

# *Diocese of Sandhurst*



## **Christian Initiation of Children who have reached Catechetical Age**

**2008**

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## Diocese of Sandhurst Chancery Office



*My friends in Christ,*

*I am very glad to present to the schools and parishes of Sandhurst this document written to guide the formation of those younger people choosing to become part of the Catholic Church.*

*This policy, “Christian Initiation of Children of a Catechetical Age” (ICCA) has been written to help form*

- *Those children who have not been baptised but have reached an age where their desire is to be part of the Catholic Church.*

*The process we have developed may also be used for*

- *Those children who are already baptised but have passed the usual age for the sacramental program, but would like to be fully initiated into our Catholic Church. We honour the baptism that these children have received already and we ensure that the children and their family realise the change of journey they are now taking.*

*Some parishes may already have an extensive process for the initiation of children who do not fit into the sacramental program or the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). If your existing process is one that has a team already comfortable in its application, it would be worth placing it beside this policy to make sure there is a consistency of practice across our parishes and schools.*

*Any process like this cannot work in isolation which is why I urge you to make sure that the formation of our children is done within a group setting where the richness and experience of many may contribute to its success. It may be helpful in smaller centres to run any process on initiation of children of a catechetical age along side an existing “Steps in Faith” sacramental process or the parish’s RCIA. This way the resources may be shared, not just in presenters, but also in the energy and group atmosphere provided in established processes.*

*Both “Steps in Faith” and the RCIA have long traditions and clear guidelines which are useful for their purpose. But those guidelines may not be applicable to children who are too old for the sessions in the “Steps in Faith” process, or too young to follow the conversations and concepts of adults in the RCIA journey. Some parishes have tried to fit children into one of these two settings for convenience.*

*Our fundamental duty is to proclaim our faith in Jesus Christ and to present the values and principles to be lived in our church Community. At the same time, like the RCIA, the journey of our children and young people should be at their pace and ability to learn and integrate their faith learning into their lives. The best example to those people thinking of undertaking the journey into the Church are well formed people who have been through a process of discovery themselves.*

*This diocesan policy for the Initiation of Children of a Catechetical Age is the fruit of the wisdom and experience of a number of people from within the diocese. My thanks go to the members of the Sandhurst Catechumenate Forum, Diocesan Liturgical Commission and the Catholic Education Office, who have put so much work into establishing this process. There are many opportunities within this process to incorporate the individuality of each parish and school, and it is my hope that the greatest incorporation will be the joy and love of Jesus Christ.*

*Yours in Christ*

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "+ Joseph Grech". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

MOST REVEREND JOSEPH GRECH, DD  
Bishop of Sandhurst



# Policy for the Diocese of Sandhurst

1. This policy is explicitly for children and younger people who are to be fully initiated into the Catholic Church. It may be used for those who have already been baptised but have received no further catechises. The person for Initiation must be prepared in a manner appropriate to the directives of the Diocese. The liturgical process to be used is to be modelled on the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* process. This means having a:
  - a. **Period of Inquiry** – to establish motivations and personal commitment of the child or young person and their direct support group. This will conclude with a *Rite for Acceptance as a Catechumen*.
  - b. **Period of Catechumenate** – to catechise the child or young person and the parish, to introduce them into the parish community, by way of attendance at parish events and worship. Considerable time needs to be spent with the exploration of the scriptures and catechesis about the Catholic Church. The purpose of this time is to nurture and grow their faith and conversion to God. This period will conclude with a *Rite of Election and Enrolment of the Name*.
  - c. **Period of Enlightenment** – to continue in a more intense way the commitment made by the elect and their support group to full initiation into the Catholic Church, using prayer and reflection as a basis for this journey. This will conclude with the reception of the *Sacraments of Initiation*.
2. The Rites of Acceptance, Election and Initiation are to be public events, occurring within a parish environment and witness. This reinforces the idea that a child is initiated into a parish not a school. Even though the school is often part of the parish and is a most appropriate venue for formation and source of support for the journey.
3. A small community must be formed as support for the child or young person. This group would most suitably include a family member, peer support, the parish priest (or his representative), parish support, RCIA support and a person to oversee the formation.

4. The name, age and formation process of the child or young person for Initiation may be registered with the Diocesan Chancery at the time of Acceptance. At present these details may be sent to the “Chairperson of the Sandhurst Catechumenate” or by email or phone message to the Chancery. This may enable children to join together and journey with others in their Christian formation.
5. The period of formation should be suitable to each young person’s stage of development. It must be substantial enough to include a sense of belonging to a parish community and some appropriate knowledge about the teaching of the Church. The process should not be rushed to fit a pre-ordained timetable. Initiation takes as long as is necessary, and it is different for each person.
6. The child for initiation must be able to comprehend what they are asking for and be able, in their own words, to explain their desire for Initiation.
7. This process of initiation is one of conversion and evangelisation, which also touches all the community who gather around them. The goal is initiation not religious education. Although some knowledge will be gained, the hope is a change of heart for the young person.
8. The content of formation must be based on the Scriptures, and the teaching and history of the Catholic Church, applicable to the age and development of the child or young person being formed.



# The Initiation of Children of a Catechetical Age

*The ten stations on the journey of Initiation.*

## Period of Inquiry

### Station 1

Getting to know you

- Who is the inquirer asking for reception?
- What is their motivation?
- Who are the people around them that show the witness of Jesus?
- What does the inquirer like?
- What do they believe?

*Purpose :- To familiarise all the team with the child or young person asking for Initiation*

*Outcome:- A sense that this is the authentic journey for the inquirer*

### Station 2.

Getting to know Jesus

- Who is Jesus ? Stories in the bible.
- The personal reflection of the members of the group as to who Jesus is for them.
- Who is Jesus for the inquirer?

*Purpose :- To familiarise the enquirer with the life of Jesus*

*Outcome:- A sense that Jesus has always been a part of the enquirer's life and the lives of the other members of the group*

## Rite of Acceptance

# Catechumenate

## Station 3.

Praying with Jesus

- Styles of Prayer
- Formal Prayer – Liturgy and traditional prayer.
- Personal reflection and praying.
- The benefit of regular Mass attendance

*Purpose :- To familiarise the Catechumen with the Rites of the Church*

*Outcome:- Ability to identify and take part in Catholic Prayer*

## Station 4

Getting to know the Church

- The Catechism
- The Creed
- The History of our Church

*Purpose :- To familiarise the Catechumen with what the Church believes and why.*

*Outcome:- To appreciate the Catechism and its importance*

## Station 5

Getting to know the Sacraments.

- What are they about ?
- What happens at reception ?
- How are we changed by them ?

*Purpose :- To familiarise the catechumen with the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church*

*Outcome:- Knowledge of the sacraments as a journey of faith*

## Station 6

Getting to know your local community

- The history
- The ministries and ministers
- The people who call themselves members.

*Purpose :- To familiarise the Catechumen with the local worshipping community*

*Outcome:- A sense of belonging to a larger worshipping community*

## Station 7

Becoming part of the local community.

- How can the Catechumen be part of the existing community.

*Purpose :- To become more familiar with the roles of a community*

*Outcome:- Increasing the sense of belonging*

# Rite of Enrolment

## Period of Enlightenment

### Station 8

Rite of Christian Initiation.

- What is it about ?
- What happens at each stage ?
- What does each Sacrament of Initiation represent
- Why do it ?

*Purpose :- To place Initiation within the Christian journey*

*Outcome:- To know what will happen at the Rites of Initiation*

### Station 9

Coming to a deeper understanding of the Catholic Community and prayer

- Why do I want Initiation
- Time of reflection and prayer (revisit station 3)
- Deepening understanding of the gospels

*Purpose :- To prepare the Elect for Initiation*

*Outcome:- Readiness for Initiation*

## Rite of Christian Initiation

### Mystagogy

#### Station 10

Becoming all you can be and what God created you to be

- How has my life has changed and how do I continue my relationship with Jesus.

*For more details and help with the journey Elio Capra's book *The Christian Initiation of the Young* is highly recommended. (see resources for details)*

# Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a Roman ritual developed to provide a series of liturgical rites around which the process of conversion to the Catholic Church will take place. The rite was developed for people, who as adults are not already baptised (Catechumen) and those baptised in a Christian denomination not Catholic (Candidates) who wish to become members of the Catholic community.

The RCIA is a process of preparing and welcoming new members into the Catholic Church, by the practice of breaking open the scriptures and finding out more about the practices and beliefs of the Catholic Church. This is a community journey, and while a few people make up the team who intimately travel with the catechumen and candidates, the whole worshipping community is included in one way or another. The initiates share prayer and worship with the whole community and examine their own relationship with God in an environment of Catholics sharing their own living faith and guided by gospel values.

The process is made in the company of other inquirers, catechists, sponsors and community members. There are four periods of formation which involve discussion and sharing and culminate with a liturgical rite which prepares the Initiates for the next stage of the journey.

Ultimately the reception of the sacraments of initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and first Communion is the aim of much of the journey, but our time of conversion takes a life time and the RCIA is one stage in that journey. In most parishes these sacraments of initiation will occur on Easter Saturday night, but the time of formation takes as long as is needed and sometimes the initiates are not ready at Easter.

*“The rite of Christian initiation...is designed for adults who, after hearing the mystery of Christ proclaimed, consciously and freely seek the living God and enter the way of faith and conversion as the Holy Spirit opens their hearts. By God’s help they will be strengthened spiritually during their preparation and at the proper time will receive the sacraments fruitfully” RCIA #1*

## The outline for the RCIA

### **Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate.**

This is a time, of no fixed duration or structure, for inquiry and introduction to gospel values, an opportunity for the beginnings of faith.

#### *First step: Acceptance into the order of Catechumens.*

This is the liturgical rite, marking the beginning of the Catechumenate proper, as the candidates express and the Church accepts their intention to respond to God’s call to follow the way of Christ.

**Period of Catechumenate.**

This is the time for the nurturing and growth of the catechumens' faith and conversion to God; celebrations of the word and prayers of exorcism and blessing are meant to assist the process.

*Second step: Election or Enrolment of Names.*

This is the liturgical rite, usually celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent, by which the Church formally ratifies the catechumen's readiness for the sacraments of initiation and the catechumen, now the elect, expresses the will to receive these sacraments.

**Period of Purification and Enlightenment.**

This is the time immediately preceding the elect's initiation, usually the Lenten season preceding the celebration of this initiation at the Easter Vigil; it is a time of reflection, intensely centred on conversion, marked by celebration of the scrutinies and presentations and of the preparation rites on Holy Saturday.

*Third Step: Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation.*

This is the liturgical rite, usually integrated into the Easter Vigil, by which the elect are initiated through Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist.

**Period of Post-Baptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy.**

This is the time, usually the Easter Season, following the celebration of initiation, during which the newly initiated experience being fully a part of the Christian community by means of both pertinent catechesis and particularly with all the faithful in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration.

(The above outline is the one presented in the rite book. For more information and requirements regarding the RCIA please refer the Rite of Christian Initiation Book – refer to resources for full description.)

All formation during the RCIA needs to be the result of the unique nature of each person presenting themselves for initiation. It should provide joy and hope for all the community and a sense of welcome for the initiate.

*“The whole initiation must bear a markedly paschal character, since the initiation of Christians is the first sacramental sharing of Christ's dying and rising.” RCIA #8*

# Rite of Initiation of Children who have reached a Catechetical Age

## *NORMS FROM THE RCIA DOCUMENTS: RITES FOR PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES*

**242** This form of the rite of Christian initiation is intended for children not baptised as infants, who have attained the use of reason and are of catechetical age (7-8+ years). It can also be used for children who have been baptised as infants but who have not been catechised.

They seek Christian Initiation either at the direction of their parents or guardians or, with parental permission, on their own initiative. They are capable of a personal faith and of recognizing an obligation in conscience, but are dependant on their parents and are still strongly influenced by their friendship and their social surroundings.

**243** The initiation of these children requires both a conversion that is personal and somewhat developed in proportion to their age, and the assistance of the education in faith they need. As with adults, their preparation may take years if need be, before they receive the sacraments.

Their initiation is marked by several steps and liturgical rites leading up to their sacramental initiation.

**244** The progress of formation children receive depends on the help and example of their parents, companion and catechists. Therefore it is to be hoped that:

- The children will receive as much involvement, help and example as possible from the parents, whose permission is required for the children to be initiated and to live the Christian life.
- The children receive support from a group of children of similar age who might also be preparing for the reception of sacraments of initiation.

**246** The children will receive the sacrament of Baptism. The Bishop or priest who baptises them will also confirm them. The children will for the first time receive Eucharist (Communion). Thus the children will be fully initiated in the one liturgy if their catechetical instruction sees them ready.

# Outline of the Rite of Acceptance

**REFER TO RITE FOR CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS: # 250-266**

## RECEIVING THE CHILDREN

*This rite occurs before the Liturgy of the Word*

### GREETING

### OPENING DIALOGUE

### AFFIRMATION BY THE PARENTS (SPONSORS) AND THE ASSEMBLY

### SIGNING OF THE CANDIDATES WITH THE CROSS

#### SIGNING OF THE FOREHEAD AND OTHER SENSES

*256 The cross is traced on the forehead of each child; the signing of the other senses may follow.*

#### SIGNING OF THE FOREHEAD

*257 The celebrant first says the following formulary.*

N, Christ has called you to be his friend. Always remember him and be faithful to him. Therefore I mark your forehead with the sign of the cross. It is the sign of Christians; let it remind you always of Christ and how much he loves you.

And I also invite you, parents, sponsors and catechist, since you also belong to Christ, to sign this child with the sign of the cross.

*All say the following or another suitable acclamation.*

**Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

#### SIGNING OF THE OTHER SENSES

*258 The signing of the other senses may be carried out by the celebrant. After the signing of each sense the assembly may sing or recite an acclamation in praise of Christ, for example, 'Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!'*

*While the ears are being signed the celebrant says:*

I mark your ears with the sign of the cross:  
hear the words of Christ.

*While the eyes are being signed:*

I mark your eyes with the sign of the cross:  
see the works of Christ.

*While the lips are being signed:*

I mark your lips with the sign of the cross:  
speak as Christ would speak.

*While the breast is being signed:*

I mark the sign of the cross over your heart:  
make your heart the home of Christ.

*While the shoulders are being signed:*

I mark your shoulders with the sign of the cross:  
be strong with the strength of Christ.

*While the sign of the cross is traced above the whole person:*

I place you entirely under the sign of Christ's cross  
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, +  
and of the Holy Spirit:  
live with Jesus now and for ever.

Catechumen: **Amen.**

## THE CATECHUMEN IS THEN PRESENTED WITH A BIBLE (#259)

Accept this Word of God that you may better come to know Jesus and his many gifts

# Outline of the Rite of Enrolment

**REFER TO RITE FOR CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS: # 117-124**

*This rite occurs after the Homily*

## **OPENING DIALOGUE**

### **PRESENTATION OF CATECHUMENS**

### **AFFIRMATION BY THE GODPARENTS AND ASSEMBLY**

### **INVITATION AND ENROLMENT OF NAMES**

### **ACT OF ELECTION**

N...., I now welcome you as a member of the elect, to be become closer to the church and our parish. Is it your wish to come closer to Jesus in the Catholic Church?

#### **It is**

God is always faithful to those God calls, you must be faithful to God in return. Will you do this?

#### **I will**

Godparents and sponsors, you have spoken in favour of this child. Will you help N.... in their journey to initiation by the way you live and act?

#### **I will**

People of God, will you help N...., their family and catechists with their initiation, by being true witnesses of God's love in your lives?

#### **We will**

### **PRAYER OVER THE ELECT**

Lord God, you create us and give us life. Bless these children and receive them into your community. May they be joyful in the life you won for us through Christ our Lord.

#### **Amen**

Although you cannot join us at the Lord's Table, stay with us as a sign of our hope that all God's children will eat and drink with the Lord and work with his Spirit to make a new earth.

## **LITURGY OF PENANCE**

*279 The Sacrament of Penance is to be prepared for, at an appropriate time, and celebrated with those already baptised. For the unbaptised, sacramental penance must be celebrated at some stage in the future after their reception of their Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion.*



# CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

## **REFER TO RITE FOR CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS: # 280-305**

280 In order to bring out the paschal character of baptism, celebration of the sacraments of initiation should preferably take place at the Easter Vigil or on a Sunday, the day that the Church devotes to the remembrance of Christ's resurrection

282 If the sacraments of initiation are celebrated at a time other than the Easter Vigil the Mass of the day is used. The readings for the Sunday or feast on which the celebration takes place will be used.

283 All the children to be baptised are to be accompanied by their own godparent or godparents, chosen by them and approved by the priest

284 Baptised children of the catechetical group may be completing their Christian initiation in the sacraments of confirmation and the Eucharist at this same celebration. For their confirmation, previously baptised children of the catechetical group are to have their own sponsors. If possible, these should be the persons who were godparents for their baptism, but other qualified persons may be chosen.

## **LITURGY OF THE WORD**

### **CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM**

**INVITATION TO PRAYER**

**PRAYER OVER THE WATER**

**RENUNCIATION OF SIN**

**[ANOINTING WITH THE OIL OF CATECHUMENS]**

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

**BAPTISM**

**[ANOINTING AFTER BAPTISM]**

**[CLOTHING WITH A BAPTISMAL GARMENT]**

**[PRESENTATION OF A LIGHTED CANDLE]**

### **CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION**

**LAYING ON OF HANDS**

**ANOINTING WITH CHRISM**

**LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

## **PERIOD OF POST-BAPTISMAL CATECHESIS OR MYSTAGOGY**

306 A period of post baptismal catechesis or Mystagogy should be provided to assist the young neophytes and their companions who have completed their Christian initiation. This period can be arranged by an adaptation of the guidelines given for adults (nos. 234-241) the child and the team must meet again. This may take place with other neophytes who have been received into the church throughout the previous year. Giving the children active ministries within the community will help their integration. The period of Mystagogy should be long enough to answer any more questions that arise and see that the newly initiated feels comfortable within the community.



# RESOURCES

## Essential

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults  
(Initiation for Children of a Catechetical Age)  
E J Dwyer. Sydney, Australia: 1986 (out of print)  
St Pauls Books and Media

## Highly Recommended

Capra, Elio sdb (ed). The Christian Initiation of the Young  
(Office for Worship, Melbourne, Australia: 2000)

## Optional

Duggan, Robert and Kelly, Maureen. The Christian Initiation of Children: Hope for the future (Paulist Press, New York, USA: 1991)

Figges, Sandra rscj. Christian Initiation of Older Children  
(St Pauls, Slough, UK:1990)

Pennock, Michael Francis. The Seekers Catechism: The Basics of Catholicism  
(Ave Maria Press, Indiana: 1994)

Wade, Terry (ed). The Parish Companion to Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (Office for Worship, Melbourne, Australia: 1990)

Diocese of Sandhurst – Catholic Education Office. Steps in Faith. 2004

## Music Resources

Celebrating Sacraments  
Growing in God  
These Hands  
We give you thanks  
You are mine  
Song of Fire and Water  
Veni Sancte Spiritus

John Burland.  
Peter Kearney  
Andrew Chinn  
D. Haas  
D. Haas  
M. Haugen  
Taize.



# APPENDIX I

## Expanding the ten stations: Help for the Team

The purpose of this section is to look a little more deeply at the periods of initiation. It is a guide for the team to use in giving a clearer vision of what might be achieved along the way. The use of the Catechism is not so that the child can recite parts of that document, but to give a basis for formation, and reference book for use by the team. Initiation is never dependant on knowledge but on conversion of the heart. As previously stated Elio Capra's book "Christian Initiation of the Young" will give you a path to follow that might help a team working to form a child. Use a good resource such as Pennock's "The Seekers Catechism" to help break open the basics of the Catechism. All of this formation is underpinned by a weekly reading and discussing the Sunday scriptures with the child or young person. Some discussions points might be:

- *What is Jesus doing?*
- *What do we think is happening?*
- *What is God saying through these stories?*

## Period of Inquiry

This period covers the **first inquiry** by a child, young person or their parent. It is most importantly a time of welcome. It is time now to find out the level of commitment that the child or young person has for the journey. Some questions might include:

- *What does the inquirer know about the Catholic faith already?*
- *How much do they know about Jesus?*
- *Why are they asking to enter the Catholic Church?*
- *What support do they have in this journey?*
- *Has the inquiry come from the parent or the child?*
- *Is there a sense of pressure from someone else?*
- *Do they realise that there may not be a firm date for the reception of the Sacraments, as the journey takes as long as is required?*
- *Are they able to understand what they are asking for?*

Now it is time to find out what questions they may have. Inquiry is a time of honesty from both inquirer and the Church. This is the time to involve the Parish Priest or their representative.

Inquiry is a time to introduce the inquirer to the stories of Jesus, and a little of the history of the church. Though the majority of this will be covered in the period of Catechumenate now is the time to let them know some of the things the Church believes and offers. It is a time to base the rest of the journey on the person of Jesus and ensure that everything comes from him. Introducing the child to the gathering

community should come now, as they need the support of the whole community in their journey.

Along with the bible and its gifts, the inquirer should know about the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) and its gifts. The catechism reveals the Catholic Church's faith, and we cannot inform without it. But it should be used only as a reference for the team to touch back into when needed. Do not try to look at all the book contains as that would be overwhelming, but use it as a basic commentary to understand what the Catholic Church teaches. If we are calling our inquirer into conversion it is important they know that what we believe is based on the life of Jesus and informed by the Catholic Church's religious beliefs as shown in the Catechism.

Therefore, following the "stations" we begin to find out more about the enquirer and their life and we all become more familiar with the life of Jesus. The inquiry period is a time to find out whether those two lives can intertwine well using the beliefs of the Catholic Church as ballast.

By placing the inquirer with a number of people a range of views can be reflected and commitments made by the inquirer and their support group. A key question to ask yourself is whether this team assembled the best group of people to help in the journey? It is most appropriate for these people to select a suitable Sponsor and Godparent from the community for the child or young person, but the child or young person may feel more comfortable with a family member. The family member must know that this is a serious thing being asked of them and will involve them being part of the journey, by attending the sessions with their candidate.

It is important that every stage of the journey, Inquiry, Catechumenate and Enlightenment is informed by the liturgical rite which guides the process. Always keep the content of that rite nearby and refer to it often as a gauge to decide if the period of the journey is complete.

Explore the **Rite of Acceptance** with the inquirer before moving on.

- Is the Inquirer ready to go forward with resolve and joy supported by their sponsor and parents?

## Catechumenate

Now that the inquirer has committed to the journey, has a group to help on the journey, and has been accepted by the wider Catholic Community where they live, then it is time to move to the period of the Catechumenate. There is much to do in this period and it is a time of discovery and joy for all concerned.

A **Catechumen** is a child who has not received Baptism, or any other Sacrament. A **Candidate** is a child who has been baptised in the Catholic Church or another aligned Christian denomination but would now like to continue their faith journey in the Catholic Church by receiving Confirmation and First Communion.

It is important to know that our diocesan journey as stated in these "stations" can be taken by either Catechumen or Candidate, but a child already baptised in another denomination must realise that they are asking to continue in a faith that has not been theirs so far. The parents must understand that fact as well.

The **Catechumenate** is when the Catholic Church is more fully revealed to the child or young person asking admission. The catechumen will have received a bible from

the community. This life of Jesus is the basis of our journey and must be a constant part of the child's formation. While this remains a time to open up the scriptures to the child it is also a time to become more familiar with what the Catholic Church is. During this time the traditional prayers of the church are explored. Ways of praying such as, the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Gloria and the Creed are explored. So too are the ways we use these particular prayers; such as Liturgies of the Word, Mass, Rosary, Angelus and spontaneously in daily personal prayer. Refer to Part IV of the Catechism in relation to Catholic Prayer

The Catechumen must be taken through the parts of the Mass:

- Opening Rite (with Penitential Rite),
- Liturgy of the Word (the difference between Old and New Testament Stories, the Creed and Prayer of Intercession),
- The Communion Rite (the Eucharistic Prayer, the action of communion)
- and the Closing Rite (the Blessing and Dismissal) Refer to Part II of the Catechism for its section on Liturgy.

The Catechism is divided into 4 parts.

- Part I explores our Creed, and what we believe. It gives the Catholic perspective on what we believe and then looks at the words of the Creed in relationship to the Christian and Catholic Church.
- Part II will be looked at when becoming familiar with the liturgy and the sacraments.
- Part III explores the life of Christ and our part in living Christian lives; in particular the 10 commandments are related to the Catholic life.
- Part IV relates to prayer and the Lord's Prayer in particular.

The prayers of the Catholic Church will be more deeply explored during the next **Period of Enlightenment** when the child asking for the sacraments will receive a copy of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer from the community.

When looking at the Catholic Church's history the value of the changes of Vatican II should be emphasised as much of our current practice has been influenced by the decisions of Vatican II. The journey that is being undertaken by the children now is part of the Vatican II changes that revisited the initiation of Christians in the early Church. The gifts of the Sacraments are often best revealed by various people from the team and community telling their experience of the sacraments.

Catechumenate is a time of growing into the local community for the children. Looking at the local church community and its history will involve people with stories of the church becoming involved. Connections between parish and school can be identified. This is the time for the children to work out how they can become an active part of the community and what gifts they have individually that can be shared with the community.

The more people the catechumen can meet the better the various agencies and services of the Church can be experienced. This may help the young person to determine if the gifts they have may be contributed to their local Church.

The child must become familiar with the Catholic Church and the community that they are asking to be enrolled in. The sponsors, parents and community must all be sure that this is the correct journey for the child. This is not the end of the familiarising of the child with the community but they must be becoming sure of their commitment.

Explore the **Rite of Election** and become familiar with what it asks. The rite is the prayerful display of God electing the catechumen for the Church.

- Is the catechumen ready to say yes?

## Period of Enlightenment

The **Period of Enlightenment** is the intense time of prayer, and discovery that leads up to the **Sacraments of Initiation**. It is the time to become more familiar not just with what the ceremonies involved but also what the Catholic Church expects of someone receiving these final sacraments of initiation. It is time to make sure the sponsors and parents are ready and aware of what is involved for them as well. The more formation that sponsors and parents can be part of the more comfortable they can be in the sacraments.

This is the chance to answer any final questions and raise any doubts. It is the time to prepare the community of prayer and more intensely include the child or young person into the worshipping community's prayers. The next **Period of Mystagogy**, includes regular meetings to continue the conversation of conversion. The role and importance of that is established now, and any hopes of the local community regarding the inclusion of the **neophyte** (the name for the newly initiated) are now explored.

The period of enlightenment must include a time of quiet and prayer in preparation for the sacraments. Conversations with other newly initiated people will help the child or young person better understand what might occur. This will also be an opportunity to establish contact with anyone else that has recently been brought into the church.

It is hoped that by now the journey to Initiation is almost complete but the lifelong journey as a Catholic Christian has just begun. The sacraments of initiation are just the beginning. It is important to be comfortable with what will happen at the ceremony of initiation. It was during the period of enlightenment that the Creed and Lord's Prayer was given, now is the time to realise if they have become part of the life of the child or young person.

## Mystagogy

This time establishes the lifetime practice of reflection on the life of Jesus and how that connects with the life of the Neophyte. The **period of Mystagogy** is meant to continue for the next 12 months, but in reality we often have problems sustaining the meeting points. You should insist on at least a couple of follow up meetings to answer any questions and solidify the welcome offered throughout formation. Mystagogy will help you to find out if the practices you are following work, and review how future processes might be better. This period will also allow you to see if the conversion is still ongoing and the faith offered during formation has been embraced.

The ongoing contact with neophytes will be a great advantage to the faith and hope of the team who has put so much time and desire into the formation of the child or young person. Mystagogy is a time to sit in wonder of the mystery of the movement of the Spirit in our lives, and that in certainly a lifetime journey of discovery for everyone.