

**Mass attendance:** For Catholics, Sunday Mass is the most important moment of the week. By going to Mass on Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation, you are developing the virtue (good habit) of celebrating Mass. In attending mass, you are welcome to participate, though you may not receive Holy Communion until you become Catholic.

**Prepare for the Sessions:** The instructional sessions are based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church and you will receive a schedule of readings that corresponds to each week's presentation. Be prepared for the session by reading the assigned Catechism sections and writing down any questions you might have as well as any reflection questions given to you. If you are unable to attend, contact your mentor.

**Sponsors:** You will be assigned a mentor to accompany you throughout the RCIA process. When you prepare for the Rite of Election (February), it is time to designate a sponsor. This person may be your mentor or you may choose your own. You are to meet with your mentor/sponsor at least four times before Easter. Sponsors are strongly encouraged to attend all RCIA sessions, rites and retreats.

**Baptism/Confirmation Name:** Each candidate is required to choose a Baptism/Confirmation name by Nov. 16, 2011. This is the name of a saint whose life you especially relate to and who provides an example to you of a follower of Christ. On Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>, you will be asked to give a brief presentation of the saint you selected.

# St. Matthew Catholic Church Rite of Christian Initiation

## Participant Expectations 2013-2014



### Pastoral Staff

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# St. Matthew Catholic Church

## What is RCIA?

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is a journey toward a deeper union and communion with Jesus Christ and His Church, culminating in the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. At the heart of this process is the ongoing call to personal conversion to Christ. RCIA is the process through which adults are fully initiated into the Catholic Church.

## Who is the RCIA for?

1. A person who has never been baptized.
2. One who has been baptized in another Christian faith and is interested in becoming Catholic.
3. Anyone interested in learning about the Catholic Faith.
4. Baptized Catholics who have not received First Communion and Confirmation.

## What are the stages of RCIA?

1. **Precatechumenate:** This is a time for inquiry and introduction to Gospel values and the teachings & practices of the Catholic Church.
2. **Catechumenate:** This is the time for the nurturing and growth of the catechumen's faith and conversion to God through studying the teachings of the Church, Sacred Scripture, and participating in worship.
3. **Purification & Enlightenment:** This is a time to prepare for the sacraments through intense prayer and personal conversion. During this time the scrutiny rites are celebrated. The scrutinies are meant to uncover, then heal all that is weak, defective or sinful so as to foster deeper conversion.
4. **Mystagogy:** This is the time following the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation, during which the newly initiated

delve more deeply into the mysteries that are the foundation of Catholic living, especially through participation in Sunday Mass.

## What are the liturgical rites?

The RCIA process is dynamically moved along by liturgical rites that serve as gateways into the major periods of the process. Below is a short explanation of the major liturgical rites.

1. **Rite of Acceptance/Welcoming:** This is a gateway into the period of the catechumenate by which one begins a formal relationship with the Catholic Church.
2. **Rite of Election:** This rite begins the intense period of preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation. Participants are helped by the scrutinies as they make their final preparation for complete Christian initiation.
3. **Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation:** This is the liturgical rite, integrated into the Easter Vigil, by which one is fully initiated into the Catholic Church through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

## The following are our expectations:

**Registration & Documentation:** Please fill out an RCIA registration form and, if you have been baptized in another Christian community, provide a copy of your baptism certificate by Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>.

**RCIA Attendance:** RCIA meets every Wednesday (see calendar) from 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the St. Matthew School Library. It is mandatory that you attend these meetings unless you are sick or have a family obligation. Excessive absence can delay one's entry into the Catholic Church.

**RCIA Retreat:** During Lent there is a mandatory one day retreat. This is the final preparatory stage before entry into the Church (see calendar for more information).