

# Liturgical Components of the Christian Initiation Process:

## Gateways and Sources of Grace for Conversion

MYSTAGOGY AND THE NEOPHYTE YEAR

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*Devoted to post-baptismal catechesis, this period is a time for deepening the Christian experience, for spiritual growth, and for entering more fully into the life and unity of the community.*



ENLIGHTENMENT

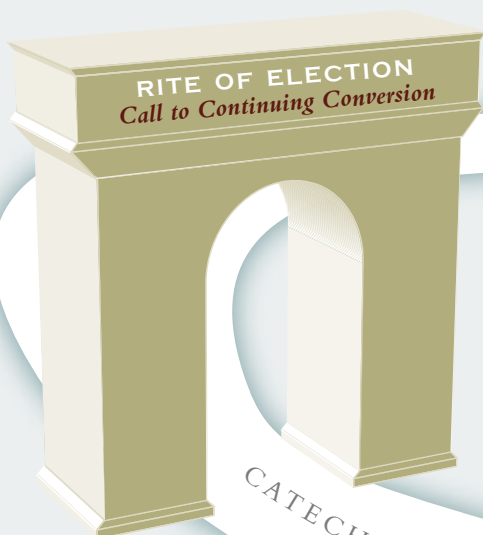
PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

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*Coinciding with Lent, this period consists more in interior reflection than in instruction. It is intended to enlighten the minds and hearts of participants with a deep knowledge of Christ the Savior.*

#### Minor Rites in the Period of Purification and Enlightenment

- Penitential Rite (Candidates)
- Scrutinies (Elect)
- Presentations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer
- Preparation Rites on Holy Saturday



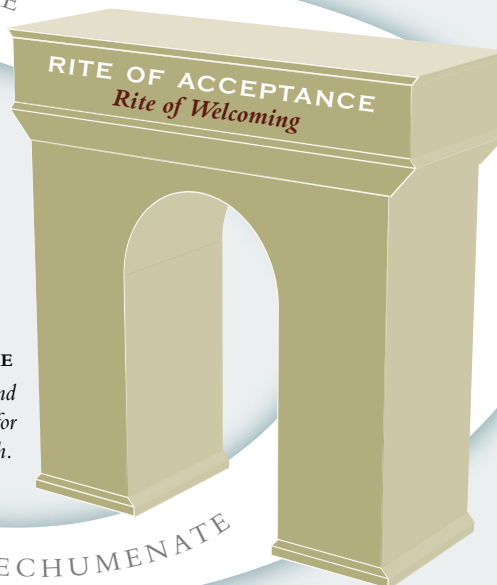
CATECHUMENATE

### CATECHUMENATE

*This is an extended period for pastoral formation and guidance aimed at training participants in the Christian life; it includes a thoroughly comprehensive catechesis on the truths of Catholic doctrine and moral life.*

#### Minor Rites in the Period of the Catechumenate

- Celebrations of the Word of God
- Minor Exorcisms
- Anointings (Catechumens)
- Blessings



PRECATECHUMENATE

### PRECATECHUMENATE

*This is a time for inquiry and evangelization, an opportunity for the beginnings of faith.*

**Start**

□ CATECHUMENS

■ CANDIDATES

□ PERIODS



STEPS



# Adult Inquirer Information Form

*Information on this form is held in confidence and is not shared without your permission.*

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: First: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle: \_\_\_\_\_ Last: \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden Name (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
(include **locality** (town, city, county, etc.), **region** (state, province, territory, etc.), and **country**)

Name of Father: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

## I. CONTACT INFORMATION

Full Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (Daytime) \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening/Weekend) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell/Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Other) \_\_\_\_\_

## II. RELIGIOUS HISTORY

1. What, if any, is your present religious affiliation? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you ever been baptized?  Yes  No  I am not sure

*If you answered "Yes" to Question 2, please provide the following information:*

(a) In what denomination were you baptized? \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Date or your approximate age when you were baptized: \_\_\_\_\_

(c) Baptismal name (if different from current name): \_\_\_\_\_

(d) Place of Baptism (name of church/denomination): \_\_\_\_\_

(e) Address, if known: \_\_\_\_\_

(f) Location, if known: \_\_\_\_\_

(include **locality** (town, city, county, etc.), **region** (state, province, territory, etc.), and **country**)

3. If you were baptized as a Catholic, check those sacraments you have already received:

Penance (Confession)  Eucharist (First Communion)  Confirmation

### III. CURRENT MARITAL STATUS

Check the appropriate statement(s) below and provide any information requested beneath each statement.

1. I have never been married.

2. I am engaged to be married.

(a) Your Fiancé(e)'s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Your Fiancé(e)'s Current Religious Affiliation (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

(c) For you:  This is my first marriage.  I have been married before.

(d) For your fiancé(e):  This is his/her first marriage.  My fiancé(e) has been married before.

3. I am married.

(a) Your Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Your Spouse's Current Religious Affiliation (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

(c) For you:  This is my first marriage.  I have been married before.

(d) For your spouse:  This is my spouse's first marriage.  My spouse has been married before.

(e) Date of Marriage: \_\_\_\_\_

(f) Place of Marriage: \_\_\_\_\_

(include **locality** (town, city, county, etc.), **region** (state, province, territory, etc.), and **country**)

(g) Officiating Authority of Marriage: \_\_\_\_\_

(civil government, non-Christian minister, Christian minister, Catholic cleric)

4. I am married, but separated from my spouse.

5. I am divorced and I have not remarried.

6. I am a widow/widower and have not remarried since my spouse's death.

### IV. FAMILY INFORMATION

List the name(s) of any children or other dependents (e.g., Daughter—Jane; Stepson—John).

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

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## V. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What or who has led you to want to know more about the Catholic Faith?

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2. Please describe the types of religious education you have received, as a child and as an adult.

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3. What contact have you had with the Catholic Church to date?

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4. What are some of the questions or concerns you have about the Catholic Church?

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5. At this point in time, which of the following statements best describes your present feelings and thoughts about the possibility of joining the Catholic Church? (please circle one)

- A. I need much more information about the Catholic Church before I would consider joining.
- B. I am considering joining, but I am still unsure about it.
- C. I am fairly sure that I would like to join, but I still need some time to study and pray about it.
- D. I am fairly sure that I want to join the Catholic Church.

# Catechist's Examination of Conscience

*But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children.  
So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the Gospel of God  
but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.*

~ 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

Read the above passage from Scripture.

As you encounter and seek to invite souls to join you in discovering the love of God, deeply, prayerfully consider the following questions and statements about your own heart attitude and actions.

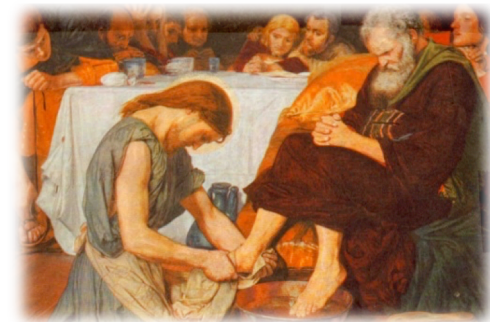
When I think about my Catholic faith,  
and my mission as a catechist...

## Remember

You're doing one of the *most important* jobs on earth, and Satan doesn't like you, so expect this all to be rather hard.

Guard and grow *diligently* what has been entrusted to you by almighty God.

People listen to those who *listen* to them.



Do not reject criticism; we are not expected to like it, but there is often *no progress* without it.



For all that you're called to be for others, remember God *delights* in you for your own sake.

Strive as a child; pray as a child.  
God is *so* interested in your details.

Teach as a witness to *joy*.

When I discuss the Catholic faith  
with those who are not Catholic...

## Consider

Do I consider it a *privilege* to be chosen by God as a bearer of his message of mercy and hope for this time, this place, and for these souls?

Do I accept mediocrity in my catechetical work in *any* way at all, even a little bit?

Can I honestly say that I listen *well*?  
Or am I often just waiting to get in my next point?

Do I seek to get to *know* those I share the faith with?

Do I know anything about their lives?  
Do I even know their names?

Do I care about them, or are they more just *objects* to receive what I have to say; to be "set straight" by my opening their minds to the truth?

Do I find in my personality a sense of:  
Being easily *angered*? Being easily turned to a *sour* attitude?  
Holding *grudges* after strong disagreements?  
Not *smiling* much when I teach or share the faith?

Am I insecure about not having "all the answers" in a discussion of my faith?  
Does it cause me to *need* to "get it all said"? Does it cause me to *avoid* questions or those who ask questions?

Does my way of discussing faith indicate a *need* to be "proved" right?

Do I pray for myself?  
Do I pray for those I am seeking to catechize, *really*?

Do I see God as a good employer,  
or more as a good *Father*?

Would those who know me *best* describe me as: Gentle?  
Inviting? Easily forgiving? Outwardly joyful about my faith?

# A Pair of Examples of Good Methodology in Teaching Adults

***“To be able to educate others in the faith, catechists should themselves have a deep spiritual life. This is the most important aspect of their personality and therefore the one to be most stressed in formation. The real catechist is a saint” (GCM 22). This is daunting. And yet this is doable — in God. So long as this daunting call drives us to prayer, instead of driving us away in fear, then all things become possible (see Lk 1:37). What we have to give — Who we have to give — is worth surmounting this fear.***

## Using Questions as an Aid to Conversion

Our own verbal teaching, private conversations with those we teach, small group dialogue, as well as times set aside for questions and answers, can all bring out questions, intended or not. Be grateful for questions: it means that someone is interested! Questions asked by participants are always good. It is important though, that catechists not relate to questions passively, much less view them as potential distractions. Good catechists *invite* and *work* for questions.

It’s helpful to consider the following questions: When does learning begin? Was there ever a time in your own education when a particular teacher left you feeling lost? The teacher may have expounded on several ideas with great passion, but left you wondering, “What is the point here?” If at some level that question was not satisfied, you may have continued to be present, but you had to force yourself to pay attention, unaided by any internal *need to know*.

If you have had this experience, you discovered that learning does not begin when the teacher simply starts to speak. Rather, it begins when the *learner* fashions a well-framed question in his or her mind, a question of such interest that it demands an answer. When the learner “owns” a question, when it strikes to the core of his or her own curiosity, then the proper dynamic is at work for real engagement. Learning has begun.

To be clear, we are not talking about simple factual questions like, “In what year was the D-Day Battle fought?” Rather, we are talking about broader questions, such as: “What would have happened if the Allies had not prevailed at Normandy? How would it have changed the face of Europe?” While dates are important, these larger questions are more interesting and present a framework that tie together otherwise disparate facts. In turn, they elicit other, more detailed questions.

When participants in adult catechesis feel lost or bored, it is often because they have not considered these larger questions or their underlying importance, or have not been helped to do so. One hallmark of a great catechist is the ability to initiate curiosity with a well-framed question, and guide those being catechized to ask their own questions along the path toward conclusions. This is accomplished through a series of guided questions posed by the catechist to elicit thought, discussion, and conclusions from participants. It demands thoughtful preparation on the part of the catechist, but when well executed, this method gives participants a chance to experience, in the midst of an indifferent culture, that truth is surprisingly *relevant*, and more important, to consider the invitation to conversion at a more *personal* level.

## Using Eye Contact as an Aid to Conversion

Eye contact is one of the *most* crucial skills of a good catechist. It is certainly the case that a solicitation of participants’ questions or thoughts, small-group discussion, group dialogue during a teaching, and individual conversations afterward will all give a catechist insight into how a teaching is being received, but for those portions of a teaching in which such means are not used, it is indispensable for a catechist to learn to closely observe participants as truths are unfolded to them.

Very often, unless otherwise trained, most catechists (and speakers in general) will unconsciously begin to make eye contact with only those faces in the room that seem to be responding most positively. During a teaching, the presence of a person with a happy face and a head nodding in apparent agreement will soon attract a catechist’s eye contact in *great* disproportion to others in the room. For example, in an RCIA setting, it can even get to the point that if the most positive faces in the room are from RCIA team members, godparents, or sponsors then the catechist will begin to make eye contact *only* with them. Often the result of this unconscious action is that the catechist mentally shifts to teaching *them*, instead of participants, usually evidenced by an increasing use of terminology and phrases that may be meaningless or confusing to non-Catholics.

If a catechist can’t make eye contact with *all participants*, then he or she has *no real sense* of how the teaching is being received *in the moment*. What will be missed? A confused look on someone’s face (or maybe many faces) that signals a need to stop and clarify or repeat, to slow down, or to back up and come at a point from another direction, or to directly ask the quizzical ones a question. A change in expression that indicates some encouraging level of understanding or recognition. A slight shift in the mouth and slight clouding of the eyes that lets you know emotions have been stirred to the point of tears. A sleepy-eyed look (maybe from a long day, a good meal, or lackluster teaching) that calls you to work harder to engage a particular person, or simply to pause for a coffee or tea break. A questioning look that may benefit from an opportunity to ask one. An angry look that may need pursuing immediately, or perhaps in private after the session. A sudden turning down to write, implying you’ve perhaps said something of value.

All of these, and other reactions you observe as you teach, point to one of the most important aspects of relationships in your catechetical work: yes, you may be diligently seeking to build relationships with participants in many ways *in addition* to the actual catechesis, but does the importance of knowing *who* you are teaching now extend fully to knowing them *as* you are teaching?