

Who's Who In the Initiation Process?

Each year, we think we know a little more about the Rite of Initiation than we did the year before. Then someone comes to Inquiry with a background different from anyone else we've met, and we realize there's so much more to learn!

Knowing what to do in all the various circumstances of initiation is actually not so difficult if we gather some basic information right from the start:

- Is the person validly baptized? (If so, remember: take care to honor that baptism no matter where it was.)
- Has the person been catechized? (Someone who has received First Communion and Confirmation is considered at least minimally catechized.)
- Is the person validly married?
- Has the person (or their present spouse) been married before?
- If the person is Orthodox, remember that the Orthodox are fully initiated at Baptism.

The goal of all our initiation work is not just baptism, but conversion, a "transformation of mind and heart which places Jesus Christ at the center of one's life." The stories that follow present nine different people who seek membership in the church. These scenarios are offered to help you recognize who's who in the initiation process and support the catechumen and candidate on their journey to conversion.

Not every conceivable situation can be thought of beforehand, and so these "inquirers" are but a few of the people who may knock at your door. Their stories are to give you a method with which to think about initiation.

Further help with thinking about "who's who" is available from the Office of Worship and in these books:

- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. National Conference of Catholic Bishops
- The RCIA Transforming the Church. Thomas H. Morris (Paulist, 1997, revised)
- When Other Christians Become Catholic. Paul Turner (Liturgical Press, 2007)
- The Way of Faith: A Field Guide for the RCIA Process. Nick Wagner (23rd Publications, 2008)

1. An unbaptized adult or older adolescent

Unbaptized	Baptized non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child	Older adolescent or adult
X				X		X

Stanley, an unbaptized adult, inquires about becoming a Catholic. He has had no catechetical formation, but believes God may be calling him to the Church. After an appropriate period of inquiry, Stanley is admitted to the catechumenate.

Rite Used	Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens (RCIA #41-68). His name is entered in the Register of Catechumens (if one is used in the parish).
Title	Catechumen
Definition	unbaptized person, seeking full initiation into the Catholic Church.
Age	Older teen – adult
Process	After an appropriate pastoral formation in the parish catechumenate, including dismissals, prayers, anointings, and catechesis (RCIA #75), and lasting at least one full liturgical year (NS 6), Stanley would be admitted to the sacraments of initiation, i.e. Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.
Time of Celebration	normally celebrated at the Easter Vigil
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	No delegation required from Bishop’s Office
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: Catechumens (at the time of Acceptance)* Baptism Confirmation First Communion (optional) and a notation of Marriage (if appropriate)
References	RCIA Part 1; National Statutes 1-24

**Not all parishes use the optional Book of Catechumens, but it is recommended.*

2. Unbaptized children, ages 8 and 11, seeking baptism

Unbaptized	Baptized non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child (but of catechetical age)	Older adolescent or adult
X				X	X	

Kim and Thomas, ages 8 and 11 are unbaptized children who come for Baptism. They are brought to the church by their parents, who realize now their responsibility in bringing their children for the sacraments. After an appropriate period of inquiry, which often included the parents, Kim and Thomas are admitted to the catechumenate adapted for children.

Rite Used	Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens (RCIA 41-74). This rite may be celebrated with the adult catechumens or separately with just a group of children (260-276). They celebrate the Rites Belonging to the Catechumenate (RCIA 81-105) and, at the proper time, they participate in the Rite of Election.
Title	Catechumen
Definition	Unbaptized, uncatechized children of catechetical age
Age	Catechetical age (over seven years of age). When children of catechetical age are baptized, Confirmation and Eucharist must also be celebrate at the same time (RCIA 215, Canon 866).
Process	The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, adapted for children. Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist will be celebrated together at the Easter Vigil after an appropriate length of time. These children experience a period of formation in word, worship and mission at a level appropriately adapted to the age and faith development of the child for a period of at least one full year. They may be dismissed from the Eucharist for their own Breaking Open of the Word. (RCIA 256).
Time of Celebration	normally celebrated at the Easter Vigil
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	No delegation required from Bishop's Office
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: Catechumens (at the time of Acceptance) Baptism Confirmation First Communion (optional)
References	RCIA Part II: 1, 4; NS 18, 19; Canon 852.1, 866

3. Adult or older adolescent validly baptized non-Catholic, but who is uncatechized.

Unbaptized	Baptized non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child (but of catechetical age)	Older adolescent or adult
	X			X		X

Lauren is 31 and a validly baptized Presbyterian. As a child, her attendance at Sunday school classes was very irregular, and she does not attend church except on rare occasions. She now expresses a desire to become a Roman Catholic. After an appropriate time of inquiry, Lauren becomes a candidate for reception into full communion.

Rite Used	Rite of Welcoming the Candidates [RCIA #411-433]. If this rite takes place together with the acceptance of unbaptized people into the Order of Catechumens, the combined rite is used [#505-529].
Title	Candidate for Full Communion
Definition	a validly baptized non-Catholic who wishes to be fully initiated into the Roman Catholic Church.
Age	Older teen - adult
Process	After an appropriate pastoral formation adapted to her needs, modeled on the catechumenate (and perhaps even as part of the parish catechumenate), Confirmation and Eucharist are celebrated together whenever Lauren is ready. At this time, Lauren is received into the full communion of the Roman Catholic Church, and thus completes her initiation.
Time of Celebration	While it may be done at the Easter Vigil, it is preferable that the celebration of Reception into Full Communion take place on an appropriate Sunday, when she is ready.
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	No delegation required from Bishop's Office
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: Baptism (with a notation of Reception, date & place of non-Catholic baptism) Confirmation First Communion (optional) And a notation of Marriage (if appropriate)
References	RCIA Part II: 4,5; NS 30-37

4. An adult or older adolescent, baptized Catholic but uncatechized.

Unbaptized	Baptized non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child (but of catechetical age)	Older adolescent or adult
		X		X		X

José, aged 18, is a baptized Catholic, but has never received Confirmation or First Communion. He vaguely remembers attending a few CCD classes, but has no catechetical formation. José feels the lack of spiritual focus in his life, and wants to reclaim his roots as a practicing Roman Catholic. After an appropriate time of inquiry, José becomes a candidate.

Rite Used	Rite of Welcoming the Candidates [#411-433]. If this rite takes place together with the acceptance of unbaptized people into the Order of Catechumens, the combined rite is used [#505-529].
Title	Candidate for completion of initiation sacraments
Definition	a person baptized Catholic, usually as an infant, with little or no catechetical formation. This person has <u>not celebrated</u> either First Communion or Confirmation
Age	Older teen - adult
Process	After an appropriate pastoral formation adapted to his needs and modeled on the catechumenate (perhaps as part of the parish catechumenate), José completes his Christian initiation through the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. They can be celebrated together at Pentecost. If José's preparation takes place as part of the parish catechumenate, he may receive these sacraments at the Easter Vigil. Depending on circumstances, a third and best option is to celebrate Confirmation and First Communion whenever José is prepared to receive the sacraments.
Time of Celebration	While it may be done at the Easter Vigil, it is preferable that the completion of initiation take place on an appropriate Sunday, when he is ready (perhaps even on Pentecost).
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	Pastors must seek the faculty to confirm uncatechized adult Catholics.
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: Confirmation and First Communion (optional) with notification to the church of baptism.
References	RCIA Part II: 4; NS 25-29, 31

5. An adult or older adolescent, baptized non-Catholic, catechized in their faith.

Unbaptized	Baptized non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child (but of catechetical age)	Older adolescent or adult
	X		X			X

Francene is a baptized and catechized Episcopalian. She attends the Episcopal church with some regularity, and knows her faith. Moved by the example of her Catholic neighbors, she desires to become a Catholic. After an appropriate time of inquiry, Francene becomes a candidate for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

Rite Used	Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church (#473-498). This includes Confirmation and First Communion.
Title	Candidate for Full Communion
Definition	a validly baptized non-Catholic seeking reception and full communion with the Roman Catholic Church
Age	Older teen - adult
Process	Pastoral formation includes both doctrinal and spiritual preparation adapted to the individual's needs for reception into full communion and a deeper adherence to the Church. The length of preparation is determined by the amount of formation needed and is not necessarily a part of the catechumenate process. "No greater burden than necessary is required" (RCIA #473).
Time of Celebration	While it may be done at the Easter Vigil, it is preferable that the reception into full communion take place on an appropriate Sunday, when she is ready.
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	No delegation is required.
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: Baptism (with notation of date and place of non-Catholic baptism) Confirmation and First Communion (optional) and notation of Marriage (if appropriate)
References	RCIA Part II: 5; NS 30-33; 35-37

6. A baptized, catechized Catholic, older adolescent or adult, seeking Confirmation..

Unbaptized	Baptized non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child (but of catechetical age)	Older adolescent or adult
		X	X			X

Michael, 19 years old, is a baptized, catechized Catholic, who has made his First Communion. He has not been confirmed. He is seeking Confirmation now. After an interview with a parish priest, or with the parish coordinator, he becomes a candidate for Confirmation.

Rite Used	Rite of Confirmation
Title	Candidate for Confirmation
Definition	Any Catholic who has celebrated Baptism and First Eucharist is considered to be at least minimally catechized. They come forward seeking Confirmation.
Age	Older teen - adult
Process	This is not a part of the catechumenate process (RCIA). Usually a short, focused preparation, preceded by some foundational catechesis is all that is necessary.
Time of Celebration	It is recommended that this Confirmation be celebrated at a time other than at the Easter Vigil, preferably Pentecost or a Sunday of the Easter season.
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	Pastor must seek the faculty to confirm.
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacrament is entered in these parish registers: Confirmation And the church of Baptism is to be notified.
References	Rite of Confirmation

7. A validly baptized non-Catholic but uncatechized child of 10 years of age.

Unbaptized	Baptized non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child (but of catechetical age)	Older adolescent or adult
	X			X	X	

Megan was validly baptized in the Methodist church but is uncatechized. She is now 10 years old and she, together with her mother, wishes to become Catholic. After an appropriate period of inquiry on the part of Megan, her parents, and the parish team, Megan begins the process of reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

Rite Used	Rite of Welcoming Baptized but Previously Uncatechized Adults Who Are Preparing for Confirmation and/or Eucharist (RCIA #411-433) may be used if appropriate.
Title	Candidate for Full Communion
Definition	Validly baptized, uncatechized non-Catholic child of catechetical age who wishes to become Roman Catholic.
Age	Catechetical age (7 and up)
Process	This child should experience a period of formation in word, worship and mission as described in the RCIA (Part II) at a level adapted to the age and faith development of the child. She may be dismissed from the Eucharist for Breaking Open of the Word (possibly with other young people in the same situation). Catechetical formation follows this, or is done at some time during the week. This formation is usually at least one full year, or longer, depending on the development of the child, and the situation of his or her peers. It is most appropriate for her catechetical formation to take place with a peer group.
Time of Celebration	Megan celebrates the Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church (which includes sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist, cf. NS 35) at an appropriate time during the liturgical year, preferably not at the Easter Vigil.
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	No delegation is required
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: Baptism (with a notation of Reception into Full Communion, date and place of non-Catholic baptism); Confirmation And First Communion (optional)
References	RCIA, Part II: 1,4,5, (c.f. RCIA 400 and 478); NS 30-37.

8. A validly baptized and catechized non-Catholic child of 14 years of age.

Unbaptized	Baptized non-Catholic	Baptized Catholic	Catechized	Uncatechized	Child (but of catechetical age)	Older adolescent or adult
	X		X			X

Charles, aged 12, was baptized in the Lutheran tradition. He is catechized and attends the local Lutheran church. Together with his parents, Charles has asked to be received into the Roman Catholic Church. After an appropriate time of inquiry, on the part of Charles himself, his parents, and the church, catechesis for his reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church begins.

Rite Used	Rite of Welcoming, then the Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church
Title	Candidate for Full Communion
Definition	a child of catechetical age, validly baptized in another tradition, and catechized in that tradition.
Age	Catechetical age (7 and up)
Process	Adapted to the individual needs and the prior formation experience of the child. Since Charles and his family are catechized already, he can simply be received into the church and placed in the religious formation program of the parish.
Time of Celebration	Any Sunday Eucharist. Confirmation and First Eucharist are celebrated at the same Mass, after the simple profession of faith. Later on, at the time his peers are confirmed, he can take part in all the preparatory work, and at the ceremony, be presented to the bishop for a blessing.
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	No delegation is required
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: Baptism (with a notation of Reception into Full Communion, date and place of non-Catholic baptism); Confirmation And First Communion (optional)
References	RCIA Part II: 1,5; NS 18, 19, 30, 32-37

9. A validly baptized and catechized Orthodox person, of catechetical age and up.

Sophia, aged 25, was fully initiated as a member of the Greek Orthodox Church. She is catechized and attends the local Orthodox Church. She now wishes to become a member of the Catholic Church. After an appropriate time of inquiry on the part of Sophia and the church, catechesis for her reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church begins.

Rite Used	Rite of Reception into Full Communion of the Catholic Church, RCIA Part II: #491, 492.
Title	Candidate for Full Communion
Definition	a person of catechetical age, validly baptized in the Orthodox Church, and catechized in that tradition.
Age	Catechetical age (7 and up)
Process	Since Sophia is Eastern Orthodox, she will be received into the corresponding Eastern Catholic Church. After a suitable liturgical and doctrinal preparation, Sophia is only obligated to make a simple profession of faith in order to be received into the Catholic Church (RCIA #491, 492) as she was fully initiated at the time of Baptism (baptism, chrismation/confirmation, and Eucharist).
Time of Celebration	Any Sunday Eucharist.
Minister	Pastor
Faculty to Confirm	Sophia is not to be confirmed again since she was fully initiated at Baptism.
Record Keeping	The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: Baptism (with a notation of Reception into Full Communion, date and place of non-Catholic baptism). It should also be noted that she is received into whichever Eastern Catholic Church corresponds to the one of her Orthodox Baptism.
References	Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (CCEO) Canon 897; RCIA #474

Notes:

- 1) When a member of an Orthodox church becomes a Catholic, that person is received into the corresponding Eastern Catholic Church. For example, if a Romanian Orthodox person wants to become Catholic, he/she enters the Romanian Catholic Church; a Ukrainian Orthodox person enters the Ukrainian Catholic Church.
- 2) An individual might request a change in Rite, that is, to be received into the Roman Catholic Church rather than the corresponding Eastern Church. This request also goes to the Chancery.
- 3) The Orthodox view of divorce and annulment differs substantially from that of the Roman Catholic Church. It is important to keep this in mind when doing the preliminary interview.