

The **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** is the process through which persons inquire into and determine if they are called to live out their faith life as a member of the Roman Catholic Community. RCIA consists of four periods:

Inquiry – Inquiry is a time of questioning and searching which becomes the entry point to the RCIA process. The primary purpose of this period is to provide a resource for non-Catholics who would like to know more about the Catholic faith. They come with the understanding that there is no obligation to become Catholic. The Inquiry period lasts as long as necessary for the inquirer to begin the catechumenate period. At St. Matthew Parish, Inquiry takes place year-round on an as-needed basis. Sessions are held by appointment, usually on Sundays from 11am to Noon or on Tuesdays from 7:30-8:30pm in the Church Undercroft. It is an on-going process with the agenda set by the participants.

Catechumenate – The Catechumenate period is a more structured time of education and faith formation. The church provides education, opportunities for faith growth, and support. The candidate or catechumen matures in faith and conversion and deepens his or her commitment to Christ. The catechumenate period begins in September of each year and the length of time is flexible, depending on the needs of individual candidates and catechumens, but generally transitions into the next period at the beginning of Lent.

Purification and Enlightenment – The period of Purification and Enlightenment is a time of spiritual preparation for candidates and catechumens who have decided to enter the Church. This period takes place during the Lenten season and ends on Holy Thursday. Those who are to become fully initiated members of the Catholic Church receive the sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil.

Mystagogy – The period of Mystagogy is a time of postbaptismal catechesis which focuses on the Eucharistic mysteries. The neophytes deepen their Christian experience and become more integrated into the community of the faithful. The length of mystagogy is from Easter to Pentecost, and throughout all of life.



RCIA is open to any adult who wishes to learn more about the Catholic faith, including those who want to become members of the Catholic Church. Typically, groups consist of people who are unbaptized and want to become initiated into the Church, those who were baptized into other Christian faiths and want to become Catholic, and those who were baptized Catholic, but have not received the other sacraments of initiation. Also welcome are those who are curious about what Catholics believe and wish to attend for informational purposes only. All are welcome!

At St. Matthew Church, the catechumenate period of the RCIA process begins in the fall of each year. It moves through the periods of purification and enlightenment and mystagogy concluding with Pentecost in late spring. Sessions are held on Tuesday evenings from 7:00pm to 9:00pm in the St. Anthony Room of the Church Undercroft. From October until Easter, there are two classes per week. During that time the participants also meet on Sunday mornings during the 10 o'clock mass. For those wishing to become full members of the Church, both the Tuesday and the Sunday sessions are required. After Pentecost, the newly initiated meet for one year on a quarterly basis to delve further into the Eucharistic and Easter mysteries.

Free childcare is available for Tuesday night RCIA sessions in the church nurseries for infants and children of all ages. Please mention childcare needs when registering.

The 2008-09 Catechumenate Period of the RCIA
begins Tuesday, September 9.
To register or for more information, contact Karen Burford
at 471-0212 x 1108 or karen@stmatthew.net.



St. Matthew
the Apostle Church

One parish, One family, One Journey

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