

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

Lesson C1: The RCIA Process and Rites

OPENING SCRIPTURE

JOHN 1:35-42

The RCIA Process and Rites

■ What is a Rite of Passage?

- A rite of passage is a ceremony or ritual of the passage which occurs when an individual leaves one group to enter another. It involves a significant change of status in society.

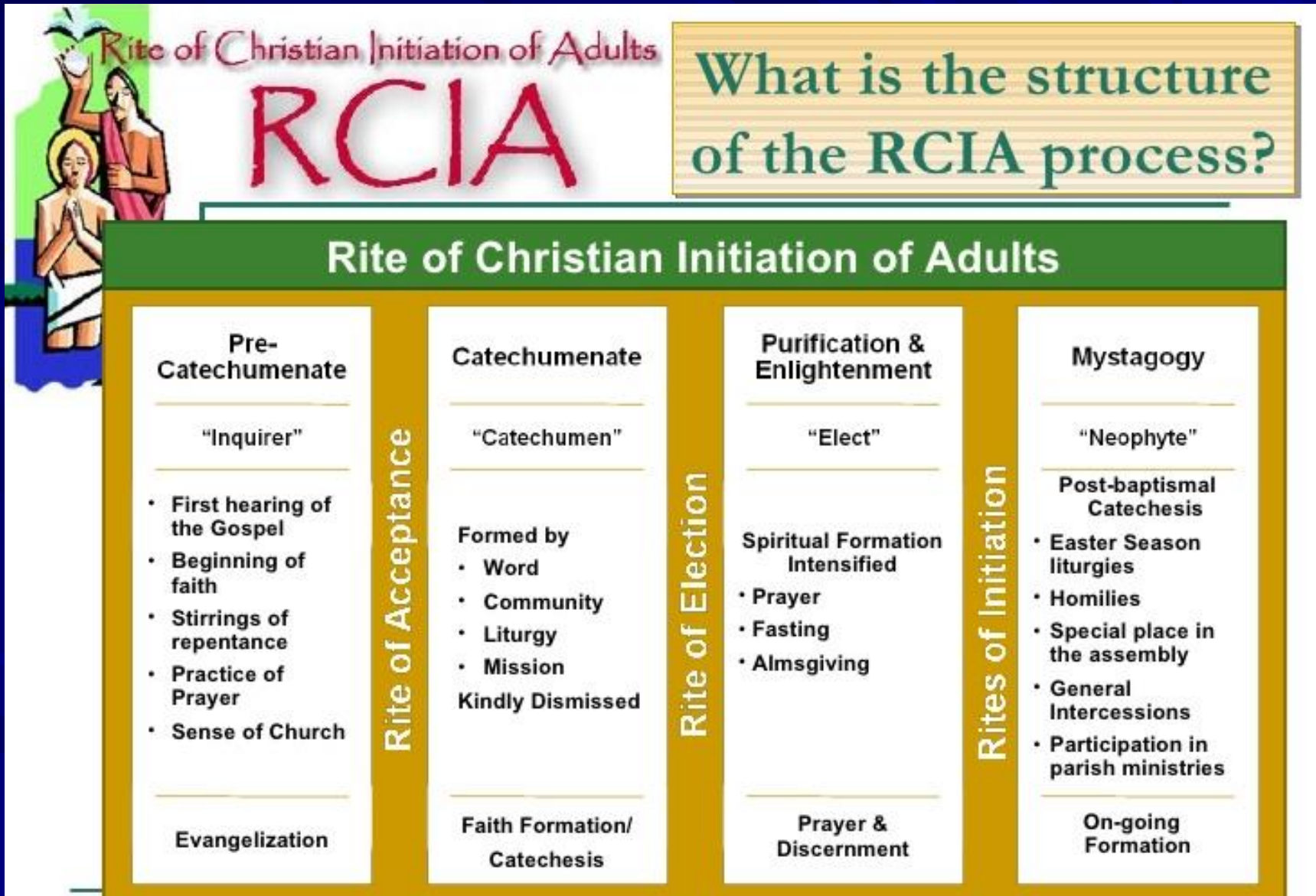
■ What are some personal, social or cultural rites and rituals?

- Birthdays, Weddings, Holiday Traditions

■ The RCIA process is similar to cultural and personal rites of passage.

■ It is your personal “rite of passage” of entering into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Periods and Rites



Period of Pre-Catechumenate AKA Inquiry

- **People are known as “Inquirers” during this period.**
- **This is when anyone can “test the waters” and ask questions about the Catholic faith.**
- **You do not make any commitments or promises.**
- **This period can last as long as you desire – a few months up to a few years.**

Period of Catechumenate

- An unbaptized person is known as a Catechumen, meaning “a person receiving instruction.”
- This person is accepted into the *Order of Catechumens* at the *Rite of Acceptance*.
- This Rite generally happens at Sunday Mass on the first Sunday of Advent.
- During this period, Catechumens are dismissed from Mass after the Liturgy of the Word and before the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Period of Catechumenate

- A validly baptized person is known as a “Candidate” since they are already a Christian by virtue of their baptism.
- This person is “welcomed to join the Catholic Church” at the *Rite of Welcome*, which occurs at the same Mass as the *Rite of Acceptance*.
- The two Rites are combined together at the same Mass and are formally known as the “*Rite of Acceptance and Welcome*.”

Period of Catechumenate

- During this period you will continue to study and discuss the Church's main beliefs.
- You will also have a sponsor join you on your journey.
- Sponsors are practicing Catholics who have received all the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation).

Period of Catechumenate

- This period ends at the *Rite of Sending* just before the beginning of Lent.
- You will be “sent” to the Cathedral for the “*Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion*” by the bishop at the beginning of Lent.
- Catechumens are now known as the “Elect” indicating they have been chosen by God and the Church.

Period of Purification & Enlightenment

- This period occurs in the weeks before Easter and includes these minor rites for the Elect (unbaptized):
 - The Scrutinies
 - Presentation of the Creed
 - Presentation of the Lord's Prayer
- This time is more prayerful than instructional.
- It is a time of deeper spiritual preparation for the sacraments.

Period of Purification & Enlightenment

- **Before Holy Saturday, Candidates will go to the sacrament of Penance and Catechumens receive the Rite of Anointing of Catechumens.**
- **This period concludes with your reception into the Catholic Church on Holy Saturday (the day before Easter Sunday) through the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.**

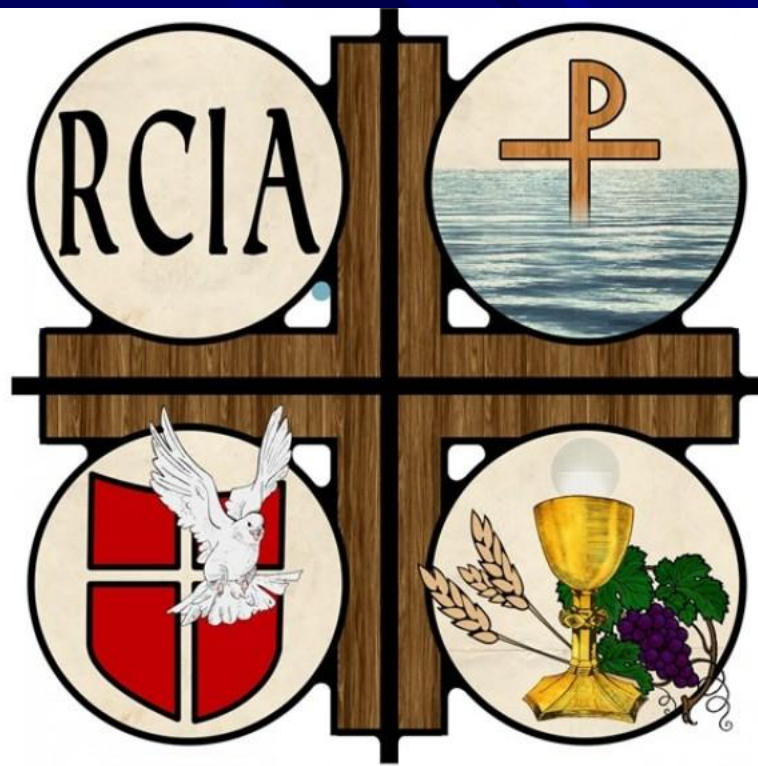
Mystagogy

- From the Greek language and means “to lead through the mysteries.”
- This is a period of accompaniment for new Catholics as they discover what it means to fully participate in the sacramental mysteries of the Church.
- The newly baptized are called “neophytes,” from the Greek words meaning “new plant,” because the faith has been newly planted in them.

Mystagogy

- Even though their catechetical preparation has been completed, they still have much to learn about what it means to live as Catholic Christians.
- This final period occurs after your reception in the Catholic Church on Holy Saturday and lasts for several weeks.
- It's a time to reflect on the mysteries of the sacraments and to living out your new faith in practical ways.





**Rite of Christian Initiation
for Adults**

**Lesson C2: The Sacraments
An Introduction**

OPENING SCRIPTURE

MATTHEW 28:16-20

What is a Sacrament?



- A sacrament is an outward and visible sign, instituted by Christ and entrusted to his Church, to confer God's inward and invisible grace.
- In other words, a sacrament is a sign of the real, free and undeserved help God gives us to respond to his invitation to be his children – like forgiving our sins, or marking us as his own.

What is a Sacrament?



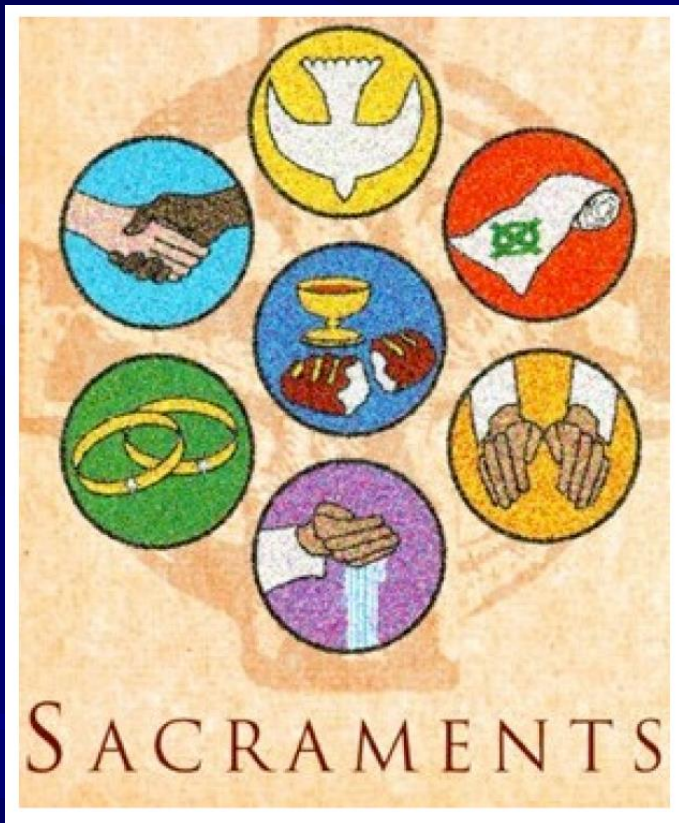
What is a Sacrament?



What is a Sacrament?

- The visible reality we see in the Sacraments is their outward expression, the form they take, and the way in which they are administered and received.
- The invisible reality we cannot “see” is God’s grace, his gracious initiative in redeeming us through the death and Resurrection of his Son.
- His initiative is called grace because it is the free and loving gift by which he offers people a share in his life, and shows us his favor and will for our salvation.
- Our response to the grace of God’s initiative is itself a grace or gift from God by which we can imitate Christ in our daily lives.

Why are the Sacraments important?



- The sacraments sanctify us, to build up the Body of Christ and to give worship to God.
- The sacraments heal us from sin and nourish or restore the life of grace in us.
- The sacraments make the power of the Paschal mystery of Jesus present to us for the sake of salvation.
- By these channels of grace, God makes us his adopted children and increases his life of grace within us.
- The Sacraments touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life: they give birth and increase, healing and mission to the Christian's life of Faith.
- There is thus a certain resemblance between the stages of natural life and the stages of the spiritual life.

Parallel Between the Sacraments and Stages of Natural Growth

Sacraments

- Baptism →
- Eucharist →
- Confirmation →
- Penance & Anointing of the Sick →
- Matrimony & Holy Orders →

Natural / Physical Growth

- Birth
- Physical Nourishment
- Growth & Maturity
- Spiritual, Emotional & Physical Healing
- Community realities of family life and leadership

The Seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church

- Baptism
- Holy Eucharist
- Confirmation
- Penance (Confession)
- Anointing of the Sick
- Holy Matrimony
- Holy Orders

The Sacraments Can Be Grouped Into Three Categories

■ Sacraments of Initiation

- Baptism
- Holy Eucharist
- Confirmation

■ Sacraments of Healing

- Penance (Confession)
- Anointing of the Sick

■ Sacraments of Service

- Holy Matrimony
- Holy Orders

How Do the Sacraments “Work?”

- The Sacraments are not superstition, good luck charms or magic.
- We must be properly disposed to receive the grace offered in the Sacraments.
- When proper form and matter are used, the grace is always present and effective in each Sacrament.
- However, we must cooperate freely with that effect so the grace takes root in our heart.
- The effects of any sacrament are not dependent upon the holiness of the person performing it.

Why the Sacraments are Important

- **It is critically important that we remember the sacraments are not traditions.**
- **They are not little rituals we play out like the make-believe games of childhood.**
- **They have the power to bring heaven to earth, rip the veil between all things seen and unseen, and allow humanity and eternity to commingle in mysterious, yet palpable ways.**

Why the Sacraments are Important

- Through the sacraments, heaven comes, not just to visit, but to live with us and in us.
- The sacraments are so much more than a ceremony to prepare for; they are God's way of reaching down to us and offering us a lifelong gift—a gift of grace that gives us a glimpse of heaven and a taste of eternity.

Any Questions?



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Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you that you created us, you know us and you love us. We are fully known and completely loved by you. Though we fail you, you have never turned your back on us, you remain faithful forever.

Lord Jesus Christ, we praise you for your sacrificial love. You lived the perfect life we could never live and died the death that we deserved so that we can be forgiven and live for eternity with you.

Holy Spirit, we thank you that you convict us of our sin, assure us of your forgiveness and empower us for our lives. Triune God, we glorify you today. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.