

How long will it take?

Christian initiation is not a program. It is the church's way of ministering sensitively to those who seek membership. It is a time of preparation for a lifetime commitment that comes with membership into the Catholic church. The Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated at the Easter Vigil each year.

The process at Our Lady of Mt Carmel begins with an enquiry session after Pentecost Sunday, followed by post enquiry interview with candidates.

The program is 16 weeks' duration, commencing early October through to March with a break of 6 weeks during December/January. Sessions are held on Sunday evenings (*with* a couple of weeknight classes during the program).

After Easter Vigil (at which time the Sacraments of Initiation are administered), the next 6 weeks are spent attending and participating fully in the Mass with the Parish community. Pentecost Sunday is the last formal session in this process.

Do I need to find a sponsor?

Yes. If you already know and have an existing friendship with a Catholic person who has received the Sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation this person would be a suitable sponsor.

If you do not know a Catholic who may be suitable, there are parishioners who would be happy to fulfil this role.

The role of a sponsor

The role of a sponsor is one of a spiritual friend to provide support for you on your faith journey. If you have concerns or questions that you may feel uncomfortable asking in the group then ask your sponsor privately.

Your sponsor is there to help you feel welcome in the parish community. They will accompany you to Mass, the group sessions and all Rites and Church events on your journey.

The participation of sponsors in each of the catechetical gatherings is important. Their support in your journey and beyond as you deepen your faith will be immeasurable.

Are you interested in learning more about the Catholic Church?

- Are you unbaptised but recognise a need for spirituality in your life?
- Are you a baptised Catholic or baptised into another religion but never received any formal religious education?
- Are you married to a Catholic and attend Mass but are not sure what the next step is to become one of the Catholic faithful?
- Are you yearning for something more in your life?

If so, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) may be for you. Every year adults are welcomed into the Catholic community through the RCIA. It is a learning and loving process in which conversion of the heart brings you to Jesus Christ who is our Lord and Saviour.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart. Your souls will find rest, for my yolk is easy and my burden light”

Matthew 11:28-30.

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Are you interested in becoming a Catholic?

Pick up this brochure today!



The process by which adults become Catholic.



How does a person become Catholic?

The Catechumenate (RCIA) is the way the Church helps an unbaptised person to become an active member of the Catholic community. The Rite is a parish based process adapted to the spiritual journey and needs of adults.

The process is also accepted as the appropriate form of preparation for those already baptised who seek full communion with the Catholic Church.

This process is also for those baptised Christians of other religions who wish to receive First Communion and Confirmation.

It is also acceptable for adult Catholics who have been baptised, received Holy Communion and now wish to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

What is the first step?

Anyone who is seriously thinking about becoming a Catholic is welcome to call the Parish Office on 9610 1025 for more information. The process begins each year after Pentecost Sunday.

How does the process work?

The initiation of new members is a gradual process. This adult journey of faith unfolds in four stages. Movement through each stage is marked by public liturgical rites which are milestones on the way.

STAGE ONE:

Is a time of enquiry, an opportunity to become acquainted with life in a Catholic community and experience Sunday Mass.

THE RITE OF ACCEPTANCE:

The first milestone marking the end of the time of enquiry and leading to the Catechumenate.

STAGE TWO:

Is usually the longest part of the journey. It is a time for Gospel sharing, catechesis, community, prayer and mission.

THE RITE OF ELECTION

The next milestone marks the end of the Catechumenate and the beginning of the third stage.

STAGE THREE:

Is normally associated with Lent. It is a time of retreat, a more intense spiritual preparation for Christian initiation at the Easter Vigil.

CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. This is the highlight of the Catechumenate journey.

STAGE FOUR:

Is a time for reflecting on the Easter experience and preparing more fully to participate in the life and mission of the community.

LITURGICAL SYMBOLS OF RCIA

The Initiating Community

First symbol of Christian life.

The Word of God

Read at length during the Easter Vigil. It tells the history of God's dealings with us.

Water

Water is vital to life. It washes and purifies. The triple pouring of the water of baptism plunge the candidate into the death and resurrection of Christ—the Paschal Mystery.

Oil

Oil is the traditional symbol of strengthening and healing. Chrism is the oil used at Baptism.

White Garment

It speaks of the new life in Christ and the dignity of Baptism.

Light

The newly baptized are now awakened to the flame of faith. The symbol of light reminds us of the Risen Christ with us.

Bread & Wine.

The 'work of human hands'. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

Who will accompany you on the journey?

The people of God, as represented by the local Church, should understand and show by their concern that the initiation of adults is the responsibility of all the baptised.

THE WHOLE PARISH has a responsibility for the gathering and nurturing of new members. The entire community welcomes them and delegates some from among its members to accompany them on their faith journey.

THE BISHOP as part of his overall care of the diocese, personally and actively promotes the Catechumenate and normally welcomes the new members himself by presiding at the Rite of Election and at a celebration of Eucharist after Easter.

THE PRIEST plays a special role in ministering to the pastoral and spiritual care of those on the journey and those accompanying them.

THE SPONSORS are delegated by the parish family to take an active and supportive role as companions, witnesses and guides for those seeking to join the Catholic Church.

THE TEAM OF CATECHISTS are responsible for guiding the formation process of the members of the group. As those in formation share their experience of God in their own lives, catechists guide them to a deeper reflection on the Word of God and greater understanding of the faith of the Church.

