



Archdiocese of Liverpool
Pastoral Formation

"So what happens now ?"

The first period or **Time of Inquiry** includes informal meetings that allow you to search.

During this period you will be encouraged to simply explore, ask questions and find out more about life as a catholic and the teachings of the church. This first exploratory part of your journey can last as long as is needed. You will not be rushed but encouraged to take your time. During this initial exploratory time you are entirely free to walk away, if you change your mind about becoming a Catholic if you so choose. However you may decide to continue deepening your formation in faith .

Once you feel you would like to learn more about your faith and the church in a more formal or structured way, you may wish to pass through the doorway provided by the "Rite of Welcoming and Acceptance." This simply involves being informally introduced to the parish community during a Sunday Mass. This creates an opportunity for the parish to welcome you as someone interested learning more about the faith (and therefore prepared to begin a structured time of formation.) Your community will accompany you in prayer throughout the length of your remaining journey. You are being welcomed as an apprentice into a way of life founded on the scriptures and the teachings of Jesus Christ. This marks the start of the second period of your journey, the Period of Catechumenate.



Your local contact for further information is:

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Tel:.....

Ever thought of becoming a Catholic?

We welcome inquiries from everyone. You may be someone who has never belonged to any faith tradition or you may have been baptised in another Christian faith. You may simply feel a sense of curiosity to find out more or you may have already decided to seek membership of the Catholic church. Whatever your starting point you are very welcome.

You may be asking yourself

What is R.C.I.A?

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (or RCIA for short), is a sacramental process rather than a programme of study and is the normal way in which newcomers are welcomed into the life of the Church. Over the weeks and months that follow, you will be listened to and helped to grow spiritually as you deepen your knowledge and understanding of the Lord and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

It is easiest to think of this process as a journey in faith that has four periods of preparation and three "Rites". The Rites are like doorways that you pass through marking the end of one period and the start of the next. These Rites are liturgical celebrations that may also be thought of as milestones or 'Steps' along your journey





An outline of the journey can be summed up as follows:

Period One : Informal Time of Inquiry

Step One: Welcoming and Acceptance

(in your home parish during a Sunday Mass)

Period Two: Structured time of preparation

(Period of Catechumenate when you will meet regularly to explore and deepen your faith)

The **Retreat** prepares us for

Step Two: Rite of Election

(at Shrewsbury Cathedral with others from around the Diocese who are also preparing.)

Period Three: Lent: Time of conversion just six weeks (**Period of Enlightenment**) .For the whole parish family this is a time of conversion of heart looking at ourselves and how we might be better disciples. This opportunity offers you an immediate preparation time before receiving the sacraments of Initiation at Easter.

Step Three:

Receiving the Sacraments of Initiation

(Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist)

Period Four: Ongoing deepening of Faith

(Period of Mystagoga) This time initially from Easter to Pentecost, allows you to unpack your experiences at Easter and deepen your walk of faith. It allows you opportunities to fully integrate into life as a member of the community. Extending beyond Pentecost, this final period lasts a lifetime and is the period to which everyone in the church belongs. We are always learning, always seeking to deepen our relationships with the Lord and with one another. It is a lifelong journey of deepening our understanding of our faith and of seeking to support one another as we seek to live out the gospel values together.

How long will it take?

The RCIA process is very flexible and will be tailored by your Priest and/or catechist to suit your needs. It can take as little as a few months or several years. How long you spend in each period is flexible (apart from the Lent period). Everyone is unique and no two journeys are exactly the same. .

Your life experience will be taken into account in choosing your starting point. If you were baptised into another Christian faith, your Baptism will be respected by the Church and you will begin the journey of "Ongoing Conversion" which means you will be helped to grow and deepen your faith until you are ready to receive the two Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist and thereby be received into full communion with the Catholic Church. If you come from a non Christian background you will be welcomed into a time of preparation that includes all three Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. No matter which of these circumstances best describes you at the present time, you will pass through the periods and steps as outlined opposite, although the time spent in each phase may differ from one person to the next.

Most of the "Rites" take place at your local parish church (apart from the "Rite of Election" which takes place at Shrewsbury Cathedral.) At each of the Rites, the whole community of believers is gathered to welcome you, to support you, and encourage you. Above all, your parish community will pray for you throughout your time of preparation.

Parishes may vary slightly in how they organise their RCIA sessions, but throughout the worldwide church, the process of RCIA and remains the same. RCIA is designed to be adaptable within the framework provided by the four periods of preparation and three Rites or steps.

In some parishes your preparation may be received informally through a regular "one to one" meeting with a catechist or priest. However, many other parishes have an RCIA team. This team of parishioners will meet with you (and includes others who may be wanting to find out more) on a regular basis and accompany you on your journey.

