



Considering becoming Catholic?

Already Catholic but want to get caught up on later Sacraments of Initiation? We're here to help you grow! Whether you're just beginning to explore or are ready to take a deeper look, we're here to meet with you and discuss how our adult faith formation programs can be tailored to meet your needs.

The OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation for Adults) is a process through which a person gradually deepens their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and lives out their faith in the Catholic community. The OCIA process emphasizes personal conversion and a commitment to the Catholic way of life.

The OCIA process is for two groups:

- those who are not Baptized (or who were not validly Baptized)
- those who were validly Baptized in another Christian denomination and want to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.
 - The unbaptized are called "Catechumens" and the validly Baptized are called "Candidates" for Sacrament Prep. Both proceed through the OCIA process.
 - Catechumens will be received into the Church with full Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.)

Candidates for Sacrament Prep will receive the final Sacraments of Initiation (Eucharist and Confirmation) at a time other than the Easter Vigil, depending on the readiness of the candidates. Frequently this occurs during the spring, or at Pentecost, but it can occur any time.

Baptized Catholics who were not instructed in the Catholic faith and who have not completed their initiation through the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist are also called “Candidates” for Sacrament Prep. These Candidates will also receive final Sacraments of Initiation at a time other than the Easter Vigil.

Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, know that you're welcome here. Come and see what it means to become part of the Catholic Church—we're ready when you are.

For more information, please contact Director, Dianne Galarneau either by phone at 518-372-3381 x226 or preferably via email at dgalarneau@sjchurch.com

Our Team of Catechists

Yvonne Lawton, Melanie Delf, Theodore Bareis, and Mark Nicolella

Each person presents a unique and adaptable support for their students. They provide strong collaboration, a lifelong shared passion for Catholic teaching, and a dedication to create a faith-filled learning environment bringing adults into a deep relationship with Jesus Christ.



Q & A

Q: What does the OCIA process entail?

A: There are four stages of development.

1. Pre-Catechumenate

During this period, "inquirers" can receive answers to some of their most pressing questions about the Catholic faith and discern how this faith might connect with their personal story and their desire for a closer relationship with Jesus Christ and the Christian community. There is no time limit to this period. When ready, inquirers are invited to continue the journey through participation in the ritual called the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumenes.

2. Catechumenate

This stage varies in length according to each person's needs. Catechumens (those preparing for Baptism) and Candidates (those already validly baptized who are preparing to join the Catholic Church), will spend time being introduced to Catholic beliefs and way of life. The Scriptures and Catholic teachings will guide them, while participation in various forms of worship, prayer and parish activities will help integrate them into the Catholic lifestyle. A sponsor will be chosen to provide individual support, and the parish community will continue to welcome them and pray for them. This stage culminates in the celebration of the Rite of Election where catechumens are officially accepted for the Easter Sacraments and are now called "elect".

3. Purification and Enlightenment

This period, which coincides with the season of Lent, is a time of final preparation for initiation. Lent is ordinarily that time for all to turn from sin and be enlightened by Christ. During this time, the Elect engage in prayer and reflection about their growing relationship with Christ and the Church. They discern how they will live out that relationship in their everyday lives. The centerpiece of this period of prayerful preparation is the celebration of the Scrutinies. This period climaxes with the celebration of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil liturgy on the night before Easter.

4. Mystagogy

Mystagogy means "leading into the mysteries". This final period lasts from Easter Sunday until the completion of the Easter season, which is 50 days later on Pentecost Sunday. It is a time when the newly initiated reflect on that which they have just experienced and begin their lifelong pilgrimage of growth as the mysteries of their faith unfold.

Q & A

Q: I am not sure if I was validly baptized. What should I do?

A: This will be discussed at your intake interview. Generally, the minister of Baptism in the tradition you were Baptized into would be able to issue you a certificate of Baptism. There is a proper form and matter associated with a valid Baptism and it is of utmost importance that this be verified before OCIA classes or Sacrament prep can begin. If a person is found to have been not validly baptized (i.e., a dedication ceremony), that individual would be required to complete the full OCIA process and receive all Sacraments of Initiation at a future Easter Vigil (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist).

Q: What should I bring to my interview?

A: You should bring your filled out interview form, proof of Baptism, and fee.

Q: Do I need a Godparent or a Sponsor?

A: These terms are used interchangeably for adults. Also, an adult only needs one individual to sponsor them, not two as is the case with babies and young children.

Q: When should I select a Godparent/Sponsor?

A: You should start to consider this as soon as possible. The qualifications to be a Godparent or Sponsor are that the individual should be a Confirmed Catholic in good standing with his/her parish. Details regarding this will be discussed at your interview.