

**Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
Catechetical Curriculum Adapted for Children**

**Understanding the Pastoral, Catechetical and Liturgical Aspects of the RCIA adapted for
Children.**

**Developed
By**

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Important Catechetical Documents

Here are the major documents of the Church appropriate for the ministry of Catechesis and Religious Education in the Catholic Church.

The Rites of the Catholic Church as they pertain to preparation for the sacraments.

ACCC	<i>Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community</i> International Council for Catechesis, 1990
BT	<i>Basic Teachings for Catholic Religious Education</i> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCC, 1973.
CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> Libreria Vaticana Editrice, 2002. (2nd Ed.)
CCCC	<i>Compendium to the Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> Libreria Vaticana Editrice, 2006
CIC	<i>Code of Canon Law (Codex Iuris Canonici)</i> 1983
CE	<i>Declaration of Christian Education</i> Vatican II, 1965.
CS	<i>The Catholic School</i> Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997.
CT	<i>Catechesi Tradendae</i> St. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, 1979.
EN	<i>On Evangelization In the Modern World</i> Pope Paul VI, 1975
FC	<i>The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World (Familiaris Consortio)</i> St. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, 1975
GC	<i>Guide for Catechists</i> Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, 1993
GCD	<i>The General Catechetical Directory</i> Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, 1971.
GDC	<i>The General Directory for Catechesis</i> Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, 1997
GDCM	<i>Guidelines for Doctrinally Sound Catechetical Materials</i> USCC, Publication 419-8, November 21, 1990.
GMD	<i>Go and Make Disciples: National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States</i> USCCB, November 1992

LF	<i>Letter to Families</i> St. John Paul II, February 1994
NCD	<i>Sharing the Light of Faith: The National Catechetical Directory</i> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCC, 1979.
RCIA	<i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults</i> USCC, Publication 1214-4, 1988
ST	<i>The Splendor of Truth</i> (Veritatis Splendor) Pope John Paul II, August 5, 1993
TJD	<i>To Teach As Jesus Did</i> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCC, 1972.
USCCA	<i>United States Catholic Catechism for Adults</i> USCCB, 2006

Introduction

Understanding the Pastoral, Catechetical, and Liturgical Aspects Of the Catechumenal Process for Children

“Go forth and proclaim the Gospel to all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Mt 28-17-20

The journey for anyone who desires full communion in the Catholic Church revolves around a genuine exploration of who God is and the person’s desire to form a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church. During this process questions naturally arise regarding the existence of God, our purpose on this earth, is it possible to live a holy Christian life, and why Jesus Christ came as reparation for our sins. The Rite of Christian Initiation for Children serves as the chief vehicle of guiding and nurturing children and adolescents into full communion with the Catholic Church. This process is not attest or a drill. It is a formation process aimed specifically to assist the young person to immerse him or herself into the saving realities of Jesus Christ found in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

Our responsibility as catechists is to introduce children and adolescent teens what the Church is their role in God’s plan for salvation of all and how to live this life according to God’s plan. In other words, we desire to form active, practicing, vibrant Catholics who desire to share the good news of Jesus Christ to others. (Acts 10:34-43)

Proclaiming and teaching the Deposit of Faith (Content of Catechesis in the RCIA for Children)

My teaching is not from myself; it comes from the one who sent me. (Jn 7:16).

Catechesis is an education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian Doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life . . . catechesis is built on a certain number of elements of the Church’s pastoral mission that have a catechetical aspect the prepare for catechesis, or that spring from it. In the case of the RCIA process for children, the following areas of a significant importance in the overall catechetical formation of these individuals:

- The initial proclamation of the Gospel or missionary preaching through the kerygma (proclamation) to arouse faith.
- Apologetics or examination of the reasons for beliefs.
- Experience of Christian living.
- Celebration of the sacraments.
- Integration onto the ecclesial community.
- Apostolic and missionary witness” (CT 18).

The Pillars you have just read serve as a base for all catechetical instruction within the Catechumenate for Children. Religious Education within the Catechumenate must be complete, organic, and systematic to

provide a fullness of the truth and assure that the Deposit of Faith is being passed on. Important to this formula is a witness toward living a Trinitarian life understanding the role of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in light of their own life with Jesus Christ.

Important to this process is careful guidance and recognition by the catechist towards children and adolescent teens forming a relationship with Jesus Christ and recognizing their role as children created in the image and likeness of God. Akin to this approach is helping these children and young people understand that they are integrally part of God's story, the Story of Salvation. Whether the child or young person is baptized or not, both scenarios share a common denominator; they seek an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. The following framework serves as a general guide in presenting the Story of Salvation History:

Highlight the plan of God for us and His constant revelation to us throughout human history. Be sure to make it clear that this is your story and theirs, if they choose to accept God's invitation.

- a. Who is God (happy and complete, describe His family, Trinitarian life)
- b. His creation of angelic beings, some chose to rebel.
- c. His creation of us out of love, to participate in his life.
- d. Our temptation (Satan our enemy) and sin (and loss)
- e. God's promise and plan for our salvation and divinization
- f. His gradual revelation of Himself and gathering of a people.
- g. Promise and prophecies (as much of salvation history as you have time and need for
- h. Mary's "fiat," her yes to our Lord through her perfect obedience
- i. Incarnation (be sure to give it proper emphasis, this is the crucial mystery of the Deposit of Faith)
- j. Redemption and the fruits of salvation
- k. The Church:
 1. The family of God on earth
 2. Dispenser of the Mystery cf. Eph 3:9-10
 3. The Kingdom of God
 4. The Body of Christ on earth (an Incarnational distinctive)
- l. The history of God's people and His constant care, saints in constant supply
- m. Today, you and I in "The Story," living the Christian Life (If you have time show the precursors to sacramental living in the Old Testament.)
- n. The sure promise and hope:

1. Jesus will come again
2. Judgment
3. The heavenly Jerusalem
4. Eternal Life

Be sure to tell these as truths: this is not a fictional story. Keep referring to them as you teach doctrine. Show your student how all that has been revealed by God fits in The Story, as its context.

Pastoral and Catechetical Considerations When Applying the Catechumenal Model to Children

Introduction

One of the most important aspects of the RCIA for children is that it is a journey of faith. It is not meant to be seen as a regular school environment where children simply come to class to receive information about the Catholic faith. The aim and purpose of the Catechumenate (RCIA) for children is to help the child develop a mature faith, one centered on Jesus Christ fostering a deep love for the Church and in turn becoming an active disciple in Christ.

Part of this journey is assisting the child regardless of pedagogical age and religious background to see that he or she can have and develop an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. The first step in this journey is to recognize his or her unique place in this world in light of Jesus Christ and know that he or she is part of God's saving and loving plan.

Inherent in all this is an understanding of God's story i.e. the Kerygma, one which is filled with the joy and hope of being in communion with Him. The initial response we seek in a child through the catechumenal journey is one of awe and wonder for God and an understanding of His Divine Providence in daily life. In other words it is guiding the child towards the process of conversion where he or she realizes that they are created in the image and likeness of God and have worth as children of God.

The apex of this revelation of faith rests on the unique understanding of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the second person of the Blessed Trinity. It is here where the child begins to understand the reason he or she was created and the importance of having a relationship with Jesus Christ. Thus the aim of the Catechumenate for children is to effectively draw them into an intimacy with Christ already mentioned within the Kerygma.

Pastoral and Catechetical Recommendations for the RCIA Process Involving Children.

1. Clear and unambiguous communication is important when teaching parents that the catechumenate is not a class. The catechumenate is an opportunity for their child to either deepen their existing Christian identity or formally develop it.
2. The RCIA process for Children is an adapted format from the prescribed Adult process which is specifically geared toward children who are either:
 - Unbaptized and uncatechized

- Baptized in a Christian denomination but uncatechized
- Baptized Catholic but not raised Catholic with little to no knowledge of the faith.
- Baptized, somewhat catechized but in need of further catechetical formation.

Note: an Uncatechized person is someone who have little or no formation, systematic or informal, in the practice and teachings of the Catholic Faith; lacking familiarity with the spiritual, doctrinal, moral and sacramental basics of Catholic Life.

3. The RCIA process for children is not meant to act as a formal parish religious education program where the prevailing thought is once he or she completes the sacraments of initiation they are presumed to be done learning about their Catholic faith.
4. The aim of the RCIA process for children is to bring the child into full communion with the Catholic Church and after being received in the faith, continue with his or her mystagogical formation through the parish religious education program.
5. The parish religious education program should never be used as the means by which an uncatechized child is to receive his or her formation in the faith. This is not the intent of the traditional parish religious education structure.
6. If a child clearly exhibits a distinct and clear competency in the faith, and or appears to easily grasp the basics of the faith in a sound and coherent way, efforts can be made to expedite the initiation process of the child after a careful catechetical assessment by the parish Director of Religious Education in consultation with the Parents and the Pastor.
7. If a child clearly demonstrates a challenge or difficulty in understanding and applying basic Church teaching e.g. making the Sign of the Cross or not knowing who God is then the recommendation would be to delay and extend the catechumenal process for this child until he or she is properly ready to come into full communion.
8. It is important to keep in mind that the premise behind the RCIA process for children is to assist those families with children who are coming into the Church from other denominations or who for whatever reason were baptized Catholic but never raised in the Catholic faith.
9. A parish religious education program is not a substitute for an RCIA program for children. A clear and distinct process should be developed to assist in the pastoral, liturgical and catechetical needs of all involved.
10. We must keep in mind that the application of the Adult Catechumenal model for children requires a different pedagogical mindset. Because this process involves children, our intentional catechesis should reflect a genuine desire to help the child establish and foster an active and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. In other words, our primary mission is to evangelize through an authentic presentation of the Gospel in order to effectively catechize and bring the child into full communion.

Brief History of the Baptismal Catechumenate

Introduction

The Word became flesh so that “we might know God’s love.”

(CCC 458)

If we take the Catechism’s second reason why the Word became flesh in the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, we realize just how unique our relationship with God really is. Our relationship with Him is based on His love for us intimately revealed through His Son Jesus Christ (Jn 3:16-17).

Echoing the words of the Catechism, the Catechumenal process serves as a journey to know and understand God’s love further revealed in His Son Jesus Christ. In the early stages of the ancient catechumenate, both Jew and Gentile were initiated into the Church. The emphasis for these catechumens was two-fold: that Christ was the Messiah and in particular to bring our Jewish brethren from the “Law” to “Christ” (Acts 2:41 ff).

The Gentiles received instruction directing them to the one true God in an effort to clarify their polytheistic tendencies. Recognizing that sound catechesis involves the teaching of faith and morals Christian morality was preached from the beginning.

By the end of the 2nd century individual instructions evolved into group instruction. Group Baptism’s continued during this period and special catechists were involved receiving training through catechetical schools. During this time, Baptism was administered at Easter season and invoked the participation of the Resurrection of Christ as seen through the liturgy. Hence a complimentary relationship evolved between liturgy and catechesis. This structure gave rise to the catechumenate.

Order and structure of the Catechumenate

The first form and structure of the catechumenate occurred around 215 a.d. during the time of Constantine. The structure was done in the Apostolic tradition of Hippolytus of Rome.

The Catechumenate began:

- With a rigorous examination for the purpose of determining whether the profession and the way of life of the candidate were compatible with the Christian moral law.
- This stage lasted as a rule for three years
- It was not only a period of probation but also one devoted to teaching of Christian doctrine.
- The catechist concluded every instruction with prayer and the imposition of hands.

Subjects in the Catechumenate

- The books of Esther, Judith, Tobias and the Sapiential books i.e. the biblical texts which would illustrate Christian conduct.

Catechumenate Continued

- At the conclusion of three years an examination followed concentrating less on knowledge but on moral conduct of life.
- When this was successfully completed, the candidate was permitted “to listen to the Gospel.”
- He was given daily instruction dealing with the teachings of the faith, joined in daily imposition of hands which was exorcistic in character.
- In the third century the instruction culminated in the “handing over” of the Apostles Creed, which the Baptismal candidate had to recite before he received Baptism.

Later period of the Catechumenate

The catechumenate in the 4-5th century was characterized by mass conversions. Many contented themselves with entering the catechumenate only. Some characteristics of this period are as follows:

- The desire for conversion Jews and Gentiles were recognized as Christians.
- Some sought to delay Baptism for a later period of time until they were a riper age.
- One of the more important reasons for deferring Baptism was the fact that if a grievous sin had been committed after Baptism, the Christian could, according to the severe penitential discipline of the times, obtain forgiveness only by undergoing public penance.
- In fact even in Christian families this practice of deferred Baptism was sometimes adopted.
- Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom and others were baptized only in adulthood.
- The Order of the Catechumenate had to be adapted to these conditions.

The Catechumenate in this period consisted of the following elements:

1. An initial examination included an emphasis on catechetical instruction.
2. This catechesis was designed to give a survey of the content of Christian doctrine of salvation.
3. Instruction for this is given by St. Augustine compiled in his work: De Catechizandi rudibus.
4. After this the catechist was supposed to present in the form of a narration (narratio) the entire doctrine of salvation, from the fall of our first parents down to the Last Judgment.
5. By this process it was hoped that the candidate would be led from faith to hope and from hope to love. For this reason Augustine attached great value to the fact that during the catechesis an atmosphere of happiness should prevail.
6. The reception into the catechumenate took place by signing the candidate with the sign of the Cross, which was generally followed by the imposition of hands.
7. The presentation of blessed salt was done.
8. Through these ceremonies the candidate became a catechumen, and hence a Christian.

9. The Fathers in their homilies, urged the catechumens to make known to the authorities that they were ready for Baptism before beginning the period which is now customarily known as Lent and serves as a preparation for Easter.

Catechesis during this time.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (348 a.d.) delivered his catechetical lectures. His 19 catechesis were given prior to Baptism.

Order of St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical Lectures

- 1.) First five instructions treat sin, Baptism and faith; the rest of the Creed.
- 2.) Imparting or handing-over of the Creed took place, especially in the west in a special ceremony, the tradition symboli.
- 3.) Both formulas, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, were subject to the strict discipline of the secret; they could be communicated only orally and had to be learned by heart.

In Rome

1. Communication of the Four Gospels took place. (6th cent.)
2. Order is as follows: Procession of clerics, thuriferarii with censers, acolytes with lighted candles, then four deacons with the Four Gospels, and finally the priest.
3. The four deacons placed the four Gospel books on the four corners of the altar.
4. Following this, the priest spoke of the Gospels. Then the first of the four deacons stepped up and read the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew; thereupon the priest gave a short talk in which he explained the symbolism of Matthew: facies hominis. The same thing was done by the other three deacons with the other Gospels.

The Sunday Mass

1. The godparents of the candidates for Baptism came to the fore. Their names were read at the Memento of the Living; the name of the Baptismal aspirants, who because of the discipline of the secret were unable to be present . . .

RCIA Continued

Baptism was administered at the Vigil with great solemnity.

1. The ceremonies began with a renunciation of Satan and a confession of faith.
2. Newly baptized were then confirmed, vested in white Baptismal robes, they assisted, for the first time, at the celebration of the Mass, and received Holy Communion.
3. The newly baptized wore the white baptismal robe during the entire octave of the Paschal feast up to Low Sunday.

4. They appeared daily at Mass during the festal week after the Vigil.
5. They were given the final catechesis on the Sacraments.

After the sixth century – the order of the catechumenate died down because of the mass conversions occurring throughout Europe.

1. Catechesis involved only a few weeks of instruction.
2. You had mass baptisms.
3. Education was left to the community.
4. Modified catechumenate consisted of the following:
 - Introductory catechesis
 - The insufflation
 - Sign of the Cross
 - Salt blessed under exorcism
 - Further blessings
 - Lord's Prayer
 - Profession of Faith, the Creed.
 - Last exorcism as well as the renunciation of Satan
 - Replies to the questions concerning the faith which are expected of the godparents immediately before the act of Baptism itself were part of the Baptism of Children.

The initial ecclesiastical catechesis was given to prepare adults for Baptism.

Baptism of Children

A. History from an incident in North Africa involving St. Cyprian (d. 258)

1. A certain Bishop Fidus felt that baptism should be delayed until the eighth day in order for the child to be circumcised.
2. This was rejected unanimously.
3. This controversy was not of infant baptism but of the period within which the sacrament was to be administered.
4. 4th century-infant baptism takes further root.
5. It was the obligation of the parents to raise and train their children in the faith.
6. Instruction involved:

- Assistance at Mass
- Responding the Kyrie Eleison

What we learned from the Catechesis of Christian Antiquity

1. The early Christians were not satisfied merely with purveying knowledge; but that they also sought primarily to form true Christians; for this reason they required a long period of probation, examination, prayer, and fasting.
2. The teaching had to be comprehensive; the entire arrangement both of the catechesis and of the catechumenate draws its name from it. They demanded little, however, in the way of memory learning.
3. Catechesis was closely bound up with the liturgy: Easter as the time for Baptism, assistance at the Mass of the catechumens, special celebrations in the course of religious training. An active participation in the liturgy was on the whole the most desirable way in which the individual Christian and the Christian community were able to acquire the necessary religious knowledge. The liturgy, the forms of which were clearly recognized and the language of which understood, was in a certain sense the continuation of catechesis and a substitute for those who had already been baptized as infants.
4. For the children of Christian families the parents were the catechists in the true sense of the word.

The Pastoral, Catechetical, and Liturgical Aspects of the RCIA for Children

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through Him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

Jn 1: 1-4

Period of Inquiry/Pre-Catechumenate

Pastoral

The Period of Inquiry/Pre-Catechumenate serves as the first step in the journey of faith for all candidates and catechumens who desire more information or confirmations of the Catholic Church and what she holds to be true. In many ways, this first step is a welcoming of the individual into the realities of Jesus Christ and His Church.

Regardless of the status of the individual(s) candidate or catechumen, the first step of this process aims to carefully and lovingly provide a fruitful witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ revealed and lived in truth, beauty, and goodness.

Pastoral Aspects within this stage of the Process

The Spirit of the Lord is upon because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering the sight of the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed. . .

Lk 4:18

Understanding the Story

It is important that the candidates and catechumens begin to see the fruit of Jesus Christ and His Church through the faithful witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Mt 28:17-20). Individual involved within this stage of the process should reflect and reveal the grace of faith lived each day.

Within this context emphasis on the application of the Word of God and its safeguard within the Church becomes a clear theme for all to see. Application of the faith through word and deed serves as a tenable opportunity for the candidates and catechumens to see the organic reality of the Church through the witness of others.

General Areas to observe within this stage of the process is as follows

- The individual begins to know and understand the role as a child of God. (CCC 151)
- The individual begins to understand the nature of the Church as the people of God.
- The individual begins to desire and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. (CCC 456)
- There is a stirring of the heart to seek repentance and reconciliation.
- A Catholic identity is beginning to form. (CCC 830)
- A beginning of turning to God in prayer (cite RCIA)

Catechetical

This aspect involves a specific presentation of the Gospel rooted in Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture. An important aspect of this catechesis is the explanation of the early Church in particular the teachings of the Early Church Fathers. Catechesis in this stage of the catechumenate aims to provide a bridge or a link so to speak on the proclamation of the Gospel and its root in Jesus Christ and His Church. (CCC 143)

Catechetical Aspects within this stage of the process

By his revelation the invisible God from the fullness of his love addresses men as his friends and moves among them in order to invite and receive them into his own company. The adequate response to this invitation is faith.

(CCC 142)

A Life in Christ

It is important that the candidates and catechumens begin to draw themselves away from a life of sin to a life centered on Jesus Christ. Catechist must keenly see a gradual conversion of the heart in order to systematically present the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

“Christian recognizing your dignity and now that you share in God’s own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God.

(CCC 1691)

General Areas to observe within this stage of the process is as follows

- Sufficient answers to the inquirers questions about the Catholic faith.
- Effective use of apologetics (loving and compelling explanation of the faith.)
- A gradual acceptance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (CCC 432)
- A visible turning away from sin. (CCC 1422-1424)
- Faith becomes visible; there is an adherence to a life in Christ. (CCC
- A visible desire for God’s love in one’s life. (CCC 229)

Note: Use the Association of Catechumenal Ministry Chart

Liturgical

The Liturgical Aspect in the period of inquiry/pre-catechumenate is somewhat limited due to the candidates and catechumens possible lack of exposure to the liturgical environment, history and practice of the Church. One of the main facets within the Liturgical Aspect of this period is the introduction to prayer, in particular prayers directly associated with the Mass e.g. The Doxology, Penitential Rite, Gloria, Our Father etc.

Keep in mind an entrance way into the Liturgical aspects of the period of inquiry/pre-catechumenate is an introduction to Baptism for those who have not been baptized and its significance as the first sacrament of initiation. In reality the centrality of the Liturgical Aspect here lies in presenting the Paschal Mystery (Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ)

as a way to see organically see how the Mass reveals the Paschal Mystery through these significant events.

Liturgical Aspects within this stage of the process

- Introduction to Liturgical Prayer e.g. Liturgy of the Word
- Catechetical overview of the Mass
- Introduction to Liturgical Art

General Areas to observe within this stage of the process is as follows

- A gradual exposition of the Liturgical Life of the Church would benefit the candidates and catechumens.
- Introduction to the Liturgical Cycle would be a benefit during this time.

Catechumenal Aspects of the RCIA for Children

Pastoral

During the Catechumenate, the individual begins to take a firm hold of their journey with Christ and continue in their initiation into the Church. Their hearts begin to be fixed on Christ not only through own free disposition to listen to the Gospel but its application through witness and faithful doctrinal instruction. The building blocks of faith are beginning to be formed in the whole person. Central to all this is their understanding and application of the Gospel message (Mt 28:17-20).

Pastoral aspects within this stage of the process

- Witness to these individuals on how to live a life centered on Jesus Christ
- Express the need to develop relationships within the parish community
- Practice the virtue of Charity
- Addressing moral issues that are obstacles for reception.
- Discernment for readiness **before** the Rite of Election/Call to Continuing Conversion

General Areas to observe within this stage of the process is as follows

- Foster an evangelical outreach to others.
- This part of the process involves a missionary spirit (welcoming).

Catechetical

Formulation of sound doctrinal instruction serves as the crux of the Catechetical aspects of the Catechumenate phase of the process. Catechesis in this phase of the catechumenate must be systematic and gradual. A step by step process is very important in order to reveal the connection between a life of faith and the Church's teachings. The use of Sacred Scripture, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Liturgical beauty of the Church serve as key instruments in handing on the faith.

Catechetical aspects within this stage of the process

- Catechesis in this period should be systematic, organic, and gradual.
- Catechetical instruction should be in conjunction with the Liturgical year.
- Catechesis should be complete but no exhaustive (ACM).
- We want to see a gradual understanding of Salvation History

General Areas to observe within this stage of the process is as follows

- Make sure the catechesis is complete and thorough
- Engage an active participation in the liturgy through doctrinal instruction
- We are striving for apostolic activity in them.

Liturgical

The Liturgical aspect of the catechumenate dives into the Rites of the Church. In particular, anointing, Liturgies of the Word, and minor exorcisms reserved for this part of the Process are beneficial to the candidates and catechumens (RCIA, 81-89, 90-94). An important aspect of this stage is a progression toward understanding the nature of man to worship God in a prayerful manner hence the importance of recognizing the Lord's Day as "The Day" of worship.

Liturgical aspects within this stage of the process

- Liturgies of the Word
- Anointing and Blessing
- Emphasis on the Lord's Day. (1 Cor 10:11)

General Areas to observe within this stage of the process is as follows

- The Candidates and Catechumens should begin to know and understand the significance of the Lord's Day celebration. (Ex 31:15; Mk 2:27-28)

- The Word of God is richly revealed through the proclamation of the Gospel and the series of readings leading up to God's revealed Word in Sacred Scripture.
- God desires to bless and anoint His children. The various blessings and rites within the process are meant to reecho His love for all. We must keep in mind a child's need to be authentically loved in Christ.

Purification and Enlightenment Aspects of the RCIA for Children

Within any RCIA process, the period of purification and enlightenment typically coincides with the Season of Lent. From the moment they become the "Elect" a new journey begins to unfold in their view of the world through a lens centered on Christ rather than a secular one. Visible witnesses of the Gospel are important in this aspect of the process as those involved in the catechumenate are called to be living and holy witness to them. Another aspect is preparation for the Paschal Mystery. This reminder serves at the forefront of catechetical instruction and formation of the "Elect."

Pastoral

The Pastoral aspect of this stage of the catechumenate reflects a willingness to engage a deeper relationship with Christ thus seeking an interior conversion of the heart, mind, and soul. It is important that sound witnesses of faith from those involved in the formation of the "Elect" be genuine and faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The gift of prayer is very important at this time not only involving the catechetical team but the entire parish community. Opportunities for new introduction to prayer e.g. Eucharistic Adoration, intercessory prayer, petition, contrition, thanksgiving forge a lasting imprint to the "Elect" in their journey with Christ. In particular prayers from the whole community serve a vital role.

Pastoral aspects within this stage of the process

- The Elect are guided into an intimate communion with Jesus Christ.
- **The candidates are called to a deeper conversion and appreciation of the grace of their Baptism.**
- Further time for deeper reflection and transformation of their lives away from sin.
- The fostering of an increased and extended Examination of Conscience

General Areas to observe within this stage of the process is as follows

- Continual call to conversion for the elect
- Renunciation of Sins

- Recognition of a life centered on Christ and His Church

Catechetical

This aspect of the catechumenate reflects a willingness to dive into the mysteries of Christ through prayer. Catechetical instruction for the most part does not drive this period. Moreover, the opportunity to engage Christ in prayer and seek an intimacy with Him is the emphasis here.

Catechetical aspects within this stage of the process

- A call to prayer.
- Seek a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, Deepen a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Know and understand sin, grace, and their effects.

General Areas to observe within this stage of the process is as follows

- An understanding of sin and the need to renounce sin
- Is there a firm intention to seek Salvation in Jesus Christ and His Church?
- The candidates are called to a deeper conversion and appreciation of the grace of their Baptism through the immediate preparation of the sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Have prayer and a desire for conversion become the focal point during the Scrutiny period?

Liturgical

A very important aspect of this period is the implantation of the Scrutinies beginning the third week of Lent. In general, the Scrutinies serve as preparation for the participation into the mysteries of Christ through the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil. In many ways, it marks a journey into the Paschal Mystery.

Liturgical aspects within this stage of the process

- Presentation of the Creed
- Presentation of the Our Father
- Penitential Rite (Candidates)
- Scrutinies (Catechumens)

General Areas to observe within this stage of the process is as follows

- Is there a genuine desire for conversion?
- Is there evidence of knowing the perils of sin and the grace found in Christ and His sacraments?

- In particular for the Candidates, are they adequately prepared to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation?

Mystagogical Aspects of the RCIA for Children

Pastoral

The neophytes are not fully initiated in the Kingdom of God and thus are in need of further instruction i.e. continuing catechetical formation. Pastorally speaking, the neophytes are to be immersed into their parish community truly experiencing communal life in Christ by those around them. The Mass serves as the centerpiece to embrace, welcome, and confirm their initiation into the Church celebrating their new life in Christ.

In essence they are truly experiencing the love of Christ in a more profound intimate way. This new way of life must be continually fostered and nourished. (Acts 2:39-42; Acts 8:26)

Pastoral aspects within this stage of the process

- The community serves as the perfect model of communal love and prayers for the neophytes.
- Participation in Masses for the neophytes and celebrating their entrance into the Church represents their new relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Their journey begins through an embrace of the Paschal Mystery.

General Areas to observe within this stage of the process is as follows

- The community as a whole should extend its hand in every way to assist the neophytes in their new life with Christ.
- Continual call to conversion should be expressed through their understanding of the Paschal Mystery.
- Corporal and Spiritual Works of mercy should go hand in hand with continual catechetical, liturgical, and pastoral formation.

Catechetical

Within the Catechetical aspect of the Mystagogical year lays the need for continual reflection on the Word of God and God's continual revelation through His Son Jesus Christ. Use of Sacred Scripture, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Lives of the Saints and a continual exposition on the History of the Church help in this period of the catechumenate.

Through the profound experience of the Easter Vigil, the neophytes should be exposed to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit through the witness of others and the Catholic community at large. In essence, the Paschal Mystery becomes the centrality of who they are as children of God i.e. as disciples of Christ. Keep in mind that the course of action for the newly elect is to develop their Catholic world view which is in need of being filled with the glory and richness of the Church. In other words, we need to feed their hunger for Christ.

Catechetical aspects within this stage of the process

- Continual catechetical formation in doctrine, liturgy, sacred scripture the Church
- Introduction into living a Catholic way of life.
- Centering everything on Christ and His Church.

General Areas to observe within this stage of the process is as follows

- Address their questions about the faith and its application in daily life.
- Help them identify with particular charisms of the Church they may not be particular familiar with e.g. Devotions to the Sacred Heart, parish missions, St. Vincent De Paul Society, parish bible studies, religious education programs, adult education programs.
- Meet with the newly elect frequently to assess how they are adjusting to their new life in Christ and His Church.
- Do not let them disappear never to be seen again.

Liturgical

After experiencing the beauty and richness of the Easter Triduum, the neophytes are thrust into a new liturgical atmosphere in the role of a fully initiated Catholic. This new role must be nourished through sound liturgical opportunities provided by the parish community. Central to this new life is an embrace of the Lord's Day celebration. Participating in the Sunday liturgy reflect their continue call to conversion and immersion into the mysteries of Christ and His Church.

Liturgical aspects within this stage of the process

- Participation in the Sunday Celebration of the Holy Eucharist is central to the neophytes continual call to conversion.
- Immersion into the Liturgical life of the Church, in particular introduction to the Liturgy of the Hours.

General Areas to observe within this stage of the process is as follows

- Sponsor and God parents should be intimately involved with the newly elect at Mass.
- The parish should have specifically designated areas for the elect as way to express the community continued prayers to the newly elect and the joy of welcoming them to the community as a whole.

