

*At that time Jesus said in reply, "I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike."*

MATTHEW 11: 25



# RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA) ADAPTED FOR CHILDREN/TEENS

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# RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA) ADAPTED FOR CHILDREN/TEENS

## I. INTRODUCTION

The process by which children over the age of reason are initiated into the Catholic Church is the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), appropriately adapted.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is intended for all individuals who have reached the age of reason, normally seven years of age. However, when working with individuals that are above the age of reason who have not socially reached adult status in the community, it is important to make adaptations as allowed for in the rite.

The Christian initiation of these children requires a conversion that is both personal and adapted to their age, education or degree of social development. The process of initiation must also be adapted both to their spiritual progress, that is, to the children's growth in faith, and to the catechetical instruction they receive. Accordingly, as with adults, their initiation may be extended over several years, if necessary, before they receive the sacraments. Also, as with adults, their initiation is marked by several steps, the liturgical rites of acceptance into the order of catechumens (RCIA *Study Edition*, 260-276), the optional rite of election (RCIA, *Study Edition*, 277-290), penitential rites or scrutinies (RCIA, *Study Edition*, 291-303), and the celebration of the sacraments of initiation (nos. 304-329); corresponding to the periods of adult initiation are the periods of children's catechetical formation that lead up to and follow the steps of their initiation (see RCIA, *Study Edition*, 252).

## II. ADAPTATION FOR CHILDREN/TEENS

**IC 1. Individuals seeking baptism or those baptized in another ecclesial community who are age seven or older who present themselves for sacraments are to be initiated according to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults appropriately adapted for children/teens (see NSC, 18).**

This form of the rite of Christian Initiation is intended for children, not baptized as infants, who have attained the age of reason and are of catechetical age. They seek Christian initiation either at the direction of their parents or guardians or, with parental permission, on their own initiative. Such children are capable of receiving and nurturing a personal faith and of recognizing an obligation in conscience. But they cannot yet be treated as adults because, at this stage of their lives, they are dependent on their parents or

guardians and are still strongly influenced by their companions and social surroundings (see RCIA, *Study Edition*, 252).

**IC 2. Unbaptized children/teens who have reached the age of reason (generally seven years of age) and are seeking Baptism in the Catholic Church shall follow the general pattern of the ordinary Catechumenate as far as possible, with the appropriate adaptations permitted in the ritual. They should receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil, together with the other catechumens (see NSC, 18).**

**IC 3. Children/teens beyond the age of reason (generally seven years of age) who have been baptized in another Christian tradition and seek full communion are to be prepared for the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist as candidates in accord with the provisions of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.**

Those children/teens who have been baptized in another church or ecclesial community and have not been catechized in the Catholic faith before attaining the age of reason, and seek full communion with the Catholic Church are to be considered Candidates for full communion. They are to be initiated according to *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, 30-37 with reception into full communion (Profession of Faith) and respecting the traditional sequences of Confirmation before Communion at the same celebration.

**IC 4. Children/teens baptized in the Catholic faith who have reached the age of reason and have not participated in catechetical training nor celebrated the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist are candidates for RCIA Adapted for Children/Teens (see NSC 21).**

**IC 5. Children/teens requesting to join the Catholic Church need the permission of both of their parents to be accepted as catechumens or candidates.**

**IC 6. When parent(s) present children under the age of reason who were validly baptized in another tradition, the pastor shall consult with the parent(s) (CCC, 11) and consider the pastoral circumstances to determine between two options for reception into the Catholic Church.**

- **Option A**

**By oral or written request of the parent(s) the child shall be received into the Catholic Church.**

It is strongly recommended that children under the age of reason who were baptized in another tradition and received into the Catholic Church under the above

circumstances be formally welcomed into the community with *The Rite of Welcoming* found at nos. 411-432 of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* with appropriate adaptations for the age of the child.

- **Option B**  
**When the child attains the age of reason the child completes initiation according to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults appropriately adapted for children.**

It is recommended that the ecclesiastical status resulting from option A be recorded in the parish baptismal register as a notation entry indicating the child's initial baptismal records and the date of reception into the Catholic Church. The ecclesiastical status resulting from option B be recorded according the normal method for reception into full communion through the RCIA process.

### III. LEADERSHIP EDUCATION AND FORMATION

- IC 7. All Clergy and Lay Ecclesial Ministers who are named as director of the parish RCIA process are to become fully familiar with the rite and the related statutes. It is expected that the directors will participate in the Archdiocesan Liturgical Ministry Institute (LMI) with an emphasis on RCIA.**

All those involved with the formation of children/teen catechumens and candidates are to be familiar with the sacramental catechetical principles from *National Directory of Catechesis*, Chapter 5 "Catechesis in the Worshiping Community."

### IV. LITURGICAL RITES

- IC 8. All of the rites prescribed in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults are to be celebrated. Optional rites are to be given due pastoral consideration and celebrated when possible.**
- IC 9. Full initiation of children/teen catechumens and candidates for full communion is to be observed in all parishes in the Archdiocese.**
- IC 10. The ritual of Dismissal is to be observed for all Rite of Christian Initiation participants.**
- IC 11. Ritual adaptations for children or teens are to be in accord with adaptations provided for in RCIA, *Study Edition*, 252-330.**

## V. DOCUMENTATION

See Sacramental Records: SR, V, “Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.”