



CATHEDRAL CHAPEL *of* ST. VIBIANA

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH SINCE 1927

"Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house..." (1Peter 1:5)

ADULT FAITH FORMATION – RCIA



What does Initiation mean?

The goal of initiation is to welcome new members into the Catholic Church by means of the following Sacraments of Initiation:

- 1) Baptism: Doorway to the new life in Christ
- 2) Confirmation: Reinforcement/completion of the grace of Baptism
- 3) Eucharist: Nourishment with the Body of Christ to develop/renew our spiritual life

RCIA is designed to serve the following:

Those who are not baptized, those baptized in the Catholic Church but who have not received Confirmation and the Eucharist, and baptized non-Catholics.

Required Documents:

All baptized persons seeking to either (1) complete their initiation in the Catholic Church, or (2) wish to become Catholic are required to submit a copy of their baptism certificate. Please note the following specific requirements:

1. Non-Catholic: A person baptized in a Christian church, in the Trinitarian Formula with Water, will need to provide a copy of proof of their baptism (certificate, announcement, letter from witness, copy of church ledger page).



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2. Catholic: A person baptized in the Catholic Church must provide a NEW certificate of Baptism from the parish where they were baptized, and this certificate must be dated within the current six month period. We do not accept old original certificates presented to the parents on the original date of baptism. Catholics must contact the parish where they were baptized in to request a new certificate with the appropriate date notations.

* Note for Catholics - this is a universal requirement within the Catholic Church, and not our own policy. Those who were baptized in other countries, regardless of where, are not exempt from this requirement.

RCIA Sponsor

An important part of the RCIA is the role of the Sponsor; an active member of the local parish Church that walks the journey with his/her candidate. To achieve the goals of the RCIA, all RCIA participants will be assigned a sponsor from the parish of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

Who may serve as Sponsor?

To serve the goals of R.C.I.A., sponsors must be active, practicing Catholics that are parishioners of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. Sponsors must be mature in their faith and active, so as to connect their candidate or catechumen to the parish, via parish activities, ministry, and overall parish life, and be objective in their judgment of a person's readiness or calling. Parishioners of the Co-Cathedral interested in becoming an R.C.I.A. sponsor must:

- Be at least 16 years old;
- Be fully initiated in the Catholic Church (Baptism, Confirmation, 1st Holy Communion)
- Not be parent/guardian of the intended participant;
- If married, current marriage was witnessed by a Catholic priest or deacon; and
- Is not the spouse or fiancé of the intended participant.

Sponsors will complete a statement indicating they are both aware of the requirements and in deed, meet them. This form will become part of Church record.

Church: 923 S. La Brea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90036

Parish Office/Mailing Address: 926 S. Detroit Street, Los Angeles, CA 90036

Tel: (323) 930-5976 † Fax: (323) 297-7677 † Email: parish@cathedralchapel.org † cathedralchapel.org



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Role of the Sponsor:

The role of the sponsor is to both support and witness the person's conversion and readiness to receive the sacraments of the Catholic Church. This is accomplished by attending the catechetical meetings as often as possible, special rituals and events with the inquirer and offering encouragement, listening, prayers, and example outside of the regular meetings. While both sponsor and inquirer are expected to communicate throughout the process; the initiative is on the part of the sponsor.

Aside from weekly meetings and special events, the R.C.I.A. connects the person to the universal church through the individual parish where the inquirer . The sponsor is the connection to the parish therefore his/her participation in parish life is very important. The sponsor introduces the inquirer to fellow parishioners, invites them to parish events, and meets with the candidate for one-on-one support.

Supportive role:

It is common for people to experience periods of uncertainty throughout the process; they are perhaps being challenged in their beliefs and moral attitudes by the new information they are receiving. The sponsor is there to encourage them to learn more, and to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance.

To this end, the RCIA sessions are designed with the inquirer's needs as the priority; those seeking information, discerning if God is calling them to live as Catholics. Therefore, for sponsors, incessant talking, preaching, "over-sharing," and/or dominating small group discussions is inappropriate. Quiet listening and time-sensitive sharing is the key.

The other aspect of a support role is recognizing and identifying the rich diversity of spiritualities in the Catholic Church. This means encouraging the inquirer to investigate the many ways that Catholics worship, pray, learn, and enrich their faith - including (or especially) those that perhaps are not part of one's own preferences.

Discretion:

Occasionally in an RCIA session, an inquirer shares sensitive details relating to their discernment process. To do so demands the utmost trust and comfort, therefore, RCIA is not an open-style adult ed class. RCIA is for the inquirer. Only team, sponsors, and inquirers are permitted in the R.C.I.A. meetings.

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R.C.I.A. Team

The R.C.I.A. Team is the most crucial group of people from the parish involved in the R.C.I.A., for they guide the whole process first-hand. It is the team that first welcomes the new inquirer, listens to their stories, shares the parish and faith stories, and gently guides the individual through each of the phases of the R.C.I.A. It is the team that spends the most amount of time, quality time, with each individual, and therefore begins the relationship of the parish to the inquirer. The team serves as Ambassadors of Welcome, on behalf of the parish community.

It stands to reason then, that the team is made up of parishioners that have made a serious, thorough commitment to the R.C.I.A. process. The R.C.I.A. process is very demanding; it calls for sacrifice, initiative, pro-active and critical thinking, follow-through, training, communication, and a sense of urgency.

While the year-round process does offer flexibility, that flexibility only works when members are actively communicating amongst each other and the Director, out of concern for the well-being of each meeting. Members are expected to be pro-active in their planning, whether or not they are serving at a particular meeting. To be committed means to not only be present when one is scheduled, but to be mindful and concerned about the success of each meeting with the following concerns:

What are the qualities of an ideal R.C.I.A. Team member?

Flexible: Ministry is by its very nature, messy - even with the best preparations. Equipment fails, rooms get switched, people get sick, etc. The ideal team member is able to "roll with the punches" when the situation arises.

Committed: R.C.I.A. is demanding, but this demand is less cumbersome when team members commit themselves to its total success, and make it a priority of their life as Christians.

Humble: The R.C.I.A. is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Team members are at their best when they entrust themselves to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, and become witnesses to the continual, life-long need to learn and grow in the faith.

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Team Player: Each individual member of the team has an important role to play. Team members need to be able to rely on each other at all times, but especially in times of doubt, struggle, and pressure.

Faith-filled: The team members serve primarily as witnesses to the faith, to Jesus Christ. An ideal team member is one of prayer, and action that is consistent with our Catholic tradition. To be faith-filled does not mean one is without faults, or acts holier than thou, but strives above all to be Christ-like.

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