

Diocese of Leeds

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Journey in Faith



Catechist Pack
2005

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FOREWORD

The Gospel according to Matthew closes with Christ's final words to us, "*Go therefore, make disciples of all the nations, baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you*".

At the beginning of the new millennium, Pope John Paul reminds us of the other occasion when Jesus invited Peter the fisherman and his companions to "*put out into the deep*" for a catch. These words ring out for us today, he says. We are to take up the mission Christ gave us with new energy and enthusiasm.

This resource pack is intended to help parish communities do just that. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the fruit of a renewal of the catechumenate of the Church in the first centuries. This was the way in which adults who came to the Church seeking faith were gradually helped to respond to the Gospel and prepare to be baptized. In recent years this original approach has been taken up again to provide us with a way of initiating adults to faith within the Catholic tradition. It is rich in its use of the Word of God, balances the different aspects of a person's journey to baptism, and provides a real stimulus to parish life.

I am grateful to those who have generously given their time to putting this document together. I know it will be of great help for this essential part of the life of every parish.

Mgr Philip Holroyd



About this Information Pack

RCIA stands for The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. It is the means by which the Catholic Church welcomes people to faith in Christ and membership of the Church. This information pack is intended to help parishes understand what the RCIA is about and to offer ideas and resources for running RCIA in the parish.

Every Christian community has the responsibility of offering people a way to come to faith in Christ and to become a member of the Church. This involves giving witness to Christ by our lives, presenting Christ and his Gospel through the tradition of the Church, helping individuals grow through an “apprenticeship in faith” and accompanying them on their journey in faith.

Each parish community is different and will adapt any resources and suggestions to their own circumstances. Every individual is different, and the Holy Spirit works in each one’s life in a way best suited to him or her.

The aim therefore is to provide guidelines within which each parish can develop an RCIA process suited to its particular needs.

Part One: The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

What is the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults?

RCIA is the process, a period of conversion and specific ceremonies, which leads adults to Christian baptism and into full Communion with the Catholic Church. The Church recognises four stages in the process of the RCIA:

1. Enquiry and Evangelisation

This initial stage is a time when a person approaches the Church community with their interest in Christ, and with their questions about faith and Christian life. In return they are welcomed by the parish community and hear about the Gospel of Christ as a response to their search. This stage is also known as the Pre-Catechumenate. Those who take part in it may be known as “enquirers”.

2. The Catechumenate

The “Catechumenate” is a term used in the early centuries of the Church for the period of time in which a person prepared for Christian baptism. It is a kind of “apprenticeship in the faith”, a period of formation, deepening the response to the Gospel of Christ, growing in commitment and faith, and beginning to be initiated into the life of the Christian community. To take part in this a person is formally enrolled as a “catechumen”.

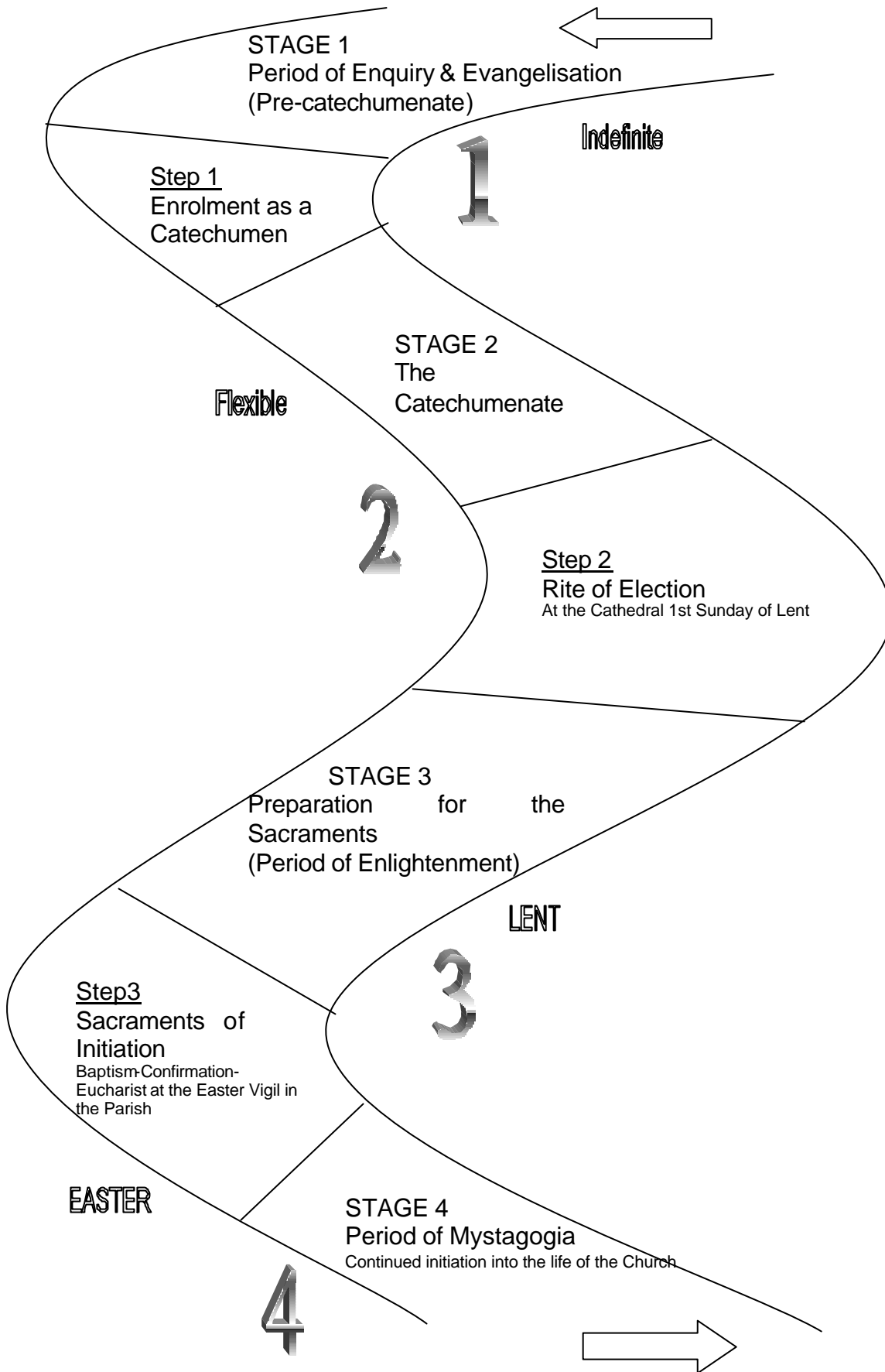
3. Preparation to receive the Sacraments

The Sacraments of Christian Initiation - Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist - are usually received at the Easter Vigil. The season of Lent developed in part as the time when those who had completed the Catechumenate applied to be candidates for Baptism. This now takes place at the Rite of Election on the first Sunday of Lent. The six weeks of Lent are a time of concentrated spiritual preparation for initiation at Easter.

4. Period of instruction after Baptism or Reception

After being baptised, confirmed, and receiving the Eucharist with the community, the new Christians continue their formation with further instruction about the sacraments, about the Church and about Christian witness. This stage is named *Mystagogia* – the sharing of the mysteries.

THE JOURNEY IN FAITH



Who is the RCIA for?

This process of initiation in four stages is the way in which the Church brings a person who is not baptised to faith and membership of the Church. It is sometimes called *The Baptismal Catechumenate*.

It can be adapted so that a person baptised as a catholic when a child, but then left without any further involvement or teaching, can now be evangelised and brought into the full life of the Church and its sacraments.

It is also used to provide the pattern followed by someone baptised in another Christian denomination who now wishes to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church.

A parish may well find that its RCIA group may include people from all these circumstances. They can prepare fruitfully together, provided the difference between someone already baptised and someone coming to Christian faith for the first time, is properly understood and respected at appropriate points.

Finally, the RCIA is recognised by the Church as the model for all Christian catechesis, “the exemplar and rule for all Christian Initiation”. (RCIA, section 5) Its structure, insights and dynamic have application to all Christian formation and development.

*This, then, is what I pray, kneeling before the Father,
from whom every family, whether spiritual or natural takes its name:
Out of infinite glory, may he give you the power through his Spirit for your
hidden self to grow strong
so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then,
planted in love and built on love,
you will, with all the saints, have strength to grasp
the breadth and the length, the height and the depth;
until, knowing the love of Christ,
which is beyond all knowledge,
you are filled with the utter fullness of God.*

Ephesians 3:14-19

In the Parish

In many parishes the RCIA process is known as “Journey in Faith”. This is sometimes a useful title and can perhaps seem less daunting than the full title. But of course all of us are on a journey in faith throughout our lives. RCIA is more specific: it focuses on the initiation of adults to baptism and to full membership of the Catholic community.

Preparation takes place in the parish community. It is very important that the RCIA is seen as part of the life of the parish as a whole. The community of the Church, the body of Christ, is the place where faith is nurtured and new Christians are formed.

The RCIA includes meetings for prayer, discussion and learning, usually on a weekly basis. It must also include a gradual initiation into the life and worship of the community. The move from one stage to another is marked by special liturgies. Initiation into the Church is finally celebrated with the whole parish in the great ceremonies of Easter, and then continues afterwards. All these elements together form the RCIA.

Individual parishes will have their own needs as to when to begin the RCIA process and how long it should last. In general, parishes involved have found that this is between six months and two years. The Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated at the Easter Vigil. This needs to be considered when planning the timetable, as Easter is a moveable feast.

In later sections, there are suggestions on content and approach.

The early Christian community

These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.

The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.

They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.

Acts 2: 42, 44-47

What are the benefits of the RCIA?

RCIA is an important way to fulfil the duty we have as Catholics to be witnesses of Christ to others by walking alongside them on their journey of faith. Parishes in the diocese who participate in RCIA have found the experience a positive one, in the following ways:

- New people are welcomed as disciples of Christ into the Catholic Church
- They bring new life, gifts and skills. This encourages constant renewal for the whole community
- Relationships and friendships are built which last and which help to create community/communion
- Communication of the RCIA process and the participants is shared with the whole community. The community shares in the celebration of the Rites
- Catechists/leaders benefit from the experience. Everyone receives and is nourished. Catechists' own faith and learning is developed. It is a three-way experience, enriching the faith of the catechists, those who come to the meetings, both enquirers and parishioners, and indeed the whole of the parish community
- It is a great gift for the parish community to see people being received into the Church through Lent and Easter

So you are no longer aliens or foreign visitors: you are citizens like all the saints, and part of God's household. You are part of a building that has the apostles and prophets for its foundations, and Christ Jesus himself for its main cornerstone. As every structure is aligned on him, all grow into one holy temple in the Lord; and you too in him, are being built into a house where God lives, in the Spirit.

Ephesians 2: 19-22

The Role of the Parish

All Catholics by virtue of their baptism are called to evangelise

The RCIA process belongs to the whole of the parish and members of the community can contribute in many different ways.

The RCIA belongs to the whole parish in as much as:

- It gives an inspiring example of Christian faith and community
- The liturgy is celebrated with commitment and significance
- The Parish sustains the process with prayer
- It welcomes and supports all involved at every stage

Individually, parishioners help by:

- Welcoming newcomers/visitors and offering hospitality
- Being open with their own faith, promoting interest in the Catholic faith and encouraging those who may be drawn to know more
- Being aware of relatives/friends/colleagues who may have an interest in learning more about the Catholic faith and inviting them to participate in the RCIA/Journey in Faith
- Praying that people will come along to the meetings and for those who are leading and participating in the sessions.

The RCIA is also a special ministry within the parish. The parish priest aims to gather a team to support the process:

- Catechists
- Sponsors
- Prayer partners
- Welcomers and hospitality providers
- People to help with publicity

*All of you are Christ's body,
and each one is a part of it.*

1 Corinthians 12:27

The Ministries for the RCIA

The Parish Priest

As pastoral and spiritual leader of the community it is the role of the parish priest to have overall care for the initiation of new members into the community. He will speak at Mass to the whole community about this aspect of parish life, and make sure that by prayer and support, and in the liturgical celebrations, the whole parish is involved.

He will gather a team of parishioners to guide the RCIA in the parish, meet them regularly for support and planning, and ensure that they have the formation for the work being asked of them.

The parish priest will get to know the candidates personally, ideally including a home visit to each of them and their families.

As he gets to know the enquirers it will be necessary, with great sensitivity, to know whether their personal circumstances present particular difficulties for their full participation in the life of the Church. Most often this will arise because of previous marriages and relationship issues. The priest must address these issues in trust and confidence with the enquirers.

It will be his responsibility in a special way to keep to the forefront the fact that it is the work of the Holy Spirit in each person's life that is leading him or her to membership of the Church. He will know that the proclamation of Christ and his Gospel is the heart of the RCIA process. His personal example of faith in and love of Christ will be of great importance.

The seeds that fell in good soil stand for those who hear the message and retain it in a good and obedient heart, and they persist until they bear fruit.

Luke 8:15

Catechists

Catechists are members of the community commissioned for the ministry of helping others grow in faith and commitment to Christ. They help the catechumens and candidates to prepare for the sacraments of initiation. The catechists carry out their ministry by:

- Helping the catechumens and candidates to receive the Gospel of Christ and to respond to it with faith
- Encouraging them to pray
- Sharing with them the teachings of the Church
- Offering them support in the name of the parish
- Strengthening their sense of belonging to the parish community
- Being a friend to the candidates
- Sharing their own faith, commitment and enthusiasm
- Listening and being aware of problems

Catechists can be from any background and age group. What is important is that they love Christ and wish to share their faith.

Catechists must be:

- Committed, practising Catholics
- Involved in the parish
- Able to share their own experience of faith
- Prepared to make a commitment to the candidates
- Willing to undertake formation for this ministry

There should be more than one catechist if possible in a parish for the RCIA process. This is because it is the Church as a community that transmits the Gospel. It also provides support and flexibility.

Sponsors and Godparents

The ministry of sponsor is one of companionship, encouragement and witness. A sponsor should be a member of the parish community, at least sixteen years of age, confirmed as a Catholic, and have received the Eucharist. A parent of the person being baptised may not act as sponsor. The non-baptised enquirer should have a sponsor by the time of the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of the Catechumens and baptised enquirers by the time of the Rite of Welcoming the Candidates. The enquirer and RCIA team should make the choice of sponsor together. Sponsors carry out their ministry by:

- Serving as a source of information about the Catholic church
- Listening to the candidate's reflections, doubts and questions
- Sharing their own faith experience
- Participating in sessions along with the candidates
- Standing as witness to the progress of the candidate during the celebration of the liturgical rites.

The sponsor may act as godparent from the Rite of Election onwards or a different person may be chosen. The ministry of godparent is one of lifetime support of growth in the Christian life. Godparents carry out their ministry by:

- Showing the candidates how to practise the Gospel in personal and social life
- Sustaining the candidates in moments of hesitancy and anxiety
- Bearing witness
- Guiding the candidates in their baptismal life.

Welcomers

The essence of the ministry of welcome is reaching out to those who are seeking Christ and can involve:

- Engaging enquirers/candidates in personal conversation
- Welcoming people into their homes
- Including candidates in community gatherings

At the RCIA sessions it is important to have one or two welcomers who can greet people on arrival and help them to feel comfortable. Ideally the welcomers should not be the catechists. At some point in the evening light refreshments can be provided.

Prayer Partners

The candidates can be linked to one or more members of the community and both partners can agree to pray for one another during the time of the Catechumenate and preparation and beyond. This can be a significant ministry for those who are sick or housebound.



Part Two: How to plan for the RCIA in your Parish

A checklist



The following is a summary checklist of what needs to be included in a parish Journey in Faith:

Preparing Ourselves

- Whole parish prays about the RCIA/Journey in Faith
- Preaching renews the community's sense of mission in proclaiming the Gospel
- Parish Priest gathers a team/Deanery team to include publicity and advertising, welcomers and hospitality and catechists
- Training and formation for team

Getting Started

- Planning of the meetings and the whole process
- Advertising and publicity:
- References to RCIA/Journey in Faith can be included in many parish and school communications e.g. Newsletter, summer fayre programme, Advent & Christmas, Lent & Easter events, local press, general notices
- A Network of Prayer set up (ministry for the sick and housebound)
- Enquirers are invited to come, by friends, parishioners, and the parish priest.
- RCIA parish leaflet is available
- The whole parish community is kept informed

How to shape the meetings

The RCIA team, clergy and catechists, needs to decide:

- The most appropriate time for the sessions to take place.
- How long the sessions will be.
- How long the process is expected to take (with great flexibility).
- Which venue to use.



The room should be carefully prepared, warm, comfortable and attractive, and the right size for the group.

At the first session, it is important to make people welcome (See “What is important for good RCIA?”).

Begin with a simple prayer by one of the team. (Be careful not to assume too much or put pressure on people. As time goes on, longer prayer, which invites participation, can be added when people are ready for it)

It is important to let people get to know each other (again without pressure), and there are different ways of doing this.

Give people a clear idea of how the meeting will unfold. Always finish at the agreed time.

Light refreshments should be available – (but not necessarily at the start of the meeting.)

What is important for good RCIA?



Parishes in the diocese which run the RCIA process have identified the following points:

- It is important to make people feel welcome and at ease.
- Plan the layout of the room
- Meet people where they are.
- Be inclusive and be sensitive to individual needs and circumstances.
- Be flexible. You may have planned a session but circumstances may require you to adapt.
- Involve other people in the parish as much as possible. There is a danger that RCIA becomes a minority interest but catechists are acting on behalf of the parish community and so wider participation is important.
- Think about the words you use. We take “church language” for granted but it may not make much sense to newcomers.
- Encourage questions but don’t worry if you don’t know the answer, you can always promise to find out.
- Encourage participation and open discussion. However, be equally sensitive that some people, particularly at the beginning, may be uncomfortable talking about personal experiences and feelings. If they prefer to listen, don’t make them feel pressured to talk.
- Make time for prayer, particularly silent prayer and meditation on the scriptures.
- Encourage personal prayer outside of meetings

Period of Post-Baptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy

The fourth stage of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults sometimes fails to have the time and attention it needs. The Easter ceremonies and reception of the sacraments are so important and powerful that it is natural for them to be experienced as the goal achieved. But for all us the journey continues, and formation in faith and the life of the Christian continues all our lives. It is important that the new members of the community are not simply left to their own devices when Easter is over. They still have much to learn, and still need to be helped to feel part of the community.

It can also be of great help to realise that they do not have to learn absolutely everything about Catholicism before they are received at Easter. This relieves the mistaken pressure of feeling that everything must be crammed into the meetings during the Catechumenate.

There are suggestions elsewhere for the kind of issues that might be dealt with during this time. It may be especially useful to invite members of parish and wider societies and groups to explain them to the new members. Each parish will have its own ideas based on its particular interests and situation.

At a Diocesan level, there is usually a celebration with the Bishop around Pentecost – this is announced at the Rite of Election and information is included in the individual letters of welcome which the Bishop sends to each person.

The new members of the community will be particularly enthusiastic and committed to the parish. It is common experience to find that they will have a marvellous contribution to make to the parish in the years ahead. At the same time the Church traditionally has allowed them time to mature and settle down as Catholics before inviting them into the formal ministries of reader or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist. Too much should not be asked of them too soon.

A Note on Content

Deciding what to include as the content of the meetings, which form a large part of the RCIA, is a considerable challenge to the parish team. It is vital that as they do this they always keep the basic principles in mind.

The journey of faith of each person includes several different elements forming an integrated whole.

They are:

- Personal faith - as a response to the Gospel of Christ.
- Worship of God in the Liturgy.
- Participation in the life of the Christian community, spiritually and socially.
- Knowledge of the beliefs and teachings of the Church.
- Being part of the Mission of Christ's people to the world around us.



The initiation of new members into the Church must take account of all these and include them, appropriately, in the process. The meetings should aim to include three elements:

- A connection with life and experience.
- The input of information about the faith of the Church.
- A spiritual element of prayer and listening to scripture.

These need not all be in the same proportions at every meeting. While it is necessary to share experience of faith and life among those present, it is essential that the meetings also present to the enquirers the beliefs and teachings of the Church, in a way which relates them to life, and introduces the enquirers to the scriptures. A good balance of experience, knowledge and prayer is the aim.

At the same time the RCIA must not be thought of as the meetings alone. It is essential the other dimensions of worship, of parish life, and of mission, be experienced as well.

Everyone needs to remain aware that God is working in the hearts and lives of everyone through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

A Summary of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Stage One: Enquiry and Evangelisation				
Those Interested in the faith are known as Enquirers				
Individual	Catechists	Parish	Themes	Suggestions for Resources
<p>A person becomes interested in the Gospel story, in faith, and in the Catholic Church, and seeks answers to questions about these and about their own lives</p>	<p>The Catechists and their helpers meet with those interested</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to listen to their questions and experiences, ▪ to discuss with them, from their own experience, how Jesus Christ and his Gospel may be the response to their search, ▪ and to begin to establish trust and friendship ▪ To explore with them whether they wish to go further 	<p>The parish community supports this stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ by prayer, ▪ by helping people come to the meetings, ▪ by being welcoming and hospitable to all 	<p>Life, Faith, Discipleship</p> <p>My Story Enquirers Catechists</p> <p>The Story of Jesus</p> <p>The Story of the Disciples</p>	<p><i>Abraham, Genesis 15, 18</i> <i>Call of Disciples in John 1, 35-51</i></p> <p><i>Birth of Jesus, His Baptism and Galilean Ministry</i> <i>Passion and Crucifixion</i></p> <p><i>Emmaus, Jn 20, 19-29</i> <i>Acts of the Apostles</i></p>
Step One: Enrolment of those not baptised as Catechumens				

A Summary of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Stage Two: The Catechumenate				
Individual	Catechists	Parish	Themes	Suggestions for Resources
<p>The individual learns more about the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and how it is lived out in the life of a Catholic.</p> <p>It is a time for the initial attraction to Christ to be deepened and become a personal faith and commitment</p>	<p>The catechists act as spiritual friends and guides to the candidates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ on their journey through a period of formation, an apprenticeship, in the Christian life. ▪ Sharing with them, In a structured way, the revelation of God in Jesus through the living experience of the Church 	<p>The parish community supports this stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ by prayer ▪ by helping people come to the meetings ▪ by welcoming the candidates, as appropriate, into worship and the life of the parish 	<p>The Gospel of the Kingdom</p> <p>The Gospel of the Christ</p> <p>The Faith of the Church (Apostles Creed)</p> <p>The Sacraments of Life</p> <p>Living as a Christian</p> <p>Christian Prayer</p>	<p><i>Matt 5 to 7; 11 to 13</i></p> <p><i>Mark 8, 27-38</i> <i>Mark 10, 32-52</i> <i>Acts 2</i></p> <p><i>Refer to the Catechism of the Church, and choose Scripture</i></p> <p><i>CCC I</i></p> <p><i>CCC II</i></p> <p><i>CCC III</i></p> <p><i>CCC IV</i></p>
Step Two: The Rite of Election as Candidates for Initiation				

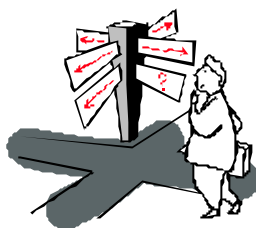
A Summary of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Stage Three: Preparing for Easter				
A time of purification and enlightenment within the community				
Individual	Catechists	Parish	Themes	Suggestions for Resources
<p>Spiritual preparation to receive the Sacraments of Initiation at Easter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The catechists help the candidates discern whether they are ready to ask for full initiation into the Catholic Church. ▪ They share with them the summary profession of faith, the Creed, and the model of all Christian prayer, the Our Father. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As this takes place during Lent the whole parish is involved in a time of spiritual renewal and preparation for Easter. ▪ The sponsors prepare for their role, and give special support to the candidates ▪ The community supports the catechumens in their preparation and is inspired by them for its own preparation for Easter 	<p>Conversion, Forgiveness, Faith</p> <p>The Our Father The Apostles Creed</p> <p>Holy Week and The Liturgies of Easter</p>	<p><i>The Samaritan Woman</i> <u><i>John 4</i></u> <i>A Man Born Blind</i> <u><i>John 9</i></u> <i>The Raising of Lazarus</i> <u><i>John 11</i></u></p> <p><i>Refer to the Rite itself for the liturgies</i></p>
Step Three: Celebrating the Sacraments of Initiation				

A Summary of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Stage Four: The Time after Easter				
Individual	Catechists	Parish	Themes	Suggestions for Resources
<p>The Individual begins their life as a full member of the Catholic Church.</p> <p>They continue meeting in order to strengthen their commitment and learn more detail about the beliefs, practices, and responsibilities of the community of Christ's disciples.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The catechists and sponsors continue to meet with the new members of the Church. ▪ They share with them more detailed knowledge of the faith and sacraments, to deepen and extend their knowledge, understanding and commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The community goes out of its way to involve the new members in the life of the parish and help them experience in practice the life of a Christian community, which they have been called to. ▪ The Bishop celebrates the Eucharist with new members at Pentecost 	<p>Follow up areas which the group asks for.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Church's Year. ▪ More on the Sacraments. ▪ More on the Church: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Its history; Its structures; religious orders; Ecumenism Other faiths Option for the Poor Organisations Movements 	<p>Invite people from different organisations to meet the group and share something of their work and its inspiration</p>
Step Four: Life as a Catholic Christian				

Where can I go for help?



- Diocese of Leeds RE Team
- Network of catechists/parishes/deaneries
- RCIA Newsletter
- Diocesan website: www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk
- Internet sites

Formation for Parish Teams

While this document sets out to be a useful summary guide to the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* it is not meant to replace suitable formation and training which clergy and catechists should undertake. The Diocesan Religious Education Team will arrange for this formation on request at parish, deanery or Diocesan level. It is essential that either a parish group beginning RCIA after a period without it, or any new people invited to join an existing group as catechists take advantage of the formation available. Each year there will be information publicised to the parishes and through the RCIA newsletter about formation opportunities generally available in the Diocese.

Contact the Religious Education Centre, Hinsley Hall, 62 Headingley Lane, Leeds, LS6 2BX

Tel: 0113 261 8040 Fax: 0113 261 8044 e-mail reteam@hinsley-hall.co.uk

For specific advice and training for the RCIA please contact

Linda Pennington Tel: 0113 261 8043

linda.pennington@hinsley-hall.co.uk

RCIA Resources

Books

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

There are a number of versions of the Rite but a useful copy is:

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – A Study Book

St Thomas More Centre, ISBN 0 948071 02 8

This copy includes useful sections on the Catechesis of the RCIA, A Pastoral Commentary and A Liturgical Commentary.

On the Threshold, The Report of the Bishops' Conference Working Party on Sacramental Initiation

This book has been written for local use, whether at parish, deanery or diocesan level. It has been designed to be used especially by catechists, teachers, priests and those concerned with meeting people as they stand on the threshold seeking initiation for themselves or their children.

God For Grown – Ups, Discovering Christ Today in the Catholic Church

Pub: Redemptorist, ISBN 0 85231 152 4

God for Grown –Ups

- A resource book for everyone engaged in teaching and sharing the Catholic faith with adults. The starting point for such teaching and sharing is the life and experience of the inquirer. This experience is then related to the experience of Jesus Christ and the Church.
- An essential aid for everyone helping inquirers in the RCIA. It explains the basic thinking behind the RCIA process and offers important background information to the Rite based on practical experience. Suggests possible outlines for sessions, which help the catechists to take those interested in the Catholic Faith through the first inquiry to the sacraments of initiation and beyond.

Focus on Faith, A Resource for the Journey into the Catholic Church,

Deborah M. Jones, Pub Kevin Mayhew ISBN 0 86209 887 4

This book is primarily intended as one of the tools for use by those parishes in which people are embarking on the Catechumenate period of the RCIA. Ideas and suggestions are given for the candidates, their friends and sponsors, group leaders and other parishioners. The contents are divided into twenty sessions, each having an introductory text on a theme for home reading, followed by suggestions for group discussion and exploration. Each session concludes with a short period of prayer.

Making RCIA Work, An anthology of material for use in RCIA groups

Christine Dodd

This book

- Is a practical and down –to-earth guide to the RCIA process
- Is based on Christine Dodd's experience in parishes
- Contains lively stories and case studies
- Includes worksheets and follow-up sessions

Your Faith, A popular presentation of Catholic belief

Rosemary Gallagher and John Trenchard

Pub: Redemptorist, ISBN 0 85231 027 7

Your Faith presents the fundamental truths of the Catholic faith in a simple and popular way. It is recommended for the RCIA and for individuals who wish to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Catholic teaching.

Faith For the Future, A New Illustrated Catechism

Pub: Redemptorist, ISBN 0 85231 167 2

This is a book, which provides a popular yet authentic interpretation of the teaching of the Catholic Church, which is appropriate for today's world. It follows the structure of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and provides references to each of the four sections that are the faith of the Church, Celebrating the presence of Christ, Life in Christ and Prayer.

The Mass: Remembering Our Story

Whitney Wherrett Roberson, Pub: Franciscan Communications,
ISBN 1 55 944 002 3

This book traces the history and roots of the Mass and explores its meaning for people today

Come and See, Karen Albertus

Pub: St Anthony Messenger Press, ISBN 0 86716 411 5

This is a comprehensive folder that covers the main doctrinal, liturgical and moral issues of the Catholic Church. The pack includes Catholic updates, which are variously sourced and originally aimed at the continual catechisation of American Catholics. The updates have been selected to cover the needs of inquirers from the Pre-Catechumenate stage to Mystagogia and Discipleship.

How to Survive Being Married to a Catholic. A frank and honest guide to Catholic attitudes, beliefs and practices.

Michael Henesy & Rosemary Gallagher

Redemptorist Publications, ISBN 0 85231 089 7

If you are not a Catholic but your partner is, this book is for you. In thirteen amusing and down-to-earth chapters it tells you what Catholics believe and what difference it makes to their lives. You will also find frank and straightforward answers to over eighty questions people most commonly ask about Catholics and the Catholic Church

When You Are an RCIA Sponsor, Handing on the Faith

Rita Burns Senseman, ISBN 0 86716 449 2

This booklet offers guidance to those who have been invited to be the sponsor of a person during their RCIA journey.

Foundations in Faith, Catechist Manual for the Catechumenate, Resources for Christian Living, Allen, Texas

This manual follows the three-year cycle of the Liturgy of the Word. It is a useful and practical guide, with ideas for presenting different aspects of the Catholic faith. There is also a participant's manual.

General Reference and Use

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Faith of the Catholic Church – A Summary

Edited by Rt Rev David Konstant, Catholic Truth Society, 2001,
ISBN 1-86082-100-6

A Catechism of Christian Doctrine

Jubilee Edition, Catholic Truth Society 1999, ISBN 0 85183 420 5

The Catholic Faith

Roderick Strange. ISBN: 0 232 52419 X

A New Journey in Faith

Ann Groves. ISBN: 0 9531450 0X

Sacraments Revisited

Liam Kelly. ISBN: 0 232 52239 1

The Sacraments Explained

Nigel Bavidge. Publ: Kevin Mayhew

This is a useful and accessible presentation of the sacraments, outlining their history, their background in Scripture and detailing each rite.

Christ Among Us

Anthony Wilhelm. ISBN: 0 06 069417 3

One Bread One Body

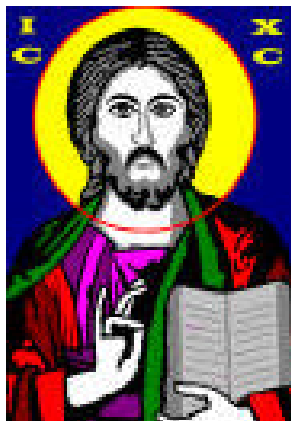
ISBN: 1 86082 049 2

Feasts and Seasons

Werenfried van Straaten, 1993 Aid to the Church in Need,
ISBN 0951 1805 4 1

Responses to 101 Questions on the Church

Richard P McBrien, 1996 Geoffrey Chapman, ISBN 0 225 66826 2



Scripture and Liturgy

The Jerusalem Bible

New Sunday and Holy Day Liturgies (Years A, B, C),

Flor McCarthy. ISBN: 1 871552 71 0

The Good News of Mark's Year (also Matthew & Luke)

Silvester O'Flynn. ISBN: 1 85607 001 8

The Pope John Sunday Missal.

Edited by Mgr Michael Buckley, 1984, Redemptorist Publications, ISBN 0 85231 068 4

The Weekday Missal

1982, Harper Collins Religious, ISBN 0 00 599725 9

Prayer Books

A Catholic Prayer Book.

Compiled by Michael Hollings, McCrimmon Publishing Co 1976, ISBN0 85597

A Simple Prayer Book

Catholic Truth Society, 1986, ISBN 0 851283 242 3

The Catholic Prayer Book.

Compiled by Monsignor Michael Buckley, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984, ISBN 0-232-52322-3

Videos

CAFÉ resources

- Knowing God Better
- Exploring the Catholic Church

This is the Night

A parish welcomes new Catholics at the Easter Vigil.

Other Resources

Diocesan website: www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk

Diocesan Catholic Post

Jesuit website – www.jesuit.i.e/prayer

www.catholic-forum.com

www.landings-international.org

www.oncecatholic.org

Bible Alive - daily Scripture meditations.

CD ROM – Religious Clip Art Vol II, Softkey 1997 ISBN 0 7630 1250 5

The origins of this resource pack

In 2002/3 people involved in RCIA in their parishes met in several venues to share their experience of RCIA. Three key themes emerged:

1. The need for good resources
2. A request for formation
3. The value of mutual support

From the meetings a working party has gathered with Linda Pennington of the RE Team to respond to these needs. A questionnaire was sent to all parishes asking for information about good resources and a number of responses were received. The working party have set about producing this resource pack to be used both to help existing Catechists develop their work, and to be a key part of the formation of new Catechists.

The working party also wants to update the database of everyone involved in RCIA in the Diocese so that they can be contacted with information and news. A regular newsletter is therefore planned. We hope it will keep people in contact across the Diocese and be a forum for the exchange of good ideas.

Members of the Working Party

- Marie Atherton, St Patrick, Huddersfield
- Rev Barry Barton, St Walburga & St Mary, Shipley
- Rev Bernard Bickers, Vicariate for Clergy
- Rev Tony Boylan, Vicariate for Worship
- Dennis Bristow, St Walburga & St Mary, Shipley
- Rev Philip Holroyd, Religious Education Team
- Louise Jennings, St Patrick, Birstall
- Denise Mason, St Wilfrid, Ripon
- Linda Pennington, Religious Education Team
- Rev Paul Reid, St John the Baptist, Normanton
- David Slingsby, St Austin, Wakefield

I would like to thank all the members of the working party for their hard work and support in producing this catechist pack.

Linda Pennington, February 2005

Acknowledgements

Scripture quotations are from The Jerusalem Bible, © Darton Longman Todd 1968

APPENDIX I

Rite of Election and Affirmation

Introduction

In early February every year each parish priest receives a letter about the Rite of Election and Affirmation in which a number of important issues are addressed:

- **The Rite of Election and Affirmation** is for both
 - Catechumens - those who will be fully initiated by Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil
 - Candidates - those already baptised, who will be confirmed and receive the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.

- **Venue** - The Cathedral Church of St Anne, Leeds.

- **Date** - The first Sunday of Lent at 3:00 pm (please arrive by 2:45pm)

- **Who Should and Could Attend?** - Ideally, everyone involved in the RCIA process in the parish should attend and take part in the Rite of Election and Affirmation. Specifically:
 - Parish priest or assistant priest,
 - Permanent deacon,
 - Each catechumen,
 - Each candidate,
 - Each sponsor of each catechumen and candidate,
 - Relatives and friends of each catechumen and candidate.
 - RCIA Catechists

- **Completion and Return of Forms** - The parish priest/RCIA co-ordinator in each parish has to ensure that the documentation is completed in plenty of time before the First Sunday of Lent.

Names of Catechumens and Candidates

Two forms, one listing all the catechumens from the parish for Baptism, and another listing those applying to be received into full communion, must be completed and returned no later than the Friday before Ash Wednesday. These need to be signed by the parish priest.

Request for Christian Initiation of Adults.

Each catechumen must complete a '*Request for Christian Initiation*' form and bring it with them to the Cathedral on the First Sunday of Lent. Please note that the document requires completing and signing by the catechumen and witnessing and dating by the parish priest.

During the service each catechumen will hand *The Request for Christian Initiation* to the Bishop during the Rite of Election just after they have signed the Book of the Elect. This is a collective record of all those requesting baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.

Request for Reception into Full Communion with the Catholic Church

Each Candidate must take with them to the Cathedral on the First Sunday of Lent this completed request. Please note that the request requires completing and signing by the candidate and witnessing by the parish priest. In signing the pro-forma the parish priest declares that he has seen the documentary evidence of baptism. (The candidates should be asked for this several weeks earlier, as it can take time to obtain. It is good practice to start this process in December.)

Each Candidate will place their request on a tray during the Rite of Affirmation just before the bishop greets each parish group. Parishes are usually received in alphabetical order as well as in groups of two or three together as number permit. Unlike the catechumens, the candidates are not required to sign the Book of the Elect. This procedure ensures that each parish priest will receive a letter of authorisation from the bishop for each of the Elect and for each Candidate in time for the Easter Vigil.

- **Sponsors** - Sponsors, sit next to the person that they are sponsoring, and accompany each catechumen and candidate to the front of the cathedral when their parish is called forward. They stand beside their catechumen/candidate and place their right hand on the shoulder of the person they are sponsoring, when being addressed by the Bishop. They return to their seat with the person they are sponsoring after meeting with the bishop.
- **Order of Service** - An order of service book is provided on the day of the Rite of Election and Affirmation. It contains a step-by-step guide of what happens during the Rite including helpful notes written in italics about what catechumens, candidates and sponsors should be doing at various times during the Rite.
- **Refreshments after the Rite of Election and Affirmation** – Afterwards refreshments will be served in the cathedral hall. Parishes should indicate in the reply letter the approximate number wishing to take refreshments. Alternatively, some parishes have a tradition of celebrating the 'Rite of Election and Affirmation' by having a shared table either in the home parish centre/hall or in the home of one of the parishioners.
- **Pre-Ceremony Information Sheet** – This occasion in the Cathedral is powerful and moving. Catechumens and candidates will more at ease if there has been good preparation, and they know what to expect. Appendix 2 offers an example.

THE CATECHUMEN BRINGS THIS WITH HIM/HER TO THE CATHEDRAL

**REQUEST
For
CHRISTIAN INITIATION**

My Lord,

I, the undersigned, having considered the matter carefully and having taken full part in the programme and catechesis in the parish of:

.....

now ask you that I may be received into full communion with the Catholic Church:

on
in the church of:

.....

Signed:

Full name:

Dated:

From the Parish Priest / Assistant Priest:

This candidate is to be presented to the Bishop at the Cathedral during the celebration of the Rite of Election on the First Sunday of Lent in the year.....

I am satisfied that there is no reason why he/she may not receive the Sacraments of Initiation into the Church.

Signed:

THE CANDIDATE BRINGS THIS WITH HIM/HER TO THE CATHEDRAL

**REQUEST
For
RECEPTION INTO FULL COMMUNION
WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

My Lord,

I, the undersigned, having considered the matter carefully and having taken full part in the programme and catechesis in the parish of:

.....
**now ask you that I may be received into full communion with the
Catholic Church:**

on
in the church of:

.....
Signed:

Full name:

Dated:

* * * * *

From the Parish Priest / Assistant Priest:

I have seen the documentary evidence of baptism and I am satisfied that there is no reason why he/she cannot be admitted into full communion with the Church.

Signed:

Appendix 2

DIOCESE OF LEEDS
RITES OF ELECTION AND AFFIRMATION
CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST.ANNE, LEEDS

First Sunday of Lent

Dear

This letter is to explain the arrangements for the Rite of Election and Affirmation at the Cathedral on Sunday.....at.....

1 Sponsors and guests.

Your sponsor should accompany you to the Cathedral. The role of the sponsor will have been explained during the preparation meetings in your parish, and will usually have been chosen well before this event at the Cathedral. Your sponsor will be a confirmed and practising member of the Catholic Church who stands as your witness during the celebration, and is a friend to you for your journey of faith now and in the future.

The event at the Cathedral is a public celebration. As a consequence your family and close friends are also invited. A row or rows of seats will be reserved for your parish.

2 Travel

In order to be in our seats by 2.45 pm to the introduction to the Rite we will need to leave our Church car park byat the latest. Traditionally, we have travelled in convoy across to Leeds. We then park in one of the car parks close to the Cathedral.

3 The Rite

The Rite lasts about an hour. It is divided into four parts: 1) Introduction Rite, 2) Liturgy of the Word, 3) Liturgy of Election and Affirmation and 4) Concluding Rite. An order of service book is provided that contains a step-by-step guide of what happens during the Rite including helpful notes written in italics about what catechumens, candidates and sponsors should be doing at various times during the Rite.

Liturgy of Election for Christian Initiation: (for those not yet baptised)

The name of each parish is called out alphabetically. Those who have never been baptised (catechumens) go up to the altar along with their sponsor to meet the Bishop. Following prayers each catechumen writes their name in the **Book of the Elect**. The Bishop says a few words to the whole group and with each catechumen and their sponsor in turn. He is very friendly so don't be nervous. Following this everyone goes back to their

seats. **Please bring the completed form *Request for Reception into Full Communion with the Catholic Church*, with you on the day.**

Liturgy of Affirmation (for those already baptised)

Those already baptised who are now preparing to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church are presented to the Bishop. Following his address the name of each parish is called out alphabetically. Those who have already been baptised but not as Catholics go up to the altar, each with their sponsor to meet the Bishop. Your completed and signed '**Request for Admission**' will be collected on a tray. **Please make sure you have it with you on the day.** The Bishop says a few words in turn to the whole group, and to each candidate and sponsor.

4 Dress

The Cathedral tends to be on the cold side in February so please dress accordingly. There is no formal dress for those who will be meeting the Bishop or their sponsors, or family and friends.

5 Post Event Celebration

Afterwards you and your guests are invited to a celebration in the Cathedral Hall.

If you have any outstanding questions please contactor Fatheras appropriate. Please ensure that your parish group leader has your contact number in case of any last minute needs or changes.