

St Joseph's RCIA Questions and Answers

What is RCIA and who should attend?

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a restoration of an ancient process for incorporating unbaptized persons into Jesus Christ through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist within the Catholic Church. Baptized individuals of another faith also go through the process of instruction to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church. Although the Catholic Church does not re-baptize people who are already baptized, it is important that you receive instruction on the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Faith which differ from other faith traditions and the ones you grew up with. RCIA classes are a perfect time to ask questions and receive clarification on why Catholics believe and practice what they do. If you are a baptized or confirmed Catholic returning to the practice of the faith, you should talk to the pastor of the parish about how to proceed. We recommend that Catholics who have been away from the Church for many years (Say, 10 or more) also go through RCIA for instruction.

What kind of information do I need to provide to join RCIA?

If you have already been baptized, you will need to contact the church or congregation that has kept your baptismal record. Obtain a copy or letter from the pastor there and hand it in to the RCIA instructor. Because locating records can be difficult and time-consuming, you should try to obtain these records as early in the process as possible. We must see these records to confirm your baptismal status before you receive any other Sacraments in the Catholic Church. If your church did not keep records or they no longer exist, we can make arrangements for other verifications.

I've been divorced but am not remarried. Can I become Catholic?

Certainly. Unless you plan to marry, you do not need to obtain an annulment.

I've been divorced and remarried, and my spouse is divorced and remarried. Can I become Catholic?

You and your current spouse need to begin the annulment process, and you should begin it as soon as possible even if your spouse is not considering entry into the Catholic Church. Please contact the parish staff for information on how to proceed. Of course, you can attend RCIA classes while the annulment process is ongoing. However, reception into the Church has to wait until the annulment process has been completed.

What's the cut-off date for joining RCIA?

You may join RCIA at any time. Normally, any person desiring to become Catholic goes through the entire eight month instructional process. However, if one joins later, one may still enter the Church if one is deemed sufficiently ready, knowledgeable, and desirous to receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist.

When and where do you meet?

Classes are in O'Neill Hall, connected inside to St. Joseph's Church, on Thursdays from 6:20-8:00 pm. Classes begin at St. Joseph's parish in mid-September and continue weekly until Pentecost Sunday, about six weeks after Easter. Please note that Baptism and reception into the Church occurs at Easter, but RCIA does not end until Pentecost.

What if I change my mind?

By coming to inquire and finding out what is involved, one is not making a commitment. During the first few months one is free to leave at any time. One may take all the time needed before making any commitment. There is no pressure and one should feel free to decide when one is ready to make such a commitment.

My schedule doesn't permit me to attend your sessions. What should I do?

We can arrange catechesis in a private setting with Fr. Kovash or Fr. Luger.

I heard I need a sponsor in order to become Catholic. What is that, and how do I get one?

A sponsor is a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church who accompanies you on your journey through RCIA and as a Catholic. They are called to show the Catechumens good example of the Christian life, sustain them in moments of hesitancy and anxiety, bear witness, and guide their progress in the baptismal life. The sponsor verifies when you enter the Church that you are ready. If you know someone who meets the criteria, you can simply ask him or her to sponsor you. If you do not know someone, the parish will provide a sponsor for you.

I know who I want my sponsor to be, but that person does not live locally and may not make it at my entrance into the Catholic Church. Can that person still be a sponsor?

Yes. You can also have a proxy for the event.

I have children. Do you provide child care?

Unfortunately, we do not. If you need child care, you must arrange your own, or if the children are quiet and well behaved, you can bring them to instructional sessions. If finding childcare becomes a serious difficulty, please contact the parish office.

How old should a person be to attend RCIA?

Technically old enough to understand what is being taught. For children of catechetical age (7-14 years old), we can provide catechists for their grade level. Depending upon their level of maturity and interests, older teens (age 15 or above) would join the adult group.

What texts do you use and how may I get them?

We use the *New Catholic Answer Bible*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *Outlines of the Catholic Faith*, and *Twelve Tough Issues and More*. We hand them out at your first session.