to your life?

6. Closing Prayer:

Leader: Let us pray in thanksgiving for God's gracious gift of Jesus, our Lord.
All: Wonderful the dignity you bestowed, O God, on human nature when you created it; more wonderful still its condition when you recreated it. Grant, we pray, that as Jesus Christ, your Son, stooped to share our human nature, so may we share the lot of his divine nature, We ask this through that same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit has shared one life and kingly power, one godhead from all eternity. Amen.

Exercise

Who Is Jesus Christ?

How important are the following statements about Jesus to you? Indicate the order of importance (1 = most important) and be ready to say why you numbered them in the order you did.

- _____ A. Jesus ate with sinners.
- _____ B. Jesus numbered women among his friends.
- _____ C. Jesus is the Messiah (the Christ).
- _____ D. Jesus is Lord.
- _____ E. Jesus is alive today and can be received in the Eucharist.
- _____ F. Jesus was put to death under Pontius Pilate.
- _____ G. Jesus often preached against phoniness.
- _____ H. Jesus saved us.
- _____ I. Jesus knew he was God's beloved Son.
- _____ J. Jesus is alive and present to us in the Gospels.

Catechesis during the Period of the Catechumenate

During the Catechumenate period there are different ways in which the sessions can take place. Below are two options for parishes to consider, depending upon circumstances and available resources. In both ways doctrine and sharing on scripture can occur, with the catechesis still being based on the Sunday Gospel.

One Session for Catechesis Held on Sunday Morning

This diagram illustrates the relationship between the Sunday catechetical session and the community's gathering for Mass. Note that as the Catholic faithful are fed at the Table of the Eucharist, the catechumens and candidates who are not yet fully initiated continue to be fed at the Table of the Word through an extended reflection on the Liturgy of the Word. The time frames for this session are based on the catechumens and candidates attending Mass with the community at 10:00 a.m., but can vary according to the Sunday Mass schedule of each parish.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| A. 9:00 a.m. | Opening Prayer and Doctrinal Presentation
Catechumens and candidates gather for the doctrinal presentation, which is based on the Gospel reading. Sponsors who are available are also welcome to attend. |
| B. 10:00 a.m. | Attendance at Mass
Catechumens, candidates and sponsors gather with the community for Sunday Mass. They celebrate the Liturgy of the Word with the parish community. |
| C. 10:30 a.m.
(approx.) | Dismissal
After the Catechumens and candidates are sent forth by the Dismissal Rite, the Mass continues with the Creed and General Intercessions and the fully initiated members of the community celebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Catechumens, candidates and their catechist extend the Liturgy of the Word through prayer, reflection, and discussion on the first two readings and the homily. |
| D. 11:00 a.m.
(approx.) | Break and Reflection on the Gospel
Sponsors who stay for the Mass join catechumens, candidates and catechists for refreshments and fellowship, and they reflect upon and discuss the Gospel reading for that Sunday. |
| E. 12:00 Noon | Closing Prayer |

Two Sessions Held Each Week Sunday Morning and One Evening During the Week

When two sessions are held the catechesis is split between reflection on the Gospel and teaching of doctrine. As in the prior example, the doctrine taught should still be Lectionary-based and flow out of the Gospel reading.

The Sunday Session would follow dismissal and be made up of **C**, **D**, and **E**, above.

The presentation of the doctrine during the weekly evening session can either be connected to the Gospel reading of the previous Sunday, or focus on the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday, and be the material covered in **A** above.

Sample Catechumenate Session

Feast of the Epiphany

Scripture: Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13
Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6
Matthew 2:1-12



1. Opening Prayer

2. Doctrine: The Meaning of the Epiphany: A "Showing Forth"

- The Universality of God's Revelation and Salvation
- Other Epiphanies in Scripture and their meaning:
 - Baptism of the Lord
 - Miracle at the Marriage Feast of Cana
- Vatican II: Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions
- The Meaning of Salvation: Personal and Social

1. What does the word "salvation" mean to you?
2. Describe an event in which you experienced salvation.

3. Reaction to the Readings and Homily:

- Write down any word, thought, or phrase that comes to mind as you recall the first two readings and the homily.

4. The Gospel - Questions to Ponder and Discuss:

1. Which line or phrase strikes you as the most important. Why?
2. What does this reading reveal about Jesus and his future mission?
3. In this Gospel story we see different reactions to the news that a king was born - by King Herod, the chief priests and the scribes, the astrologers (magi), and Mary. What can we learn from their different responses? With whom do you most identify? Why?

5. Closing Prayer

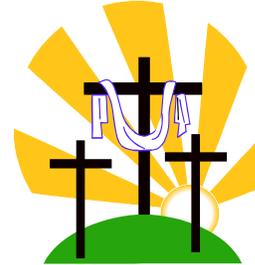
Scripture for Next Week Second Sunday of Ordinary Time (A)

Isaiah 49:3, 5-6
Psalm 40: 2, 4, 7-10
1 Corinthians 1:1-3
John 1:29-34

Sample Purification and Enlightenment Session

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13
Psalm 23:1-6
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41



1. Opening Prayer

2. The Gospel - Questions to Ponder and Discuss:

1. The blind man did not seek out Jesus, Jesus approached him, made the mud, placed it on his eyes and sent him to the waters of "one who has been sent." In a sense, the blind man helped in his own cure by obeying Jesus' instructions to go to the water and wash his eyes. (He could have rejected all and walked away.) What was the "mud" that was placed on your eyes, and what inspired you to accept Jesus' cure and approach the waters of Baptism or renew your baptism through your Profession of Faith?
2. The Pharisees knew what they saw - yet they tried to discredit Jesus and challenge the obvious - not unlike the spiritually blind of today's world! You are the blind man cured. How have each of you been challenged? What was your reaction to those challenges? What have you said or will you say to the "Pharisees" of today?

3. Reaction to the Second Scrutiny

- Write down any word, phrase, or thought that comes to mind as you recall your experience of the Scrutiny.

4. The Gospel - Questions to Ponder and Discuss:

1. In this gospel the man's understanding of Jesus grows, so that by the end of the story he is acting as a brave witness to Jesus, and finally puts his faith in Jesus and worships him as the Son of Man, who came from God. Looking back over your journey in this RCIA process, how has your perception of Jesus changed?
2. How has the light of Christ rescued you from darkness? What are the things you now see that you didn't see before? As you look forward to reception of the sacraments, what are the areas of blindness that you hope will be removed from your life?

5. Closing Prayer

Scripture for Next Sunday

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Ezekiel 37:12-14
Psalm 130:1-8
Romans 8:8-11
John 11:1-45

Sample Mystagogy Session

Opening Prayer:

Song: City of God or Come, Holy Ghost (or other appropriate song)

Ritual Action: (Turn off or dim lights.)

The leader strikes a match and says:

"Come Holy Spirit, bring us peace." (The group repeats the prayer.)

The leader lights one candle and says:

"Come, Holy Spirit, bring us wisdom." (Group repeats)

The leader lights each candle in succession in the same way, with the group repeating each invocation:

"Come, Holy Spirit, bring us understanding."

"Come, Holy Spirit, bring us good counsel."

"Come, Holy Spirit, fill us with strength."

"Come, Holy Spirit, bring us knowledge."

"Come, Holy Spirit, bring us true piety."

"Come, Holy Spirit, help us stand in awe of the Lord."

The Remembering: Recall for the participants the rite of confirmation.

Particular elements that you might wish to mention:

- The prayer over you, when the presider stretched out his hands and asked that the Holy Spirit might descent upon you.
- The words of the presider: "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit . . . Peace be with you."
- The holy chrism - did you smell the balsam fragrance?
- The feel of the anointing itself.
- How the oil absorbed by the skin and become a part of you.
- How the oil sticks to you.

Scripture Reading: John 20:19-22

Prayers of Petition or Thanksgiving: The leader should voice one or two prayers and then invite others to pray spontaneously.

Refreshments

Questions to Ponder and Discuss (Choose some from the following):

1. Did you have any strong feelings that you remembered about your confirmation?
2. How do you think your confirmation has helped/will help you live out your life as Catholic Christian?
3. Does it strike you as strange that, in this scripture passage, the disciples did not seem to recognize Jesus at first? Why do you suppose that was?
4. When the disciples finally recognized Jesus, what caused them to do so?
5. What did the Father send Jesus to do?
6. Did Jesus ever receive the Holy Spirit?
7. What did Jesus send the disciples to do? Does Jesus send us to do something? What?
8. Why do we need the Holy Spirit to carry out our mission? How might that Spirit help us?
9. What do you think might be some very ordinary, everyday ways in which you can be an apostle (one who is sent) of Jesus today?

Closing Prayer

Adapted from William R. Bruns, *Cenacle Sessions: A Modern Mystagogy*,
Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1991.

D. Principle Elements of the Christian Message for Catechesis

Throughout the different stages of the RCIA process all of the following doctrine should be covered. In preparing the Lectionary-based themes and doctrine for the three-year Cycle, most of these topics have been included under each year. Those that are not can be taught during special sessions. **The doctrine(s) listed on the following pages are only suggestions, for in reflecting on a Gospel passage other doctrines may occur to you.**

- A. The Mystery of the One God**
 - The mystery of the Trinity
 - True worship of God in the modern world
- B. Creation**
 - The beginning of the history of salvation
 - Knowledge of God and the witness of Christian love
- C. Jesus Christ**
 - Son of God, the firstborn of all creation, and savior
 - Jesus, center of all God's saving works
 - True God and true man in the unity of the Divine Person
 - Christ, Savior and Redeemer of the world
 - Christ, our life
- D. The Holy Spirit**
 - The Holy Spirit in the Church and in the life of the Christian
- E. The Church**
 - People of God
 - The Church as community
 - The quest for unity
 - The Church as institution for salvation
- F. The Sacraments**
 - Actions of Christ in the Church (the universal sacrament)
- G. The Life of Grace**
 - Sin and grace
 - Call to conversion
 - Fulfillment in and through Christ
- H. The Moral Life**
 - Human and Christian freedom
 - Guidance of the natural moral law
 - Conscience and personal responsibility
 - Guidance of the Church
 - Specifics in the teaching of morality
- I. Mary and the Saints**
 - Mary, Mother of God, mother and model of the Church
 - Other Saints
- J. Death, Judgement, Eternity**
 - Death
 - Judgement
 - Final union with God

Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory for the Catholics of the United States, (1978). Chapter Five – Principal Elements of the Christian Message for Catechesis.

E. Lectionary Based Doctrine Cycle A

Week of the Church Year	Gospel Reading	Theme(s)	Doctrine(s)	Catechism Reference
First Sunday of Advent	Matthew 24:37-44	Waiting, awareness and recognition of the Lord. Preparedness, openness to the person of Jesus.	Meaning of Advent and the Church Year	524, 1095, 1168-1171
Second Sunday of Advent	Matthew 3:1-12	Prepare; repentance and call to change our lives and ways. Doing/bearing fruit; being a messenger.	Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy	1886-1889, 1929-1948
Third Sunday of Advent	Matthew 11:2-11	Being a prophet, witnessing; sharing our faith as a follower of Jesus.	Prophets and Prophecy	64, 702, 904-907, 2581-2584
Fourth Sunday Of Advent	Matthew 1:18-24	The risk of faith; taking Jesus into our hearts enables him to be reborn again in the world.	Mary, Model Disciple; the Faith of Joseph	964, 972-973
Holy Family Sunday	Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23	God is active within family and directs us as family.	Church's Teaching on Family Life; Respect for all Human Life	1655-1658, 1929-1933
First Sunday in Lent	Matthew 4:1-11	Lent - journey into the dessert; temptation; call to choose, change.	Lent – Repentance, Conversion, Preparing for Baptism	538-540, 1168-1171, 1434-1438 2846-2849
Second Sunday in Lent	Matthew 17:1-9	Promise; we are called to let God transform us; Can God say of us "my beloved on whom my favor rests?"	God's Grace: Source of our Transfiguration	554-556, 1996-2005
Third Sunday in Lent	John 4:5-42	"Living Water" - conversion and witness.	Baptism: Source of Salvation	1127, 1213-16, 1234-1255, 1257-1261, 1271-1285
Fourth Sunday in Lent	John 9:1-41	Light/Darkness Blindness/Sight Fear/Witness	Baptism: Source of our Witness	785, 897-913, 1267-1270
Fifth Sunday in Lent	John 11:1-45	Life/Death; in dying to situation and self, God resurrects us.	Baptism: Loosening the Bonds of Sin and Death	977-979, 1263-1264, 2520
Passion/Palm Sunday	Matthew 26:14-27:66	Reflection on the Passion of Jesus according to Matthew.	The Paschal Mystery; Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum	571-573, 1168-1171 See #1 Below
Easter Sunday	John 20:1-9	Meaning of the Empty Tomb; eternal lives over death; the many experiences of resurrection in our lives.	The Resurrection	638-658, 988-1004
Second Sunday of Easter	John 20:19-31	Faith and Doubt; Forgiveness and Peace; despite doubt Jesus gives peace.	The Sacrament of Reconciliation	1420-1498, 1814-1816
Third Sunday of Easter	Luke 24:13-35	Jesus nourishes us through Word and his Body	The Sacrament of Eucharist	1322-1332

E. Lectionary Based Doctrine Cycle A

Week of the Church Year	Gospel Reading	Theme(s)	Doctrine(s)	Catechism Reference
Fourth Sunday of Easter	John 10:1-10	Jesus - Good Shepherd - the way as the sheepgate brings us unity, safety, life.	Leadership in the Church; Ordained Ministry	551-553, 888-896, 1536-1600
Fifth Sunday of Easter	John 14:1-12	Faith in God/Jesus will enable us to reach heaven.	Christology: Jesus as the Way, Truth, Life	74, 459, 519-521, 538-540, 1698, 2465-2474, 2614
Sixth Sunday of Easter	John 14:15-21	Love, sacrifice, bear fruit; we have been chosen by Jesus	Jesus' New Commandment of Love; Living the Moral Life	1749-1775, 1822-1829, 2069, 2196
Seventh Sunday of Easter	John 17:1-11	Eternal life begins in this life- in our relationship with God/Jesus/Holy Spirit	Heaven and Eternal Life	1023-1029
Pentecost Sunday	John 20:19-23	Beginning of the Church; The Holy Spirit removes fear and empowers the apostles and us.	Confirmation and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit	1285, 1321, 1830-1852
Trinity Sunday	John 3:16-18	Relationship between Father/Son/Spirit and us.	The Mystery of the Trinity	232-267
Feast of Corpus Christi	John 6:51-58	Jesus as living bread gives eternal life.	True Presence of Jesus in Eucharist	1333-1336, 1373-1381
2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time	John 1:29-34	We are sent by God to witness to Jesus.	Discipleship and Christian Witness	901-913, 2044-2046
3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 4:12-23	Change to prepare for the kingdom - leave all and follow Jesus. Jesus' call - our response.	The Kingdom of God; Discipleship; Holy Orders	541-550, 1536-1600, 2233
4th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 5:1-12	Living a life that is "blessed" in today's world.	The Beatitudes	1716-1728
5th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 5:13-16	Being salt and light in the world.	Our Christian Vocation: Single, Married, Ordained	373, 897-913, 1536-1666, 1878-1923
6th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 5:17-37	Living a moral life.	The Ten Commandments	2052-2557
7th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 5:38-48	Love and non-violence.	Church's Pastoral on Peace	2258-2267, 2302-2317 See #2 Below
8th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 6:24-34	Complete trust in God.	God's Providential Care	302-305

E. Lectionary Based Doctrine Cycle A

Week of the Church Year	Gospel Reading	Theme(s)	Doctrine(s)	Catechism Reference
9th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 7:21-27	Faith must lead to action.	Social Justice Teaching; Corporal Works of Mercy	1886-1889, 1905-1912, 1929-1948, 2443-2449
10th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 9:9-13	Though sinful we can still follow Jesus; if we follow - Jesus will help and heal us.	The Sacrament of Reconciliation	1422-1442, 1460, 1468-1470
11th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 9:36-10:8	Jesus appoints leaders to guide his church.	Holy Orders; Infallibility and Church Teaching	84-90, 551-553, 2233
12th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 10:26-33	Difficulty of witnessing to Jesus in our daily life due to fear and ridicule.	Christian Suffering and Martyrdom - the Cost of Discipleship	1506, 1521, 2473, 2474, 2506
13th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 10:37-42	We empty ourselves to be filled by Jesus - we die to receive eternal life.	Doctrine of the Cross	599-623
14th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 11:25-30	Complete trust in Jesus.	Jesus as Lord: Source of our Fulfillment	209, 429, 446-451, 455
15th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 13:1-23	Being open to God's word in our lives letting it form us into disciples.	Sacred Scripture: The Word of God – God Speaking to Us Today	79, 81, 101-141, 2653-2654
16th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 13:24-43	Is our life one that results in "wheat or weeds?"	God's Judgement	1020-1021, 1038-1041
17th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 13:44-52	Putting God first in our life - cost of discipleship.	The Kingdom/Reign of God	541-550
18th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 14:13-21	Jesus cares for all our needs.	The Eucharist: God Nourishes Us	1382-1401
19th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 14:22-33	Jesus is there for us even when we lack faith – when we "falter".	The Divinity of Jesus: Jesus as Son of God	441-445
20th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 15: 21-28	Persistence in faith.	Universality of Salvation	430, 559-560
21st Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 16:13-20	Jesus chooses weak Peter to be "rock" - the basis of his Church. Jesus chooses us too, to carry on His mission.	The Papacy	551-552
22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 16:21-27	What does it mean to take up one's cross and follow in Jesus' footsteps?	The Paschal Mystery	571-573
23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 18:15-20	Communal aspect of sin and social sin.	Sin: Venial, Serious, Mortal, and Social	386-389, 396-409, 1849-1876

E. Lectionary Based Doctrine Cycle A

Week of the Church Year	Gospel Reading	Theme(s)	Doctrine(s)	Catechism Reference
24th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 18:21-35	Communal aspect of forgiveness.	The Sacrament of Reconciliation	1443-1445, 1469, 2838-2845
25th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 20:1-16	God's way versus way of the world.	God's Justice and Mercy	1846-1848, 1987-2011
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 21:28-32	Holiness is our words and actions in sync.	Christian Discipleship: Continual Conversion	1427-1439
27th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 21:33-43	Bearing fruit in our lives.	The Judgement of God	1020, 1021, 1038-1041
28th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 22:1-14	The rights and responsibilities of Christianity.	Precepts of the Church	2041-2043
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 22:15-21	Living in the world but not being of the world.	The Church in the Modern World	781-810, 813-870, See #3 Below
30th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 22:34-40	Care for poor, lowly, immigrant, etc. love of neighbor.	Great Commandment: Church's Social Justice Teaching	1928-1948
31st Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 23:1-12	We teach others through our example - living as disciples of Jesus.	Moral Conscience and the Magisterium of the Church	871-896, 1776-1802, 2032-2040
32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 25:1-13	Being prepared for death throughout life.	Heaven, Hell, Purgatory	1023-1037
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Matthew 25:14-30	Using our gifts and talents for God.	Stewardship	2420-2449
Christ the King	Matthew 25:31-46	Jesus as King judges our lives according to our care for others.	Jesus as King: His Kingdom and the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy	446-451, 659-667, 2816-2821

E. Lectionary Based Doctrine Cycle A

Week of the Church Year	Gospel Reading	Theme(s)	Doctrine(s)	Catechism Reference
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FEASTS AND HOLY DAYS

Christmas	John 1:1-18	The birth of Jesus. God becomes human.	The Incarnation	422,423, 456-478, 504, 525,526, 606-607
Solemnity of Mary (January 1st)	Luke 2:16-21	Mary as God-bearer is model for us to also be "God-bearers".	Mary - Mother of God	488-495, 502-507, 963-969, 1172
Epiphany	Matthew 2:1-12	Journey; gift; seeking; openness to God's Word; letting God lead us.	Gifts of the Magi: Revelation of Jesus as Priest, Prophet, King	436-440, 528, 783-786
2nd Sunday after Christmas	John 1:1-18	We are called to be "light in the darkness".	The Incarnation	422,423, 456-478, 504, 525,526, 606-607
Baptism of the Lord	Matthew 3:13-17	Through baptism we become "beloved" sons and daughters of God and must live that out in our lives.	Our Baptism into the Life of the Trinity	535-537
Ash Wednesday	Matthew 6:1-6,16-18	Sin, repentance, conversion.	Lent - Metanoia, Passover	538-540, 571-572, 1168-1171 1434, 1438,
Holy Thursday	John 13:1-15	Eucharist calls us to go and serve others.	Institution of Eucharist	1337-1344
Good Friday	John 18:1-19,42	Jesus' suffering and death upon the cross.	Reflection on the Passion of our Lord	See #1 Below
Ascension Thursday	Matthew 28:16-20	Jesus gives responsibility for carrying on his mission to the apostles and to us.	Evangelization: Mission of the Church to Teach and Sanctify	425-429 737-741, 774-776, 888-893, 900-906 See #4 Below
Feast of the Assumption	Luke 1:39-56	Mary says "yes" to God. Model for us.	Resurrection of the Body	966, 988-991
Feast of All Saints	Matthew 5:1-12	All are called to live holy lives through Beatitudes.	Communion of Saints	946-962, 1173
Feast of Immaculate Conception	Luke 1:26-38	Mary - model disciple, one who says "yes" to God.	Original Sin and Free Will	490-494, 496-501

1. Raymond E. Brown, *A Crucified Christ in Holy Week: Essays on the Four Gospel Passion Narratives*, (1986).
2. United States Catholic Conference, *The Challenge of Peace. God's Promise and Our Response*, (1983).
3. Vatican Council II: *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium* (21 November 1964).
4. Church's Pastoral on Evangelization: Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (8 December 1975).

Lectionary Based Doctrine Cycle B

Week of the Church Year	Gospel Reading	Theme(s)	Doctrine(s)	Catechism Reference
First Sunday of Advent	Mark 13:33-37	Preparing ourselves for the coming of the Lord.	Meaning of Advent and the Church Year	524, 1095 1168-1171
Second Sunday of Advent	Mark 1:1-8	Preparing through repentance. How do we “clear a straight path” for the Lord? What is the “desert” of today?	Ongoing Conversion	1427-1439
Third Sunday of Advent	John 1:6-8, 19-28	Being a witness means preparing the way for others. We should let the light of Christ shine out.	The Role of a Prophet/Witness	64, 702, 904-907, 2044-2046, 2581-2584
Fourth Sunday of Advent	Luke 1:26-38	Trust in God. Acceptance. Mary experienced conversion. This changed her for life.	Discipleship: Mary, the Model Disciple	964, 972, 973
Holy Family Sunday	Luke 2:22-40	The family as the “Domestic Church” is the place where faith is passed on and lived in everyday life.	Church's Teaching on Family Life; Respect for all Human Life	1655-1658, 1929-1933
First Sunday in Lent	Mark 1:12-15	Living our covenant with God through reform and belief in the Good News.	Lent – Repentance, Conversion, Preparing for Baptism	538-554, 1168-1171, 1434-1438, 2846-2849
Second Sunday in Lent	Mark 9:2-10	When we “listen” to Jesus with openness, our lives will be transformed, transfigured.	Jesus as Fulfillment of the O.T. Law and Prophets	522-524, 577-586, 601
Third Sunday in Lent	John 2:13-25	Jesus calls us to put God first in our lives – to honor God and God's house.	The Covenant of Ten Commandments <u>or</u> Cycle A	2052-2257
Fourth Sunday in Lent	John 3:14-21	God wants all to be saved. We condemn our selves by rejecting Jesus – the Light. What are the areas of darkness in our lives?	God's Salvation and Judgement <u>or</u> Cycle A	430, 559-560, 1020, 1021, 1038-1041
Fifth Sunday in Lent	John 12:20-33	What does it mean to follow Jesus? - Serve? - Die? - Bear fruit?	Death/Resurrection; the Glory of the Cross <u>or</u> Cycle A	599-623, 988-1019
Passion/Palm Sunday	Mark 14:1-15:47	Reflection on the Passion of Jesus according to Mark.	Paschal Mystery; Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum	571-573, 1168-1171, See #1 Below
Easter Sunday	John 20:1-9	Meaning of the Empty Tomb; eternal life over death; the many experiences of resurrection in our lives.	The Resurrection	638-658, 988-1004
Second Sunday of Easter	John 20:19-31	Faith and Doubt; Forgiveness and Peace; despite doubt Jesus gives peace.	The Sacrament of Reconciliation	1420-1498, 1814-1816
Third Sunday of Easter	Luke 24:35-48	Jesus fulfills the OT and also all our hopes for everlasting life – if we only believe.	Resurrection of the Body	988-1019

Lectionary Based Doctrine Cycle B

Week of the Church Year	Gospel Reading	Theme(s)	Doctrine(s)	Catechism Reference
Fourth Sunday of Easter	John 10:11-18	Christ, the Good Shepherd, invites all people into unity.	Ecumenism	820-822, 838, 855, 1271
Fifth Sunday of Easter	John 15:1-8	We can only bear fruit when united with Jesus and the members of his body.	Christ as the Vine = The Church as the Mystical Body of Christ	770-795, 805, 813-822
Sixth Sunday of Easter	John 15:9-17	Responding to God's love means love and service to others.	Jesus' New Commandment of Love	1822-1829, 1965-1974, 2069, 2196
Seventh Sunday of Easter	John 17:11-19	How are we meant to live in the world but not be of the world?	Relationship btw. the Church and World re: Morality/Social Justice	1749-1775, 1886-1889, 1905-1912, 1929-1948
Pentecost Sunday	John 20:19-23	Beginning of the Church; The Holy Spirit removes fear and empowers the apostles and us.	Confirmation and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit	1285-1321, 1830-1832
Trinity Sunday	Matthew 28:16-20	We are baptized into a relationship with the Father/Son/Spirit. What does that mean for us?	The Mystery of the Trinity	232-267
Feast of Corpus Christi	Mark 14:12-16, 22-26	Jesus as the paschal lamb frees us from sin and death.	True Presence of Jesus in Eucharist	1333-1336, 1373-1381
2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time	John 1:35-42	How is Jesus calling each of us to follow him?	Jesus – The Messiah	436-440, 528-29, 559-60, 695, 712-716
3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 1:14-20	How are we meant to reform our lives to prepare for God's reign and make it present to others?	The Reign of God; Vocations: Single/Married/Clergy	891-936
4th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 1:21-28	What must we open up in our lives to be healed by Jesus? Do we have the faith that Jesus can heal us?	Jesus, as Son of God, is Teacher, Healer, Savior	429, 443-445, 454, 724
5th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 1:29-39	How are we meant to bring healing to the lives of others?	Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick	1499-1532
6th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 1:40-45	We need to continue to trust Jesus throughout our lives each time we face difficulty. Trust is not a once-and-for-all experience.	Ongoing Faith Development	142-184, 2087-2089
7th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 2:1-12	Our healing and forgiveness in and through community.	The Communal Dimension of Sin and Reconciliation	1443-1445, 1469, 2838-2845
8th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 2:18-22	What does it mean to be people of the new covenant? How are we meant to live?	Jesus and the New Covenant	1749-1775

Lectionary Based Doctrine Cycle B

Week of the Church Year	Gospel Reading	Theme(s)	Doctrine(s)	Catechism Reference
9th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 2:23-3:6	What it means to live the "spirit" of the law rather than the "letter" of the law.	The Ten Commandments	2052-2257
10th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 3:20-35	Choosing God = life as a member of God's family. Choosing Satan = death.	The Mystery of Good and Evil in the World	309-314, 385-421, 2850-2854
11th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 4:26-34	Our trust and hope in God will grow with God's help and grace.	The Virtue of Christian Hope	1817-1821
12th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 4:35-41	Openness to and seeing God in all of life's ups and downs – in the "storms" of our lives.	Jesus: God-With-Us in the Midst of Suffering	272-274, 571-573
13th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 5:21-43	The need for faith in order for God to act in our life.	The Miracles of Jesus	547-550
14th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 6:1-6	How are we meant to witness to Jesus despite criticism, rejection?	Divinity and Humanity of Jesus	441-445, 464-483
15th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 6:7-13	Of what must you divest yourself in order to be able to go forth and "preach" the Good News of Jesus?	Our Christian Vocation: Lay Ministry in the Church	897-913
16th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 6:30-34	Service to the community is the basis of priesthood – ordained and baptized.	Sacrament of Holy Orders	1533-1600
17th Sunday in Ordinary Time	John 6:1-15	We receive Eucharist and then go out and "feed" the needs of others, being Eucharist for them.	The Eucharist as Meal: God Nourishes Us	1382-1401
18th Sunday in Ordinary	John 6:24-35	What truly nourishes us? What is "false" bread or "real" bread?	Idolatry and "false gods"	2112-2140
19th Sunday in Ordinary Time	John 6:41-51	How is God drawing you to Jesus? How have you "heard the Father?"	The Eucharist – as Sacrifice	1322-1334, 1356-1381
20th Sunday in Ordinary Time	John 6:51-58	Eternal life is now - How are we experiencing eternal life in our daily lives.	Eternal Life	1023-1029
21st Sunday in Ordinary Time	John 6:60-69	The "mystery" of faith vs. The "facts" of science and society.	Church Teaching and Individual Conscience	871-896, 1776-1802, 2032-2040
22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23	Relationships between intention and action in our lives.	Church Laws and Religious Practices	2030-2051
23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 7:31-37	What are the impediments of our lives that prevent us from hearing the Word of God?	Jesus as Healer: Physical, Spiritual, Emotional	543-550, 1441, 1442, 1503-1505

Lectionary Based Doctrine Cycle B

Week of the Church Year	Gospel Reading	Theme(s)	Doctrine(s)	Catechism Reference
24th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 8:27-35	"Cross" What is Jesus calling you to carry? What is Jesus calling you to die to, in order to live?	The Paschal Mystery	571-573
25th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 9:30-37	Who are the "little children" of today that we must welcome?	Discipleship as Service	897-913
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 9:38-43, 47-48	Letting go of those things that bring death and not life - What are they?	The Afterlife: Heaven, Hell, Purgatory	1023-1037
27th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 10:2-16	God's Ways vs. The World's Way - The sacredness of commitment.	Sacrament of Marriage; Divorce and Annulment	1601-1666
28th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 10:17-30	Putting The Ten Commandments into practice in our lives.	The Ten Commandments	2052-2557
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 10:35-45	Leadership through service, not power or control.	Jesus - The Suffering Servant of God	571-573, 606-623
30th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 10:46-52	Faith, Trust, and Persistence in our faith relationship with Jesus.	Forms of Prayer	2558-2567, 2623-2865
31st Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 12:28-34	Balancing Love of God/others/self.	New Covenant of Love	1965-1983
32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 12:38-44	Using our gifts of Time, Talent, and Treasure for others.	Tithing and Stewardship	2420-2449
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Mark 13:24-32	Being prepared for death and judgement every day of life.	Eschatology - The End Times, Judgement	668-682, 1038-1060, 2816-2821
Christ the King	John 18:33-37	Entering the Kingdom requires hearing and living according to the Truth of Jesus.	Jesus as King of Heaven and Earth	446-451, 659-667

Lectionary Based Doctrine Cycle B

Week of the Church Year	Gospel Reading	Theme(s)	Doctrine(s)	Catechism Reference
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FEASTS AND HOLY DAYS

Christmas	John 1:1-18	Word-Made-Flesh. God became human to bring the light of grace into the darkness of sin.	The Incarnation	422, 423 456-478, 504, 525, 526, 606-607
Solemnity of Mary (January 1st)	Luke 2:16-21	Mary as God-bearer is model for us to also be "God-bearers".	Mary - Mother of God	448-495, 502-507, 963-969, 1172
Epiphany	Matthew 2:1-12	Journey; seeking; openness to God's Word; letting God lead us.	Gifts of Magi reveal Jesus as Priest, Prophet, King	436-440, 528, 783-786
2nd Sunday after Christmas	John 1:1-18	Word-Made-Flesh. God became human to bring the light of grace into the darkness of sin. We are called to be "light in the darkness".	The Incarnation	422, 423, 456-478, 504, 525, 526, 606-607
Baptism of the Lord	Mark 1:7-11	What does it mean to be baptized by the Holy Spirit? To become "beloved" sons or daughters of God?	The Sacrament of Baptism	1212-1284
Ash Wednesday	Matthew 6:1-6, 6-18	Sin, repentance, conversion.	Lent - Metanoia, Passover	538-540, 571-572, 1168-1171, 1434, 1438
Holy Thursday	John 13:1-15	Eucharist calls us to go and serve others.	Institution of Eucharist	1337-1344
Good Friday	John 18:1-19,42	Jesus' suffering and death upon the cross.	Reflection on the Passion of our Lord	See #1 Below
Ascension Thursday	Mark 16:15-20	Our role is to continue Jesus' mission by "preaching" good news by how we live.	With the Holy Spirit the Church Continues the Mission of Jesus	737-741, 774-776, 888-893, 900-906
Feast of the Assumption	Luke 1:39-56	Mary says "yes" to God. Model for us.	Resurrection of the Body	966, 988-991
Feast of All Saints	Mark 5:1-12	All are called to live holy lives through Beatitudes.	Communion of Saints	946-962, 1173
Feast of Immaculate Conception	Luke 1:26-38	Mary - model disciple, one who says "yes" to God.	Original Sin and Free Will	490-494, 496-501

1. Raymond E. Brown, *A Crucified Christ in Holy Week: Essays on the Four Gospel Passion Narratives* (1986).

Lectionary Based Doctrine Cycle C

Week of the Church Year	Gospel Reading	Theme(s)	Doctrine(s)	Catechism Reference
First Sunday of Advent	Luke 21:25-28, 34-36	God speaks to us through the "signs" of our lives, calling us to prepare for Jesus.	Meaning of Advent and the Church Year	524, 1095 1168-1171
Second Sunday of Advent	Luke 3:1-6	Preparation; Promise - if we open our hearts to change the mountains, valleys, pathways will be made smooth.	Conversion	1427-1439
Third Sunday of Advent	Luke 3:10-18	Outreach, ministry to others. Everyone must do this. Action = Wheat	Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy	1886-1889, 1929-1948, 2443-2449
Fourth Sunday of Advent	Luke 1:39-45	God breaking in upon the world depends upon us being "Christ-bearers" as Mary was.	Mary, Mother of God	488-489, 495, 502-507, 963-969
Holy Family Sunday	Luke 2:41-52	The family as the "Domestic Church" is the place where faith is passed on and lived in everyday life.	Church's Teaching on Family Life; Respect for all Human Life	1655-1658, 1929-1933
First Sunday in Lent	Luke 4: 1-13	Temptation - physical, psychological, spiritual; conversion; God's word as power over evil.	Lent – Repentance, Conversion, Preparing for Baptism	538-554, 1434-1438, 1168-1171, 2846-2849
Second Sunday in Lent	Luke 9: 28-36	Our transformation requires openness to let God speak to us. We must let the glory of God shine through us.	The Role of Prayer in our "Transfiguration"	554-556, 2558-2565, 2607-2615, 2623-2649
Third Sunday in Lent	Luke 13:1-9	Bearing fruit; Second chance; God's mercy; Jesus = vinedresser, we = vines.	Jesus: Source of God's Mercy <u>or</u> Cycle A	1846-1848, 1987-2011
Fourth Sunday in Lent	Luke 15:1-3, 11-32	Gradual realization of need for change. We must acknowledge need for and accept forgiveness. God - non-judgmental love.	Sacrament of Reconciliation <u>or</u> Cycle A	1420-1498
Fifth Sunday in Lent	John 8:1-11	What do we do with redemption? Look into our own heart; Turn away from sin.	Redemption; Jesus as Redeemer <u>or</u> Cycle A	571, 606-618
Passion/Palm Sunday	Luke 22:14-23:56	Reflection on the Passion of Jesus according to Luke.	Paschal Mystery; Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum	571-573, 1168-1171, See #1 Below
Easter Sunday	John 20:1-9	Meaning of the Empty Tomb; eternal lives over death; the many experiences of resurrection in our lives.	The Resurrection	638-658, 988-1004
Second Sunday of Easter	John 20:19-31	Faith and Doubt; Forgiveness and Peace; despite doubt Jesus gives peace.	Meaning of Faith	142-184
Third Sunday of Easter	Luke 21:1-19	As we are fed we recognize Jesus, and are meant to become Eucharist for others - "feed lambs and sheep."	The Eucharist: Sacrament of Unity and Forgiveness	1322-1419

Lectionary Based Doctrine Cycle C

Week of the Church Year	Gospel Reading	Theme(s)	Doctrine(s)	Catechism Reference
Fourth Sunday of Easter	John 10:27-30	Hearing and following Jesus gives us the power to experience eternal life.	Jesus - Source of Eternal Life	988-1029
Fifth Sunday of Easter	John 13:31-33, 34-35	Our "glorification" will come through death to self and service based on love for others.	New Commandment of Love	1749-1775
Sixth Sunday of Easter	John 14:23-29	Our relationship with God the Father/Son/Spirit is the basis of peace in the midst of living in a troubled world.	Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope, Love	1814-1829
Seventh Sunday of Easter	John 17:20-26	Unity with God and unity with one another is based in love. Jesus tells us our relationships with the Father can be as close as his is.	Ecumenism	820-822, 838, 855, 1271
Pentecost Sunday	John 20:19-23	Beginning of the Church; The Holy Spirit removes fear and empowers the apostles and us.	Confirmation and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit	1285, 1321, 1830-1852
Trinity Sunday	John 16:12-15	Relationship between Father/Son/Spirit is the basis of our relationship with God and others.	The Role of the Trinity in our Life, Life of the Church	737-741, 758-769
Feast of Corpus Christi	Luke 9:11-17	Jesus feeds us caring for all our needs - through the Eucharist, but also through others. Do we recognize this?	True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist	1333-1336, 1373-1381
2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time	John 2:1-12	Jesus takes the ordinariness of life and our lives and transforms them into eternal life.	Signs and Symbols of the Sacraments	Section 2 under each Sacrament: 1210-1690
3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21	If we are open to the Word of God, we will be challenged to "fulfill" the scripture just as Jesus did.	Social Justice Teaching of the Church	1886-1889, 1905-1912, 1928-1948
4th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 4:21-30	If we follow Jesus we are to be "prophets" to the people we meet. How do we do this? Are we willing to suffer rejection and the cross as Jesus did?	The Role of the Prophet	64, 702, 904-907, 2581-2584
5th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 5:1-11	In every state of life, as baptized Christians we respond to Jesus' call to not be afraid and to go forth and help others to hear his messages.	Our Christian Vocation: Single, Married, Ordained	373, 897-913, 1563-1666, 1878, 1923
6th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 6:17,20-26	Are we poor, hungry, do we weep or are we ostracized because of Jesus? Are we rich, full, laugh and don't need Jesus?	The Beatitudes	1716-1728
7th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 6:27-38	Jesus challenges us to live a life contrary to what the world says. Which of these challenges do you most need to accept?	The Saints - Models of Those Who Lived The Beatitudes	946-962, 1173, 1716-1728
8th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 6:39-45	Our words and actions must all witness to our belief and following of Jesus.	The Mystery of Good and Evil	309-314, 385-421, 2850-2854

Lectionary Based Doctrine Cycle C

Week of the Church Year	Gospel Reading	Theme(s)	Doctrine(s)	Catechism Reference
9th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 7: 1-10	Openness to the power of Jesus heals and gives life.	Faith/ Miracles	540-550
10th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 7:11-17	Life is a series of experiences of the Paschal Mystery in which God continuously resurrects us from death.	Death/ Resurrection	988-1029
11th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 7:36-8:3	When we recognize our sinfulness, Jesus grants us forgiveness and peace.	Sin, Forgiveness and The Sacrament of Reconciliation	386-389, 1420-1449, 1846-1876
12th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 9:18-24	Who do you say Jesus is? If we believe him to be God, are we willing to go to the cross? What is my "cross" that I must take up?	Jesus as Messiah and Son of Man; The Doctrine of the Cross	599-623
13th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 9:51-62	Our priority in life must be following Jesus.	Living the Christian Life	897-913
14th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 10:1-12, 17-20	Jesus sends us to spread his message of peace and the Good News of the Kingdom.	Evangelization	425-429, 737-741, 774-776, 888-893, 900-906
15th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 10:25-37	Love of God requires love of neighbor - all people regardless of race, color, creed, age, sex, etc. The eradication of prejudice.	Respect for Human Life	1877-1948
16th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 10:38-42	Prayer and action both require being open to God's word and hospitable to our neighbors - where we meet God.	Prayer and Contemporary Spirituality	2558-2567, 2623-2865
17th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 11:1-13	Perseverance in prayer requires faith that God will care for all our needs out of love. How much faith do we have when we pray?	The Lord's Prayer	2759-2865
18th Sunday in Ordinary	Luke 12:13-21	God gifts us with time, talent, treasure to use for our benefit and the benefit of others. What are our priorities in life?	Stewardship	2420-2449
19th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 12:32-48	We should live as if each day is our last and we are facing judgement. What is your "treasure?"	Eschatology: The End Times and Judgement	668-682, 1038-1060, 2816-2821
20th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 12:49-53	Living as a follower of Jesus often calls us to go against what is socially acceptable. What decisions must you make to do this?	Saints and Martyrdom	946-962, 1173, 1506, 1521
21st Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 13:22-30	What must we do to gain salvation? Or is Salvation a gift?	Salvation	430, 559-560
22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 14:1,7-14	What is the basis of our actions? Power? Prestige? Self-Interest? Jesus says it should be charity freely given.	Heaven, Hell, Purgatory	1023-1037

Lectionary Based Doctrine Cycle C

Week of the Church Year	Gospel Reading	Theme(s)	Doctrine(s)	Catechism Reference
23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 14:25-33	Following Jesus requires living a radically different life, but a life based on his teaching not what we desire to possess.	The Cost of Discipleship	1506, 1521, 2473, 2474, 2506
24th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 15:1-32	God searches us out when we are lost or dead, and brings us back to life. Are we willing to see and accept this?	The Sacrament of Reconciliation	1420-1498
25th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 16:1-13	What is our priority? Who is our master? Where do we put our energies? Is it the Kingdom of God or this world?	Social Justice Teaching of the Church	1886-1889, 1905-1912, 1929-1948
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 16:19-31	As members of the Body of Christ we are required to respond to the needs of our poorer brothers and sisters.	Pastoral on the Economy	See #3 Below
27th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 17:5-10	Faith - gift from God that must be used, nourished, relied upon in times of trouble and doubts and acted upon.	Faith	142-184
28th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 17:11-19	Jesus had the power to heal us spiritually and physically. In what areas are we in need of healing?	Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick	1499-1523
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 18:1-8	God knows what we need before we pray. Persistence in prayer is our response to a loving, caring God.	Forms of Christian Prayer	2558-2567, 2623-2865
30th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 18:9-14	True righteousness versus false righteousness. True humility versus false humility before God.	God's Mercy and Judgement	1020-1021, 1038-1041
31st Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 19:1-10	As sinners we all need to be open to Jesus' invitation to change. What do you need to change in your life to make room for Jesus.	Sin: Venial, Serious, Mortal and Social	386-389, 396-409, 1849-1876
32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 20:27-38	Eternal life begins in this life - in our relationship with God the Father/ Son/ Spirit that will continue after death.	The Resurrection	638-658, 988-1004
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke 21:5-19	Jesus challenges us to be prepared. Live life as a follower of Jesus with patient endurance despite difficulty.	Jesus' Second Coming	673-677
Christ the King	Luke 23:35-43	Jesus is a king who reigned from the cross. To be members of his kingdom we must be willing to accept the same.	Jesus as Messiah and King	446-451, 659-667

Lectionary Based Doctrine Cycle C

Week of the Church Year	Gospel Reading	Theme(s)	Doctrine(s)	Catechism Reference
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FEASTS AND HOLY DAYS

Christmas	John 1:1-18	The birth of Jesus. God becomes human.	The Incarnation	422, 423, 456-478, 504, 525, 526, 606-607
Solemnity of Mary (January 1st)	Luke 2:16-21	Mary as God-bearer is model for us to also be "God-bearers".	Mary - Mother of God	488-495, 502-507, 963-969, 1172
Epiphany	Matthew 2:1-12	Journey; seeking; openness to God's Word; letting God lead us.	Gifts of Magi reveal Jesus as Priest, Prophet, King	436-440, 528, 783-786
2nd Sunday after Christmas	John 1:1-18	We are called to be "light in the darkness".	Jesus the Light of the World	422, 423, 456-478, 504, 525, 526, 606-607
Baptism of the Lord	Luke 3:15-16, 21-22	The "Rights and Responsibilities" connected with Baptism. What does it mean to be called "my beloved" by God?	The Sacrament of Baptism	535-537
Ash Wednesday	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18	Sin, repentance, conversion.	Lent - Metanoia, Passover	538-540, 571-572, 1168-1171, 1434, 1438
Holy Thursday	John 13:1-15	Eucharist calls us to go and serve others.	Passover and Institution of Eucharist	1337-1344
Good Friday	John 18:1-19,42	Jesus' suffering and death upon the cross.	Reflection on the Passion of our Lord	See #1 Below
Ascension Thursday	Luke 24:46-53	We are to witness to what we have received - the Good News of Jesus-Salvation/Forgiveness	Evangelization: Our Role as Witnesses	425-429 See #2 Below
Feast of the Assumption	Luke 1:39-56	Mary says "yes" to God. Model for us.	Resurrection of the Body	966, 988-991
Feast of All Saints	Matthew 5:1-12	All are called to live holy lives through Beatitudes.	Communion of Saints	946-962, 1173
Feast of Immaculate Conception	Luke 1:26-38	Mary - model disciple, one who says "yes" to God.	Original Sin and Free Will	490-494, 496-501

1. Raymond E. Brown, *A Crucified Christ in Holy Week: Essays on the Four Gospel Passion Narratives*, (1986).
2. Church's Pastoral on Evangelization: Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (8 December 1975).
3. United States Catholic Conference, *Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching and the U. S. Economy*, (1987).

F. Resources for the Christian Initiation of Adults

Essential Texts

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The U.S. edition (1988) is available from many publishers, including the United States Catholic Conference, Liturgy Training Publications, The Catholic Book Publishing Company and The Liturgical Press. It is available in study and sanctuary editions, the latter for use during the actual celebrations of the rites.

Rito de la Iniciacion Cristiana de Adultos Edicion de Estudio, The U.S. edition (1991) is copublished by The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN; Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago; United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, Washington, D.C. It is also available in a hard cover version of the rites for liturgical use.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Washington, DC: USCC and many other publishers, 1994.

New American Bible.

Primary Resources

The Code of Canon Law in English Translation. William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1983.

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