

2013

Archdiocese  
of Regina  
Liturgy  
Commission



## ***RCIA SCENARIOS***

***SORTING IT ALL OUT: CHILDREN AND ADULTS IN  
THE INITIATION PROCESS***

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## ***SORTING IT ALL OUT: CHILDREN AND ADULTS IN THE INITIATION PROCESS***

**“Each year I think I know more about the Rite of Initiation than I did the year before. Then someone comes to our Inquiry group with a background different from anyone else I’ve met, and I realize there’s so much more to learn!”**

Does this sound familiar? Well, take heart, and read on. Knowing what to do in all the various circumstances of “who’s who in the initiation process” is not so difficult. There is basic information you need right from the start so you can minister better with the individual:

- Is the person validly baptized? (If so, remember: take care to honor that baptism no matter where it was.)
- What do you do with children?
- Has the person been catechized? (Someone who has received First Communion and Confirmation is considered to be at least minimally catechized.)
- Is the person validly married?
- Has the person been married before, anywhere? Has the person’s spouse been married before, anywhere?
- 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, that “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.**

## ***1. An unbaptized adult or older adolescent***

*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.

***Rites used:*** Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens (RCIA, 41-68). His name is entered in the Register of Catechumens which is kept in the parish. He participates in the archdiocesan Rite of Election on the First Sunday of Lent, then in the parish Scrutinies on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent. He is presented with the Creed during the third week of Lent and with the Lord's Prayer during the fifth week of Lent. In the final step, he receives the three Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil (see below).

***Title:*** Catechumen.

***Definition:*** An unbaptized person, seeking full initiation in 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, Stanley would be admitted to the Sacraments of Initiation, i.e., Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, normally celebrated at the Easter Vigil. All three sacraments must be celebrated together (RCIA, 198).

***Time of Celebration:*** The Easter Vigil.

***Minister:*** The parish priest.

***Faculty to Confirm:*** No delegation is required (RCIA, 208, 209).

***Record Keeping:*** The administration of the sacraments is entered in these parish registers: [Catechumenate (at the time of Acceptance)], Baptism, Confirmation, First Communion, and a notation of Marriage.

***References:*** RCIA, Part I

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

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

***Rites used:*** Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens (RCIA, 242-266). Their names are entered in the parish Register of Catechumens. At the proper time, Kim and Thomas may participate in the archdiocesan Rite of Election. During Lent a Scrutiny/Penitential Rite for children may be celebrated (RCIA, 267-279). Finally they receive the three Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil.

***Title:*** Catechumens.

***Definition:*** Unbaptized/uncatechized children of catechetical age.

***Age:*** Catechetical age (over 7 years of age). When children of catechetical age or the age of discretion are baptized, Confirmation and First Eucharist must also be celebrated at the same time. (RCIA, 281; Canon 866).

***Process:*** The Rite of Christian Initiation of Children Who Have Reached Catechetical Age (RCIA, p. 149 ff.). 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. They may be dismissed from the Eucharist for their own Catechesis with the Scriptures. Catechetical formation follows right away or at some time during the week. This formation is usually at least one full year, most often longer depending on the development of the child, and the situation of his or her peers (RCIA, 244). As long as the liturgical rites of the catechumenate are prepared for and celebrated, catechesis can take place with their peer groups.

***Time of Celebration:*** Normally the Easter Vigil.

***Minister:*** The parish priest.

***Faculty to Confirm:*** No delegation is needed (RCIA, 281).

***Record Keeping:*** Thomas and Kim's names are entered in these parish registers: [Catechumenate], Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion.

***References:*** RCIA, Part II: 1; Canons 852.1, 866.

### ***3. Validly baptized non-Catholic, adult or older adolescent, but who is uncatechized.***

*Lauren* is 31 and a validly baptized Lutheran. 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 with the Catholic Church.

***Rites used:*** Rite of Welcoming Candidates For Confirmation and Eucharist (RCIA, 463-487). *Lauren* may participate in a parish Rite of Calling Candidates to Lenten Renewal on the last Sunday before Lent (cf. Ordo for the current Liturgical Year; RCIA, 494-509). *Lauren* also participates in the Presentation of the Creed (RCIA, 510-513) the third week of Lent (the Nicene Creed is used as this is the Creed always professed at the Rite of Reception into Full Communion of the Catholic Church, RCIA, 404); she also participates in the Presentation of the Our Father (RCIA, 516-521) the fifth week of Lent, and she would celebrate the Sacrament of Penance prior to reception (RCIA, 522-530). Finally she celebrates the Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church (RCIA, 387-411).

***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 *Lauren's* 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 the Reception into Full Communion may be celebrated at the Easter Vigil, it is preferable that it take place at the Sunday Eucharist of the parish community at another time when she is ready.

***Minister:*** The parish priest.

***Faculty to Confirm:*** No delegation is required (RCIA, 394).

***Record Keeping:*** The administration of these sacraments is entered in the following official parish registers: Baptism (with a notation of Reception, non-Catholic baptism and the minister), Confirmation, First Communion and a notation of Marriage.

***References:*** RCIA Part II: 4,5; Appendix 3

#### ***4. A baptized Catholic adult or older adolescent, but uncatechized.***

*Mark*, 18, is a baptized Catholic, but has never received Confirmation or First Communion. He vaguely remembers attending a few catechism classes, but has no catechetical formation. *Mark* 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, *Mark* becomes a candidate for completing Christian Initiation through the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.

***Rites used:*** Rite of Welcoming Candidates For Confirmation and Eucharist (RCIA, 463-487). *Mark* participates in the Rite of Calling Candidates to Lenten Renewal (RCIA, 494-509). The Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated during his period of preparation.

***Title:*** Candidate for completion of the Sacraments of Initiation.

***Definition:*** A person baptized Catholic, usually as an infant, with little or no catechetical formation. This person has not celebrated either Confirmation or First Communion.

***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), *Mark* completes his Christian initiation through the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. They can be celebrated together, perhaps at Pentecost or some other appropriate time. If *Mark's* preparation takes place as part of the parish catechumenate, he may receive these sacraments at the Easter Vigil (RCIA, 385), although this is not generally recommended. Depending on circumstances, a third and best option is to celebrate Confirmation and First Communion whenever *Mark* is prepared to receive the sacraments.

***Minister:*** The Archbishop; or parish priest with permission.

***Faculty to Confirm:*** Upon request by the pastor, the Archbishop will usually grant him the faculty to confirm adult Catholics. It is recommended that it be done at a time other than at the Easter Vigil, such as Pentecost or another appropriate time.

***Record Keeping:*** *Mark's* name is entered in the parish registers of Confirmation and First Communion, with notification to the church of baptism.

***References:*** RCIA Part II: 4

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

*Francine* is a baptized and catechized Anglican. She attends the Anglican 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, *Francine* becomes a candidate for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

### ***Rite used:***

- Rite of Welcoming Candidates for Confirmation and Eucharist (RCIA, 463-487)
- Rite of Calling Candidates to Lenten Renewal
- Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church (RCIA, 387-411). 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.

***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, 387). She would celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation at some time during her preparation.

***Time of Celebration:*** Any Sunday Eucharist throughout the year, though the Easter season is probably most appropriate time.

***Minister:*** The parish priest is the presiding minister.

***Faculty to Confirm:*** No delegation is required (RCIA, 394).

***Record Keeping:*** *Francine's* name is entered in the parish registers of Baptism (with notation of non-Catholic baptism and minister), Confirmation and First Communion, and notation of Marriage.

***References:*** RCIA Part II: 5

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

*Tran*, 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 pastoral assistant, 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:** Pentecost or a Sunday of the Easter season.

**Minister:** The Archbishop; or parish priest with permission.

**Faculty to Confirm:** Upon request by the pastor, the Archbishop may grant him the faculty to confirm adult Catholics. It is recommended that it be done at a time other than at the Easter Vigil, preferably Pentecost.

**Record Keeping:** The names of those confirmed are entered in the Confirmation Register of the parish, 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.**

*Carrie* 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 *Carrie*, her parents, and the parish team, *Carrie* begins the process of reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

**Rite used:** Rite of Welcoming Candidates for Confirmation and Eucharist (RCIA, Appendix 3); *Carrie* would be prepared for and would receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church (RCIA, 387-411) may be used if appropriate.

**Title:** Candidate for Full Communion.

**Definition:** Validly baptized, uncatechized non-Catholic child 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:** *Carrie* celebrates the Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church (which includes sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist together) at an appropriate time during the liturgical year, preferably not at the Easter Vigil.

**Minister:** The parish priest is the presider.

**Faculty to Confirm:** No delegation is required.

**Record Keeping:** *Carrie's* name is entered in the parish registers of Baptism (with a notation of Reception into Full Communion, non-Catholic baptism and the minister), Confirmation and First Communion.

**References:** RCIA, Part II: 1,4,5.

## ***8. Validly baptized and catechized non-Catholic child of 12 years of age***

*Charles*, 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 Candidates for Confirmation and Eucharist (RCIA, Appendix 3). Prior to reception into the Catholic Church, this family would be prepared for and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church (RCIA, 387-411).

***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 older).

***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 Eucharistic are celebrated at the same Mass, after the profession of faith.

***Minister:*** The parish priest is the presider.

***Faculty to Confirm:*** No delegation is required (RCIA, 394).

***Record Keeping:*** Charles' name is entered into the parish registers of Baptism (with notation of Reception into Full Communion, non-Catholic baptism and minister), Confirmation and First Communion.

***References:*** RCIA Part II: 1,5

## ***9. Validly baptized and catechized Orthodox person, of catechetical age (7 years and older)***

*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:5; 387-399; 400-405).

***Title:*** Candidate.

***Definition:*** A person of catechetical age, validly baptized in the Orthodox Church, and catechized in that tradition.

***Age:*** Catechetical age (7 and older).

***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, 388) as she was fully initiated at the time of her Baptism (baptism, chrismation/confirmation, and Eucharist).

***Time of Celebration:*** Any Sunday Eucharist throughout the year.

***Minister:*** The parish priest is the presiding minister.

***Faculty to Confirm:*** *Sophia* is not to be confirmed again since she was fully and validly initiated at Baptism.

***Record Keeping:*** *Sophia*'s name is entered into the parish registers of Baptism (with notation of Reception into Full Communion with notation of non-Catholic baptism and minister), Confirmation and First Communion. It is also to be noted that she is received into whichever Eastern Catholic Church corresponds to the one of her Orthodox Baptism.

## **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. For more complete information, please contact the Chancery.

**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. For more complete information, please contact the Chancery.