

# Interested in Becoming Catholic?

*“Come and see...” John 1:39*

## Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults A Journey of Faith



St. Stephen Faith Community welcomes all to worship with us and share in the Word of God, even if you are not Catholic.

If however, you feel drawn to the Catholic Faith, and

- you are interested in learning more about the Catholic Church,
- if you have questions about the Traditions and Beliefs of the Faith,
- you are looking for a Church to call “home”....

We invite you to inquire about the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.), which is the process through which adults join or complete their initiation into the Catholic Church.

## Is the RCIA for me?

The RCIA is for three groups of people:

1. Those who are not baptized.
2. Those who were baptized into another Christian denomination and wish to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.
3. Baptized Catholics who were never formed in the Catholic faith and have not completed their initiation; that is, who have received neither of the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.

## This process takes place in various phases:

### PART 1: INQUIRY

This is the initial period before you decide to enter the Catholic Church. You're asking questions and being introduced to some of the basic tenets of the Catholic Faith.

The group Inquiry Sessions are held once a week for five weeks beginning in September.

Some Inquirers may decide, for whatever reason, not to continue beyond this phase. There are never any “strings attached” and we will respect your decision.

Others who have decided to continue in this process toward becoming initiated into the Church, will then proceed to the next formal stage called the Catechumenate Phase.

## PART 2: THE CATECHUMENATE

During this Phase we will celebrate the **Rite of Acceptance** with those who are seeking Baptism. They will be received into the order of **Catechumens**, and will be referred to as such going forward. They will declare formally their desire to prepare for the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation and to become members of the Catholic Church.

We will also celebrate the **Rite of Welcoming** with those who have been previously baptized in another Christian Faith. They will be referred to as **Candidates**, going forward. They will declare formally their desire to prepare for the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation, and to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church through the Profession of Faith.

The Catechumens and Candidates meet weekly on Sundays, upon dismissal after the Homily at the 9 am Mass, to “break open the words” of scripture they have just heard. At the conclusion of the 9 am Mass, they will meet for an extended session along with their Sponsors and the RCIA Team. These extended sessions are focused on Liturgical Catechesis.

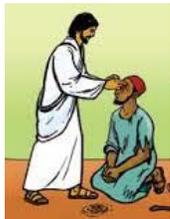


### **PART 3: PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT**

This Phase begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend of Lent. We celebrate in Church, the **Rite of Sending** of the Catechumens to the Bishop at the Diocesan **Rite of Election** for his formal acceptance of them into the order of the Elect (whom God has chosen and called by name). The Catechumens sign their names in the **Book of the Elect** as a formal declaration of their intent to journey toward the Easter Sacraments and then this book is presented to the Bishop for his acceptance and blessing.

On this weekend, we also celebrate the **Rite of Enrollment** for the **Candidates** who have declared their intention to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church at Easter.

During this phase, the extended sessions are focused on intense preparation for the three Scrutiny Rites, which are celebrated on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of Lent.



### **PART 4: MYSTAGOGIA**

At the Easter Vigil, the most sacred night in the Church Year, we celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord and share in the Sacraments of Initiation with the Elect.

We also this night, receive into full communion the Candidates, through the Profession of Faith, and the Sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation.

During the Easter Season, we continue to meet for mystagogical sessions, to explore the full meaning of all that they have experienced at the Easter Vigil as well as the Easter mysteries, and integrating them into the Faith Community as active members of the Church.

### **HOW LONG DOES THIS JOURNEY TAKE?**

The journey of faith lasts a lifetime. Many people who have begun the Inquiry phase here at St. Stephen between spring and September are received into the Church the following Easter based on their readiness.

This is not a "program", or a "class", or a "set of hoops" to jump through. It is the process designed for Adults 18+ who consciously & freely seek to enter the way of Faith and Conversion.

It is an opportunity to encounter the Lord Jesus as He reveals Himself in this Community of Faith.

### **COME JOIN US!**

If you are interested in participating in this wonderful process of conversion and in this "journey of the heart", please contact either of our RCIA Co- Coordinators, Deacon Jim or Mike Long at 407-699-5683 or via email at: [mikel@st-stephen.com](mailto:mikel@st-stephen.com)

Or

You can also speak to any of our Clergy anytime. All are welcome and remember "there are never any strings attached".

Please share a copy of this brochure with anyone you know who might be interested in learning more about the Catholic Faith.

We are always happy to meet with you and speak with you.

*St. Stephen Catholic Community*  
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