

Christian Initiation in Unusual Situations (Hebrews 10:25 Event Notes)

1. RCIC is does not exist

While there are optional rituals for use with Children in the current text of the RCIA book, RCIC is no longer promoted and its use is discouraged as part of the RCIA process – it does not exist as a separate process. Children who have reached the age of 7 or beyond are considered ‘adults’ in the RCIA process and go through the same rituals found in the RCIA, particular to whether they are a candidate or catechumen, which are much more appropriate.

2. Catechumens vs. Candidate

- A **Catechumen** in the RCIA process is an unbaptized individual. (Before they are accepted into the Order of Catechumens by the parish community, they are considered ‘inquirers’. After the Rite of Election at the start of Lent, they are known as members of the ‘elect’.) A majority of the rituals of the RCIA process are required for the catechumen’s journey to initiation. Initiation is normally celebrated at the Easter Vigil.

- A Christian **Candidate [for the Full Communion of the Church]** is a validly baptized individual in another Christian tradition who wishes to enter the Church. A majority of the rituals of the RCIA process are not required for the candidate’s journey, however, depending on their background, may be very pastorally appropriate. Candidates enter into Full Communion through the Rite of Reception, followed immediately by both Confirmation and First Communion at the same liturgy. Initiation is usually celebrated at Easter but can take place at any time during the year by a priest without special permission from the Bishop (preferably not at the Easter Vigil to avoid confusion between catechumens and candidates).

- A Uncatechized Catholic **Candidate** has already received Baptism but not First Communion or Confirmation in the Church. They may participate in a modified RCIA candidate process.

- A Catholic **Confirmation Candidate** has already received Baptism and First Communion in the Church. They do not participate in the ritual RCIA process and are instead catechized and participate in a parish or a Diocesan Confirmation.

3. All-Diocesan Confirmation in the Diocese of Green Bay

All-Diocesan Confirmation liturgies take place every Spring (near Pentecost) and Fall at the Cathedral with Bishop Ricken for anyone who either was unable to participate in their parish’s confirmation or for small groups from parishes who could not combine with a neighboring parish. This is open for *both* adults and youth. The sending parish is still responsible for catechizing/forming the candidates and determining their readiness before submitting their registration. Registration closes 4-5 weeks in advance of each celebration. Each celebration has a capacity of 60 candidates. Forms and info found online at: <http://www.gbdioc.org/confirmation>

4. Missing Baptismal Certificates

If a baptismal certificate cannot be located, there are two additional options in preparing to complete Christian Initiation:

Step 1: Determine if there is an eye-witness who can sign an affidavit attesting that the individual was baptized with water over the forehead and with the Trinitarian formula. This should be notarized.

Step 2: If there is no certificate or affidavit, but there is justifiable reason that the individual was indeed baptized validly, a private ‘conditional baptism’ may be determined by the parish priests in extraordinary circumstances. Before this occurs, they should contact the Office of Divine Worship or the Chancery.

5. Year-Round Opportunities for New Catechumens/Candidates

It is important that the parish have a plan to engage individuals in their formation regardless of when they are called to approach the parish and inquire about becoming Catholic or completing their initiation. Telling an individual to ‘come back in the fall’ often results in the candidate leaving completely or being discouraged. Ensuring that there are opportunities to enter into some type of formation throughout the entire year also assists in building and maintaining a vibrant parish community.

6. Be Joyful!

No matter how complicated an unusual process may appear and no matter the steps that may lie ahead, always remember to remain joyful and prepared to welcome new sisters and brothers in Christ and accompany them through their Christian initiation. RCIA and sacramental preparation is a process, never a program. Always feel free to contact the Diocese and the Office of Divine Worship with any questions you may have about any unusual situations. We are happy to assist you!

Contact Info

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The RCIA Process: Summary

