

Christian Initiation of Adults

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Focus on the Rite—Welcoming the inquirers (unbaptized)

This first period of Christian initiation of adults “consists of inquiry on the part of the candidates and of evangelization and the precatechumenate on the part of the Church’ (RCIA, no. 7). **Inquirers** have been led by the grace of the Holy Spirit to seek the living God, and the Christian community helps them through evangelization to meet Christ and so to come to an initial conversion, a first step toward becoming a follower of Jesus and a member of the Church. Because **God’s grace is already at work** in the lives of the inquirers, those who meet with them should welcome them in a spirit of **attentive listening** and **genuine dialogue**. As we hear the stories of their lives of their deep yearning for God, we share with them the story of Jesus, especially as it is proclaimed in the Gospels. The whole precatechumenate is meant to provide for inquirers a living encounter with Jesus Christ, who **invites them to conversion**, and **summons them into a community of faith**.

In its description of the precatechumenate period, the RCIA assumes that **inquirers have never been baptized** and are encountering the Christian faith for the first time. However, many of the women and men in North America who express an interest in our faith have already heard the Gospel and are well acquainted with the Christian faith. Some inquirers, for example, may never have been baptized because they were raised in a Christian community whose practice is to baptize only adults.

July 15, 2009

Focus on Initiation

Orientation seminars for new coordinators/team members

Thursday, July 30, 2009
from 7:00-9:30 p.m. at the Archdiocesan Office Center, this orientation will feature an overview of the RCIA. Registration form can be found on the Archdiocesan RCIA webpage.



Initiation library

*Word and Worship
Workbook for Year A, B,
and C*

by Mary Birmingham

This resource offers a model intended for use by catechists in preparing for catechesis. Included are scholarly exegetical material on scripture and tradition, prayers and blessings from the liturgy, reflection questions, suggestions for doctrinal themes, and useful doctrinal appendix for reference.

Available as a set or individually from Paulist Press.

“The time of the precatechumenate can serve as a time for such people to rediscover their faith in Christ.

Because it is a time of inquiry, newcomers should be given the **opportunity to seek and to question**. Members of the community should extend to them a listening ear, an open heart, and a friendly welcome. Since the primary goal of their inquiry is to meet Jesus Christ, the precatechumenate provides them with an opportunity to explore the yearnings that have led them to seek Christ: their hopes and fears, their joys and disappointments, their successes and failures. As they share their stories and reflect on the questions that arise from their experience, pastoral ministers and others of the community can help inquirers to recognize how **God has already been present and active in their lives** and is calling them to a deeper relationship. In this way they can come to that initial conversion in which they recognize the God whose yearning for them surpasses even their own desire.

What does it mean to be an evangelizing community? What draws people to faith in Christ? What is the place of prayer during the precatechumenate?

(RCIA: *A Pastoral Liturgical Commentary*, pp 38, 39, 40)