

MAKING DISCIPLES INSTITUTE: SCHEDULE OUTLINE AND OBJECTIVES CHECKLIST



Friday:

- 7:00p Introductions and overview
- 7:20p How do we tell others about Jesus? | Advanced Track: teambuilding/leadership
- 7:30p Six principles of the RCIA
- 8:10p Four pillars for forming disciples
- 8:30p What would happen if our parishes did this? | All gather together
- 8:45p Liturgy: Adapted Presentation of the Creed
- 9:30p End

Saturday:

- 8:30a Morning Prayer
- 9:05a Mystagogy on Friday night liturgy
- 9:30a Overview of the RCIA
- 10:00a Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate: responding to human need
- 10:25a Break
- 10:40a Check-in and feedback
- 11:10a Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate: five inquiry questions
- 11:40a Period of the Catechumenate: making disciples using your parish
- 12:15p Lunch
- 1:00p Check-in and feedback
- 1:15p Formation plan step-by-step
- 1:45p Period of Purification and Enlightenment | Advanced Track
- 2:15p Break
- 2:30p Check-in, feedback, and simple next steps | All gather together
- 3:15p Wrap up and evaluations
- 3:30p Closing Prayer
- 3:45p End

Objectives Checklist:

- ☐ Know why the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults needs a conversion-focused community
- ☐ Identify and remember the six core principles of the RCIA
- ☐ Recognize the four areas of Christian discipleship that grow a community of disciples
- ☐ Name the changes we can expect once we commit to an RCIA-based conversion mission
- ☐ Understand the way of faith and how the ritual and catechetical paths work together
- ☐ Learn the three levels of evangelization
- ☐ Discover how to use your parish as the syllabus for RCIA catechesis
- ☐ Practice developing a unique faith formation plan
- ☐ Grasp why Lent is not a time for “catechetical instruction”
- ☐ Decide on the next simple step you can take

SIX STEPS TO MOVE YOUR RCIA PROCESS FROM GOOD TO GREAT!



Nick Wagner is the cofounder and director of TeamRCIA.com, a free, online resource to help RCIA teams make a real difference in the lives of seekers. He is the author of *The Heart of Faith: A Field Guide for Catechumens and Candidates* and

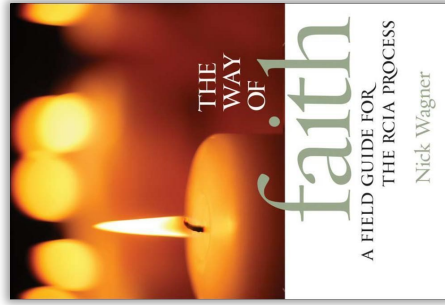
The Way of Faith: A Field Guide for the RCIA Process.

He holds a master's degree from Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota.

Contact Nick at nick@teamrcia.com.



Remember the initiation of catechumens is...	Then step up to the challenge
1 a gradual process	Start believing that we are initiating every day of the year.
2 that takes place within the community of the faithful.	Move the core initiation process outside the team and into the community (see RCIA 9).
3 By joining the catechumens in reflecting on the value of the paschal mystery	Begin sharing your personal experience of the paschal mystery.
4 and by renewing their own conversion , the faithful provide an example that will help the catechumens to obey the Holy Spirit more generously.	Move from imparting knowledge to entering into intimacy with the person of Jesus.
5 The rite of initiation is suited to a spiritual journey of adults	Use adult formation principles . Do not short-change the child catechumens with "RCIC."
6 that varies according to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the many forms of God's grace, • the free cooperation of the individuals, • the action of the Church, • and the circumstances of time and place. <p><i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, 4-5</i></p>	Pay attention to the person in front of you . Account for differences between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unbaptized • Baptized, uncatechized • Baptized, catechized Don't put people in the RCIA who don't belong there: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic confirmation candidates • Many Protestants • Returning Catholics



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How we tell others about Jesus

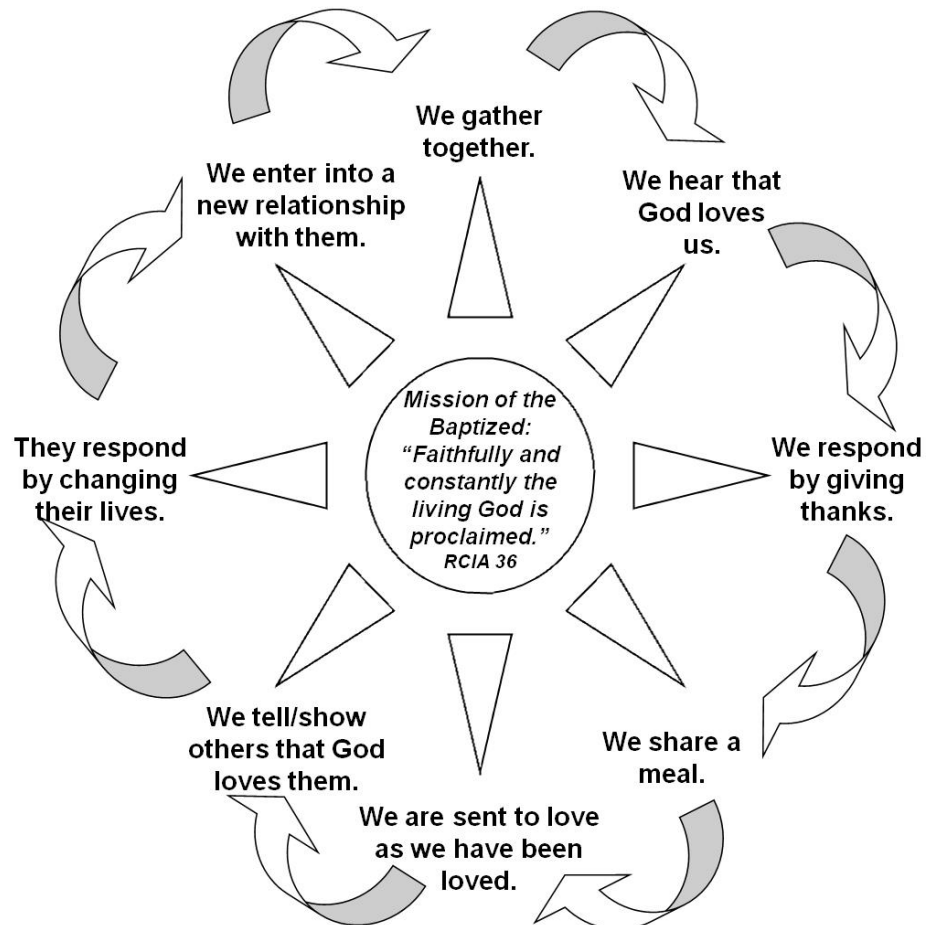
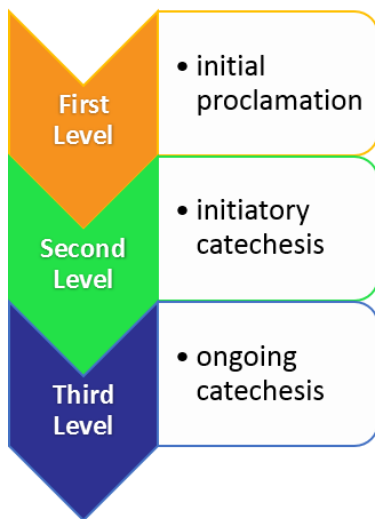
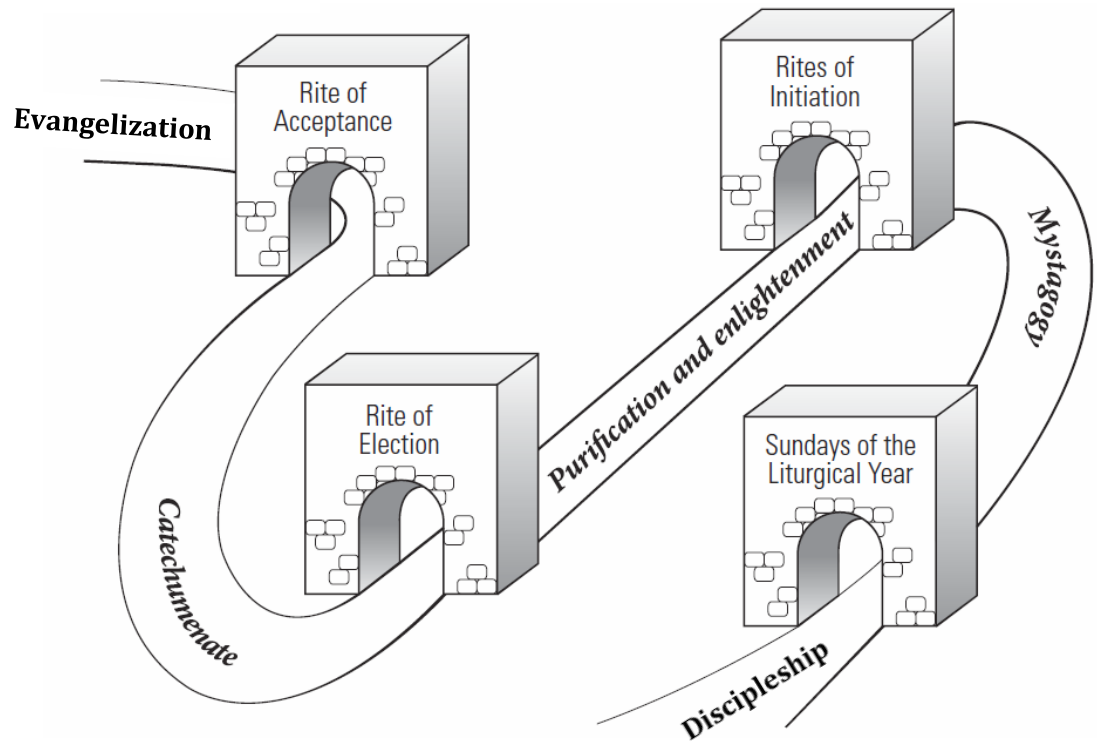


They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

Word	Community	Worship	Witness
In the parish...	In the parish...	In the parish...	In the parish...
In the home...	In the home...	In the home...	In the home...



THE PATH FOR THE WAY OF FAITH





RCIA TEAMS: BREAK THE “SPIRAL OF SILENCE” ABOUT JESUS

Do people in your parish talk about Jesus? Do *you* talk about Jesus? I recently asked a group of Catholic leaders to tell me why they thought evangelization is important. They mentioned faith, the church, the gospel, and the paschal mystery, but no one said a word about Jesus. I know, all of the things they mentioned are about Jesus, but that's a little bit different than talking about Jesus as Jesus. Think of it this way. What if I asked you to tell me why marriage is important? And you told me about covenant, and love, and raising children. But you never mentioned your wife or your husband. How weird would that be?

Talk about Jesus

In her book, *Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus*, Sherry A. Weddell says this is common in Catholic circles. We tend not to talk about Jesus. She calls it a “Spiral of Silence.” What she means by that is that there are *a lot* of Catholics (maybe a third) who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus. Because they don't have anything to say about Jesus, they influence the larger Catholic culture by their silence. We have to break the “Spiral of Silence.” Chris Walker, who runs the EvangelismCoach.org website, has [some tips](#) on how to do just that. He says we have to get intentional about having spiritual conversations. Here are his suggestions:

1) Pray

I forget to do this. I don't forget to pray. I just forget to pray at the right time. Like when I'm at Starbucks, and I meet a stranger, or even when I'm just talking with a Catholic friend, I forget to ask for guidance and support. Which is crazy, right? If my goal is to introduce people to Jesus, shouldn't step one be to offer a quick prayer like, “Okay, Lord, I'm about to open my mouth here. Make whatever comes out of it helpful for getting you and this fellow caffeine addict connected?”

2) Surface talk

I'm great at this part. Talk about the weather, the temperature of the coffee, the playoffs, whatever. This level puts the “small” in small talk. Just say a small thing. But also make it a little bit personal. For example, “I'm probably in this Starbucks once a day. How about you? Are you as addicted as I am?”

3) Personal talk

The next step is to find common ground. Walker suggests asking questions about the person's birthplace, hometown family, education, work, vacations, retirement, interests, and hobbies. Things like this are still pretty “safe,” but they move the conversation to a more personal level.

4) Religious talk

Here is where I stumble. I was raised to not talk about religion or politics in public. Gotta get over that. Most people believe in God and most of them want to talk about their belief. What they don't want is to be told *how* to believe. So this is the take-a-risk, go-to-the-cross, die-to-ego, get-over-yourself step. Here is Walker's example of a going deeper question: “On weekends we usually go hiking on Saturday, then we eat out in a restaurant after church. Do you attend church?”

5) Spiritual talk

If, on the other hand, it seems like your partner wants to keep going, then take a next step. Invite him or her to church. Or mention one simple God moment you had recently. Or offer to pray for your friend. If you want to be really bold, offer to pray *with* your friend.

WHY YOUR RCIA BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT ISN'T WORKING – AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT



Does your parish have a regular or occasional notice in the bulletin inviting new participants to join the RCIA? Can you identify the target audience? Who is the message written for? Who do you imagine reads it? Who are you hoping will respond to it?

I read these notices all the time. They tend to be a homogeneous blend of the purpose of RCIA and where and when the meetings or classes are held. If I had to guess who the intended audience was just from reading the short paragraph that appears in most bulletins, I would say it is for Catholics looking for medium to advanced adult education in Catholic teaching.

The unbaptized are not in church

I realize that most of these notices state explicitly that the RCIA is for unbaptized adults and uncatechized adults. But here's the thing. Unbaptized adults and uncatechized adults are not reading your bulletin. And if one of them did happen to wander in some Sunday and did happen to read the RCIA announcement, they would immediately conclude that RCIA is not for them.

The announcements I've seen are not written in language that would attract actual seekers. Here's an example: **"RCIA is the process designed by the Church for adults to receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and First Communion."**

The person for whom the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is designed does not know what any of these terms mean:

- RCIA
- Sacraments
- Confirmation
- First Communion

The seeker probably has a fuzzy idea of what *baptism* means, but he or she is not seeking to "receive" it.

Here's another example: **"RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) is a program for adults who wish to become Catholic. Our parish RCIA program will begin in mid-September."**

Most unbaptized and uncatechized seekers are not wishing to become Catholic. They are not looking for a program. And they certainly don't want to sign up for something in mid-September (which is either too soon or too far away, depending upon when they see your bulletin—which most of them won't, anyway).

Here's one that is a little better: **"GOT LIFE QUESTIONS? RCIA might just be for you!"**

Okay, everybody's got life questions. So maybe the one or two seekers who happen to read the bulletin will read on. But the notice then goes on to say that RCIA is for someone who:

- Is interested in becoming Catholic
- Was never baptized
- Was baptized in another Christian denomination

There is no further mention of "life questions" — what they might be or how they might be answered.

WHY YOUR RCIA BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT ISN'T WORKING – AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT (CONTINUED)



Who are we talking to?

So if our usual bulletin announcements are not working, how do we attract more inquirers?

First, you have to decide exactly who you want to attract. Think about who has gone through your RCIA process in the past. If your parish is typical, the majority of the participants have been young adults (18-19). Also, the majority of seekers were already baptized and had already had some religious formation — maybe a little, maybe a lot, but not zero. By far, the vast majority were about to marry a Catholic.

Up until now, the single most reliable source for RCIA participants has been young people marrying Catholics. If over these last few years you have noticed a drop off in numbers, it is because marriage rates are rapidly declining, and young people are no longer going to church.

A 2015 Pew study found that those who have no faith affiliation (the “nones”) are 23% of the U.S. population. And most of the “nones” are young. 56% of people born 1990-1996 are non-affiliated.

But get this. Only 3% of the nones are atheists. Or to say it the other way, 97% of the nones believe in God. So what’s going on here?

Spiritual grazers

Young people today believe in God (or something or someone “divine” or “higher” or “above”), but they don’t believe in institutional church. They tend to be spiritual “grazers,” choosing the bits of different faiths or ethical principles that attract them the most and leaving the rest.

And what attracts many of them is service. They don’t want to *be* saved. They want *to* save. So they tend to be fans of gospel stories, for example, that focus on helping the oppressed — such as the story of the Good Samaritan. They don’t believe they have to be Christian to be good Samaritans themselves.

Watch your language

If this is the person you would like to invite into your RCIA process, then here are a few suggestions:

Don't talk about...	Do talk about...	Don't talk about...	Do talk about...
Membership	Exploration	Receiving	Giving
Church	Community	Teaching	Wisdom
Catholic Church	Pope Francis	Class or meeting	Group
Christianity	Jesus	September	Welcome
Sacraments	Spirituality	Appointment	Coffee
Salvation	Service to the poor	Faith	Doubt
RCIA	Quest or journey	Program	Search or process
Joining	Gathering		

As a next step, try rewriting your RCIA bulletin announcement using language that would be attractive to young adult seekers today. Send your examples to me at Nick@TeamRCIA.com, and let’s discuss with each other the strengths of each. I’d love to hear what you have to say.

Five inquiry discernment questions

Use these five questions to learn about the inquirer and to help you develop a specialized plan of formation for this person:

Regarding my habits, knowledge, and attitudes about faith...

1. Where have I been?
2. Where am I now?
3. Where do I want to get to?
4. How am I going to get there?
5. How will I know I have arrived?



First Gathering

Prayer and introductions (10 min)

Listen to the inquirer's story. Ask them:

Where have you been? (20 min)

- When did you first become aware of God?
- If you're baptized, describe that event.
- When have you felt really close to God?
- What was your family experience of faith?
- What have been your significant relationships?
- Have you ever gone to church? How often?
- What was it like?
- Describe your knowledge of Jesus or the Bible.
- Do you own a Bible?
- What has been your image of God or Jesus?
- What has happened in your life that has led you to this moment?

Tell the inquirer your parish's story (10 min)

- Handout your Sunday bulletin.
- Talk about your parish's patron saint.
- Describe what you like about your parish.
- Describe the pastor, parish staff, and leaders.
- Tell about some parish committees, the parish website, special projects, etc.
- Describe the liturgies, schedule, character.
- Offer to meet the inquirer at Sunday Mass.

Next steps and closing (10 min)

- Ask the inquirer to write a few pages this week responding to the questions above and to share that with you.
- Closing prayer

Second Gathering

Gathering and prayer (10 min)

Listen to the inquirer's story. Ask them:

Where are you now? (20 min)

- What is your image of God now?
- How often are you aware of God in your life?
- How often do you pray and what is it like?
- Do you go to church now? How often?
- Do you ever talk about God with anyone?
- Describe what that is like.
- What are your significant relationships now?
- What is your relationship with God like now?

Where do you want to get to? (20 min)

- What do you most hope for in your relationship with God?
- Is there someone (or was there someone) in your life you want to be like in your faith?
- Describe what it is about that person that makes you want to be like them.
- Describe what you hope to find in our parish.
- What attitudes or behaviors do you hope to change in yourself?
- What are your hopes for your family's faith?
- What area of knowledge or practice do you want to strengthen with regard to faith?

Next steps and closing (10 min)

- Ask the inquirer to write a few pages this week responding to the questions above and to share that with you.
- Closing prayer

Third Gathering

Gathering and prayer (10 min)

Listen to the inquirer's story. Ask them:

How are you going to get to where you want to go? (20 min)

- In what ways do you need to develop your faith practices to get where you want to go?
- In what ways do you need to develop your relationship with God?
- In what ways do you need to develop your relationship with the church?
- How do you need your family to support you?
- How do you need the faith community at this parish to support you?
- How will you determine if your plan will get you where you want to go?

How will you know you've arrived? (20 min)

- How will you know if you've met your goal?
- How will your family know?
- How will others you interact with know?
- How will the people at this parish know?

Next steps and closing (10 min)

- Ask the inquirer to write a few pages this week responding to the questions above and to share that with you.
- Closing prayer



Formation Plan Template

SEEKER'S NAME:

STEP 1: Determine the seeker's place on the ritual path

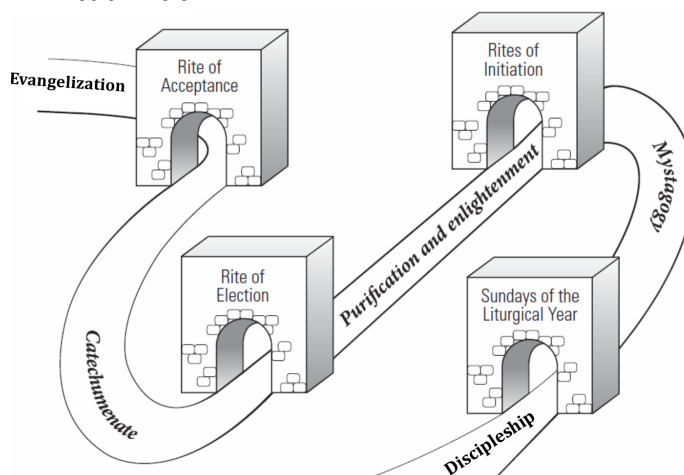
STEP 2: Assess the seeker's level of catechesis on the catechetical path

STEP 3: Ask the seeker the five inquiry questions; keep a record of their answers

STEP 4: Discern in which areas of discipleship the seeker needs more formation

STEP 5: Match the seeker's needs and level of formation with activities in your parish community and seeker's home

Step 1: Ritual Path



Step 2: Catechetical Path

1 Primary proclamation → 2 Initiatory catechesis → 3 Ongoing catechesis

Step 3: Five Inquiry Questions

Where have you been? | Where are you now? | Where do you want to get to?
How will you get there? | How will you know you have arrived?

Steps 4 and 5: Training Areas of Discipleship

WORD	COMMUNITY	WORSHIP	WITNESS
Seeker's need:	Seeker's need:	Seeker's needs	Seeker's needs
Parish activity:	Parish activity:	Parish activity:	Parish activity:
Home activity:	Home activity:	Home activity:	Home activity:



MYSTAGOGICAL CATECHESIS

Event

an encounter with God

Conversion

how it challenges, confronts, affirms; why it matters; how will I live differently now?

Recollection

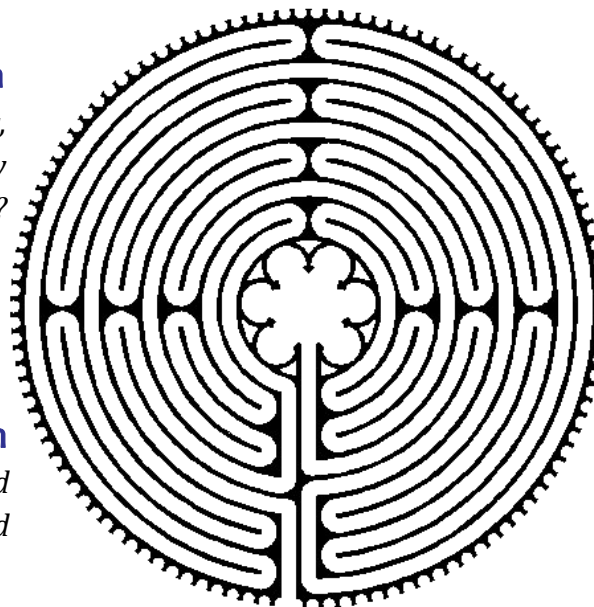
of the event's symbols, actions, texts; taking time to remember

Connection

to my life, to my situation and relationships, to the world

Reflection

sharing what was most memorable, engaging, discomfoting



Catechesis

*what Scripture and Tradition teach us;
what we can learn from the symbol, action, text*

Mystagogy is:

Ambrose of Milan's Method of Mystagogical Preaching, Craig Alan Satterlee, Liturgical Press, 2002

- scripturally based
- takes place within a liturgical setting
- addressed exclusively to the Christian community
- goal is formation of Christians rather than providing religious information to Christians

Sacramentum Caritatis, #64 (Pope Benedict XVI)

- corresponds interior disposition with our words and gestures
- enables us to live what we celebrate
- an encounter with Christ that
 - interprets rites in light of events of our salvation
 - presents the meaning of the signs in the rites
 - brings out significance of the rites for Christian life

Some mystagogical questions:

- What was your most memorable moment?
- What was your favorite part?
- What did you see/hear/do/feel?
- What did it mean to you?
- What does it remind you of from the Bible or from our Christian traditions?
- What does it tell you about God?
- What does it say about Christ?
- How did the rite communicate that?
- If that symbol could speak, what would it say to us about our faith?
- How does this change you?



GLOSSARY OF RCIA TERMS

Book of the Elect: a book that is a record of those elected for baptism

candidate: a baptized person preparing for a rite; also refers to the subject of a rite

catechumen: an unbaptized person who has celebrated the Rite of Acceptance

catechumenate: the period when catechumens prepare for initiation

convert: term for a catechumen; never used to refer to a baptized person becoming Catholic

elect: name given to catechumens chosen by God and affirmed by the Church at the Rite of Election as those ready to celebrate baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at the next Easter Vigil

election, or enrollment of names, or Rite of Election: the formal liturgical act of choosing those who have been called by God to celebrate the initiation sacraments

evangelization: first stage of the RCIA; also called precatechumenate; the mission of the baptized and the reason the Church exists

godparent: a person chosen by a catechumen to be a lifelong companion in the Christian faith; can be the same person as the sponsor

inquirer: usually describes an unbaptized person drawn to the Christian way of life; also used to describe a baptized Christian drawn to the Catholic Church

liturgy: a structured set of texts and actions celebrated by a group of people together

mystagogy: a process for reflecting on an encounter with God; also the period following baptism

neophyte: a newly baptized person; means “new plant”

RCIA: stands for “Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults;” process for becoming Christian

RCIC and RCIY: fictional beasts; there is only one rite—the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, which is adapted for particular persons

rite: a specific kind of liturgy

Rite of Acceptance: first public rite for adults preparing for baptism

scrutinies: rituals for the elect that heal and strengthen them in preparation for baptism

sponsor: a companion who walks with a catechumen or candidate through their formation; a temporary role assigned by the parish



SUGGESTED READING LIST FOR MAKING DISCIPLES (CANADA)

All of these resources are available directly from the publishers or at teamrcia.com/catalog

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Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. Canadian ed. Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1987.

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