

So what do we do now?

The steps involved in offering RCIA in your parish

1. A parish decision is made to establish an RCIA group. *(Usually by the parish's priests & pastoral council)*
2. The Parish R.C.I.A. group is established to learn about R.C.I.A. and trained to welcome enquirers *(the Pastoral Centre will help with this)*
3. Parish agrees upon a procedure for enquirers *(so when a person calls, they get in direct contact with the RCIA team!)*

Support for parish RCIA groups

- The parish RCIA team works on behalf of the whole parish, and thus is supported by the pastoral council.
- A member of the parish group is a contact person for the diocesan RCIA committee, so that resources and support are always available.
- Parish groups from across diocese meet annually around Pentecost to review and celebrate their work.

This information is issued by the Pastoral Development team,
Limerick Diocesan Pastoral Centre,
St Michaels courtyard, Denmark St, Limerick
Tel 061 400133.

Please call us if we can be of support to your parish:
in establishing and/or supporting RCIA

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults



The Rite of Election, Lent 2008. 9 adults, and their sponsors, declare their readiness to receive the sacraments of initiation this Easter in the Diocese of Limerick

'I was never baptized as a child'

'My child is in First Communion class, can we be baptized together?'

'I am already Christian and want to become Catholic'

Sound familiar? Not sure of what to do next??

Every parish has a number of people who have expressed a wish to 'become a Catholic'. While many of us are nervous as to how we might support such enquirers; we all want to joyfully encourage those God is calling to join us.

The R.C.I.A. process is a simple, joyful way that is adaptable to your parishes realities.

It draws on the Word of God, it links the new Christian into the Sunday liturgy and invites the whole community to pray and give thanks for those who prepare.

Interested in learning more? Read on!

What is the RCIA?

The letters 'RCIA' stand for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The RCIA process was introduced after the Second Vatican Council, Church leader advocated a return to community style initiation, with an emphasis on liturgy, as a more fitting form for the modern world.

RCIA is a process which involves the faith community in journeying with a person who has asked to become a Catholic.

It takes place over a number of stages, and actively links our community prayer and the persons faith journey. At the Easter Vigil, the sacraments of initiation are received and the person becomes a full member of the Roman Catholic Church. The entire process takes several months, but participants are invited to proceed at a pace which suits them individually.

The steps involved in the RCIA process include:

- Inquiry *general enquiry*
'I'm curious about the Catholic Church' ... 'I was thinking of becoming a Christian' ... 'how does one ...' '?!'
Rite: Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

- The Catechumenate *often October - January*
'How does a Christian speak with God?' ... 'What does the church teach about ...?' ... 'how do I read the Bible?' ...
Rite: Election and enrolment of names
- Period of Purification and Enlightenment *During Lent*
'I am ready to become a Christian' ... 'Now, I need time to prepare myself before Easter' ... 'I need your prayers' ...
Rite: Presentations of Creed and of the Our Father
Three Scrutinies
- Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation *Easter Vigil*
Alleluia!
- Mystagogy *During the Easter Season*
'What does this mean for my life now?' ... 'how can I now live as a Christian?' ... 'where is God calling me now?' ...

Who is involved in the RCIA process?

The person who is inquiring about becoming a Catholic
The parish R.C.I.A. team (3-4 people)
The whole parish community

What material is covered in R.C.I.A.?

(or 'but do we need a theology degree to do this?' !)

Suitable Catechesis: The Catechumenate is essentially training in Christian life. It contains instruction, but it is about learning for life not learning for a test! (I.e. formation not information!) There's lots of training and material available for RCIA groups to use.

Liturgical life: All we do is supported and grounded in scripture and the lived liturgy of the faith community.

The Sharing of life experience: All of us are journeying – conversion is a life long process. Priests, parishioners, new comers and old times - we all have more to learn, and can best do that together.