

‘Let the children come to me...’

Children’s Initiation at St. Lawrence

CONTACT INFORMATION

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The **RCIA** (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) is the process through which families with children over the age of 7 and youth up to the age of 18 celebrate the initiation sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. This formation process is also for families with children or youth baptized Catholic who did not celebrate Communion in 2nd grade and now desire to complete the initiation sacraments and deepen their relationship with God and this faith community.

Outline of the Initiation Process

There are four periods and three major rites that mark the transition from one stage to another on this journey of faith:

I. Pre-Catechumenate Period

This is a time for questions about the Catholic faith as well as faith sharing about God's presence in one's life. Five family sessions begin in late spring. Weekly sessions for children and parents begin in August. The Rites of Acceptance and Welcome celebrate your child's intention to follow the way of Christ.

II. Catechumenate Period

Formation in this period encompasses reflection on the Word of God, experiences of worship, opportunities for service, and immersion in community fellowship.

The Rite of Election acknowledges God's call to faith and signifies one's readiness for discipleship.

III. Purification and Enlightenment Period

Coinciding with Lent, prayerful recollection purifies one's heart and enlightens the mind about Christ. Sacramental celebrations (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist) on the Octave of Easter mark full initiation or communion with the Catholic church.

IV. Mystagogy Period

Following initiation, insights into that experience as well as the mysteries of faith and discipleship are shared and explored. Pentecost marks the end of formal sessions but is also the beginning of life-long discipleship. Registration in PSR or youth ministry programs continues your child's on-going faith formation.

Pastoral Considerations

To be a **godparent or sponsor** one must be a fully initiated Catholic who is at least 16 years old and living a life consistent with Catholic faith beliefs. A parent cannot be a Confirmation sponsor or godparent for their own child.

Children's initiation is a **family commitment**. A parent must be able to attend the weekly sessions offered for adults that are held while your child is in class.

Session Times

Catechetical sessions meet weekly on Monday nights, 7 p.m. till 8:30 p.m. from August to Pentecost Sun.

Dismissal sessions begin in late November and continue till Easter during the Sunday 8 a.m. Mass.

Childcare is available in the nursery if requested.

Registration Information

One can inquire about the process any time of the year, however enrollment in the current formation group ends in late November. There is a separate information packet to register your family in the parish. A family interview with Diane and Rita begins the RCIA registration process. In addition to completing a RCIA registration form, a copy of your child's birth certificate or baptismal certificate will be required. There is a fee for this program, though financial assistance is available if needed.

Who's Who

Children who have never been baptized are called *catechumens*. Parents choose godparents to witness their Baptism and Confirmation.

Children who have been validly baptized in a Christian denomination are called *candidates*. They are not re-baptized but will need a sponsor for Confirmation.

