

# Frequently Asked Questions about. . .

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## *Baptism for Adults ; Full Communion with the Church; Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*

### **How can I get baptized?**

The Catholic Church has a special process called the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA, for short) for adults who wish to be baptized. This process is designed to welcome and prepare people to celebrate baptism through a series of gatherings, rituals, classes and small groups. The purpose is to foster a relationship with God and with the community, to encourage a spirit of faith and charity, to teach or review the basics of the Catholic faith, to prepare for the sacraments, and to help the person feel “at home” in the Catholic Church.

### **If I’ve been baptized in another Christian Church, will I be baptized again?**

We normally recognize as valid any baptism performed by pouring or immersion with water and the words “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” This would include the baptism of most mainline Christian Churches. In this case, a person would not be baptized again.

### **What is meant when people refer to men and women coming into “full communion with the Catholic Church”?**

When men and women who are baptized Christians but not Roman Catholics wish to become Catholics, they are coming into “full communion with the Catholic Church” through a process similar to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). These people make a profession of faith but are not baptized again.

### **How long does it take?**

The time required may vary-- depending upon the background and circumstances of the individual. Normally a person who is not baptized would participate in the RCIA process for a minimum of one year from the time of beginning. For persons who are baptized in another Christian denomination, the time frame may vary widely depending on their commitment to Jesus Christ, how active they have been in other Christian communities, and other factors.

### **Why does it take so long?**

The person can build a good foundation for lifelong formation and an ever deepening relationship with God, moving at God’s pace, not too fast or too slow, during a year’s time. Also each person can experience the richness of the Church’s different seasons and feasts through the year and have an opportunity to enter fully into the life of the community.

### **How do I start?**

You may get started in several ways:

- Come to the Inquiry Gatherings in Room 201 in our two-story Community Center on any of the first three Sundays of a month, after the 9:00 AM Mass, approximately 10:30 AM.
- Meet with the Director of Adult Faith Formation to learn more about the process. See contact information below.
- Fill out the Inquirer’s Form which is attached and we will contact you.

### **What happens during these “Inquiry Gatherings”?**

It is an opportunity for those wishing to become Catholics to ask questions about Catholicism, share their own faith journey, explore the way that their life experience intersects with Catholic perspective, receive an introduction to the process of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, and an orientation to Catholic teachings.



### **What happens after the Inquiry Gatherings?**

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a four phase process:

- **Inquiry:** Sharing the good news
- **Catechumenate:** Time for nurturing and growth of faith and conversion to God
- **Purification and Enlightenment :** Time of reflection during Lent, the 40 days before Easter
- **Mystagogy :** deeper understanding through reflection and integration after celebration of the sacraments of Initiation
- Rituals mark the entrance into each phase. See the other page for a fuller explanation.

### **Explain about this “Catechumenate.” What is it?**

The Catechumenate is the time in the RCIA process when the candidate, with the help of God, the RCIA team, the sponsor and the community, enters more deeply into the life of faith. By walking in the light of Christ and learning to trust his wisdom, the candidate patterns his life on the teachings of the Gospel. The word “catechumenate” is based on a Greek word which means “to echo” and the Church seeks to echo the message of Christ so that we, too, may become “ambassadors for Christ.”

### **What is a sponsor? How do I find one?**

A sponsor is a baptized, confirmed adult Catholic, one who regularly participates in Mass and lives a moral life who serves as a mentor and guide to the candidate during the RCIA process. Normally the sponsor is a member of the parish or lives close by so that they can participate in classes and rituals with the candidate. If the candidate does not know of anyone to be a sponsor, then the team will find someone to serve in this role.

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### **For Sacraments in English please contact:**

David Lopez - 713-554-1561

Coordinator of RCIA & Adult Sacraments

[dlopez@stcyrilhouston.org](mailto:dlopez@stcyrilhouston.org)

### **Para preparación en español, favor de comunicarse con:**

Jeanette Granados - 713-554-1560

Spanish Ministries & Wedding Coordinator

[jgranados@stcyrilhouston.org](mailto:jgranados@stcyrilhouston.org)