

4TH PERIOD
THE NEOPHYTE YEAR

POSTBAPTISMAL CATECHESIS
 (MYSTAGOGY – 7 WEEKS)
 n. 7.4, 8, 9.5, 11, 244-251, Ap. III, n. 22-23

**REMAINDER
 OF THE NEOPHYTE
 YEAR**
 Ap. III, n. 24

Name for the Newly Baptized During This Period

All who were baptized are called *neophytes* in this period, until the anniversary of their initiation.

Length of This Period and Type of Formation for the Newly Baptized

"The final period extends through the whole Easter season and is devoted to the postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy. It is a time for deepening the Christian experience, for spiritual growth, and for entering more fully into the life and unity of the community." (n. 7.4)

Events During This Year

"The bishop...should arrange... to meet the recently baptized at least once a year and to preside at a celebration of the Eucharist with them." (n. 251)

**ANNIVERSARY
 OF CHRISTIAN
 INITIATION**

"On the anniversary of their baptism the neophytes should be brought together in order to give thanks to God, to share with one another their spiritual experiences, and to renew their commitment." (n. 250)

PENTECOST

"To close the period of postbaptismal catechesis, some sort of celebration should be held at the end of the Easter season near Pentecost Sunday." (n. 249)

Pastoral Aspects

☒ "During the period immediately after baptism, the faithful should take part in the Masses for neophytes, welcome the neophytes with open arms in charity, and help them to feel more at home in the community of the baptized." (n. 9.5)

☒ "This is a time for the community and the neophytes together to grow in deepening their grasp of the Paschal Mystery and in making it part of their lives through...doing the works of charity." (n. 244)

☒ "To strengthen the neophytes...the community of the faithful, their godparents and their pastor should give them thoughtful and friendly help." (n. 244)

☒ "[W]ith the help of their godparents [neophytes] should experience a full and joyful welcome into the community and enter into closer ties with the other faithful." (n. 246)

Catechetical Aspects

☒ "This is a time for the community and the neophytes together to grow in deepening their grasp of the Paschal Mystery and in making it part of their lives through meditation on the Gospel." (n. 244)

☒ "The neophytes are, as the term 'mystagogy' suggests, introduced into a fuller and more effective understanding of mysteries through the Gospel message they have learned...they derive a new perception of the faith, of the Church, and of the world." (n. 245)

Liturgical Aspects

☒ "This is a time for the community and the neophytes together to grow in deepening their grasp of the Paschal Mystery and in making it part of their lives through...sharing in the Eucharist." (n. 244)

☒ "The neophytes should begin the period of mystagogy by participating in the principal Sunday eucharist of the community throughout the Easter season...They should do this as a body in company with their godparents and those who have assisted in their Christian formation." (Ap. III, n. 22)

☒ "[At the Masses for the neophytes], special places in the congregation are to be reserved for the neophytes and their godparents." (n. 248)



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KEY

- "n." A paragraph in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults ["RCIA Text"].
- "Intro n." A paragraph in the General Introduction to the RCIA Text.
- "Ap n." A paragraph in Appendix I, II, or III of the RCIA Text.

Formation During This Period for Those Who Have Completed Their Initiation

or

Those Who Were Received into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church

"These adults will complete their Christian formation and become fully integrated into the community by going through the period of post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogy with the newly baptized members of the Christian community." (n. 410)

PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

n. 7.3, 8, 138-205

Name for the Unbaptized Person During This Period

"From the day of their election, the catechumens are called '*the elect*.'" (n. 124)

Length of This Period and Type of Formation

"[This period] ordinarily coincides with [the six weeks of] Lent." (n. 8) "In the liturgy and liturgical catechesis of Lent the reminder of baptism already received or the preparation for its reception, as well as the theme of repentance, renew the entire community along with those being prepared to celebrate the paschal mystery." (n. 138)

Pastoral Aspects

- ✠ The faithful are "to give good example to the elect and along with the elect to prepare themselves for the Easter solemnities." (n. 125)
- ✠ "After the election, the [clergy, sponsors, team, and parish] should surround the elect with prayer so that the entire Church will accompany and lead them to encounter Christ." (n. 121)
- ✠ "[The elect] are expected particularly to progress in genuine self-knowledge through serious examination of their lives and true repentance." (n. 142)

Catechetical Aspects

- ✠ "This is a period... consisting more in interior reflection than in catechetical instruction... [It] is intended... to enlighten the minds and hearts of the elect with a deep knowledge of Christ the Savior." (n. 139)
- ✠ "Because they are asking for the three sacraments of initiation, the elect must have the intention of achieving an intimate knowledge of Christ and his Church." (n. 142)
- ✠ By means of the scrutinies, the elect "are instructed gradually about the mystery of sin... their spirit is filled with Christ the Redeemer... [and they] should progress in their perception of sin and their desire for salvation." (n. 143)

Liturgical Aspects

For the Elect...

- ✠ The Scrutinies: (n. 20, 141-146)
 - 1st Scrutiny (*3rd Sunday of Lent*) (n. 150-156)
 - 2nd Scrutiny (*4th Sunday of Lent*) (n. 164-170)
 - 3rd Scrutiny (*5th Sunday of Lent*) (n. 171-177)
- ✠ The Presentations: (n. 21, 147-149)
 - Presentation of the Creed (*3rd week of Lent*) (n. 157-163)
 - Presentation of the Lord's Prayer (*5th week of Lent*) (n. 178-184)

For Candidates...

- ✠ The Penitential Rite (*2nd Sunday of Lent*) (n. 459-472)
- ✠ Presentations can also be done with Candidates
- ✠ The sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated prior to the Easter Vigil. (n. 482, Ap. III, n. 27, 36)

Liturgical Celebrations for the Baptized, Uncatechized Adult

"As a sign of God's activity in this work of preparation, some of the rites belonging to the catechumenate... can be used to advantage. Among these are the presentation of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, or also a presentation of a book of the Gospels (as well as the Rite of Welcoming, Rite of Sending, Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion, and the Penitential Rite)." (n. 407)

Liturgical Celebrations for the Baptized, Catechized Christian Who is Not Catholic

"Individual candidates may benefit from the celebration of liturgical rites marking their progress in formation. [O]ne or several of the rites [for baptized, uncatechized adults — Rite of Welcoming, Rite of Sending, Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion, Penitential Rite] may be celebrated." (n. 478)

SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

Preparation Rites for the Elect on Holy Saturday
n. 140, 185-205

- ✠ "On Holy Saturday, when the elect refrain from work and spend their time in recollection, the... preparation rites may be celebrated." (n. 22, cf. n. 185, Ap. III, n. 15)
- ✠ Recitation of the Creed (n. 193-196) and Ephphetha Rite (n. 197-199)
- ✠ Choosing a Baptismal Name (n. 200-202)

Elements of the Sacraments of Initiation for the Elect

- ✠ Presentation of the Elect (n. 219)
- ✠ Litany of the Saints (n. 221)
- ✠ Blessing of the Water (n. 222)
- ✠ Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith (n. 223-225)
- ✠ Baptism (n. 226)
- ✠ Explanatory Rites (Clothing with a Baptismal Garment; Presentation of a Lighted Candle) (n. 227-230)
- ✠ Confirmation (n. 231-240)
- ✠ Eucharist (n. 241-243)

BAPTISM

For the Elect: Intro. n. 18-29, n. 6.3, 17, 23, 206-243, Ap. III n. 14-17

For the Candidates: n. 480

(Conditional Baptism, Ap. III, n. 37)

"Baptism incorporates us into Christ and forms us into God's people. This first sacrament pardons all our sins, rescues us from the power of darkness, and brings us to the dignity of adopted children." (Intro, n. 2)

CONFIRMATION

For the Elect: n. 215; For the Candidates: n. 409, 481, Ap. III, n. 32-35

"By signing us with the gift of the Spirit, confirmation makes us more completely the image of the Lord and fills us with the Holy Spirit, so that we may bear witness to Him before all the world." (Intro, n. 2)

EUCCHARIST

For the Elect: n. 217; For the Candidates: n. 409

"Finally, coming to the table of the Eucharist, we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man so that we may have eternal life and show forth the unity of God's people." (Intro, n. 2)

The Combined Rites

The Combined Sacraments of Initiation and Rite of Reception can be found in Ap. I, n. 562-594.

THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

n. 487-504 (apart from the Easter Vigil);
n. 562-565 (during the Vigil)

- ✠ Profession by the Candidates and Act of Reception (n. 584-586)
- ✠ Confirmation (n. 587-591) (*See above*)
- ✠ Eucharist (n. 592-593) (*See above*)
- ✠ Names of those received into the full communion of the Church should be recorded in special book. (n. 486)

2ND PERIOD
CATECHUMENATE

n. 7.2, 75-117, Ap. III, n. 6

Name and Status of the Unbaptized Person During This Period

"The term *'catechumen'* should be strictly reserved for the unbaptized who have been admitted into the order of catechumens; the term *'convert'* should be reserved strictly for those converted from unbelief to Christian belief." (Ap. III, n. 2)

"Joined to the Church, the catechumens are now part of the household of Christ, since the Church nourishes them with the word of God and sustains them by means of liturgical celebrations." (n. 47)

Length of This Period

"The period of catechumenate...should extend for at least one year of formation...from at least the Easter season of one year until the next; preferably it should begin before Lent in one year and extend until Easter of the following year..." (Ap. III, n. 6, cf. Ap. III, n. 20-21); It may even last "several years if necessary." (n. 76)

Formation During This Period

"The catechumenate is an extended period during which the [participants] are given suitable pastoral formation and guidance, aimed at training them in the Christian life." (n. 75)

Pastoral Aspects (n. 75.2, 75.4)	Catechetical Aspects (n. 75.1)	Liturgical Aspects (n. 75.3)
<p>Catechumens learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✠ "to turn more readily to God in prayer, ✠ to bear witness to the faith, ✠ to keep their hopes set on Christ, ✠ to follow supernatural inspiration in their deeds, ✠ to practice love of neighbor." (n. 75.2) ✠ "[C]atechumens should...learn how to work actively with others to spread the Gospel and build up the Church by the witness of their lives and by professing their faith." (n. 75.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✠ "A suitable catechesis is provided...planned to be... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● gradual and complete in its coverage, ● accommodated to the liturgical year, and ● solidly supported by celebrations of the Word. <p>This catechesis leads the catechumens not only to an appropriate acquaintance with dogmas and precepts but also to a profound sense of the mystery of salvation in which they desire to participate." (n. 75.1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✠ "A thoroughly comprehensive catechesis on the truths of Catholic doctrine and moral life...is to be provided during [this] period" (Ap. III, n. 7) "that while presenting Catholic teaching in its entirety also... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● enlightens faith, ● directs the heart toward God, ● fosters participation in the liturgy, ● inspires apostolic activity and ● nurtures a life completely in accord with the spirit of Christ." (n. 78) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✠ "The Church...helps the catechumens on their journey by means of suitable liturgical rites, which purify the catechumens little by little and strengthen them with God's blessing." (n. 75.3) ● Celebrations of the Word of God (n. 75.3, 81-89) ● Minor Exorcisms (n. 89, 90-94) ● Blessings (n. 89, 95-97, Ap. III, n. 8) ● Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens (n. 79, 98-103) ✠ "When pastoral care requires, the bishop should depute catechists, truly worthy and properly prepared, to celebrate the minor exorcisms and the blessings of the catechumens." (n. 12, 16, 91, 96) <i>Note: Anointing is not included.</i> ✠ "The catechumens should be taught to keep holy the Lord's Day." (n. 83)

Name for the Baptized but Uncatechized Adult

Baptized but uncatechized Catholics are called "*candidates for catechetical instruction leading to the completion of Christian Initiation*" (in Confirmation and Eucharist). (cf. n. 434, 509)

Those baptized but uncatechized Christians who are not Catholic are called "*candidates for catechetical instruction leading to reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.*" (n. 509, 473) "[T]he term *'convert'* should...never [be] used of...baptized Christians who are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church." (Ap. III, n. 2)

Name for the Baptized, Catechized Christian Who is Not Catholic

Those baptized but uncatechized Christians who are not Catholic are called "*candidates for catechetical instruction leading to reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.*" (n. 509, 473) "[T]he term *'convert'* should...never [be] used of...baptized Christians who are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church." (Ap. III, n. 2)

2ND LITURGICAL STEP FOR THE UNBAPTIZED
RITE OF SENDING AND...
 n. 106-117

- ✠ Presentation of the Catechumens (n. 111)
- ✠ Affirmation by Godparents (n. 112)
- ✠ Signing of the Book of the Elect (n. 113)

...RITE OF ELECTION
 n. 118-137

- ✠ "[T]here should be a deliberation prior to [celebrating the rite] to decide on the catechumen's suitability...carried out by the priests, deacons, and catechists...and by godparents and representatives of the local community." (n. 122)
- ✠ "[O]n the basis of the testimony of godparents and catechists and of the catechumens' reaffirmation of their intention, the Church judges their state of readiness and decides on their advancement toward the sacraments of Initiation...[This] acceptance is founded on the election by God." (n. 119)
- ✠ "[The bishop], in the name of the Church...carries out the act of admitting them as elect." (n. 125)

Elements of the Rite of Election

- ✠ Presentation of Catechumens (n. 129)
- ✠ Affirmation by the Godparents (n. 131)
- ✠ Enrollment of Names/Election (n. 132-133)

The Combined Rites
 The Combined Rite of Sending and Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion can be found in Ap. I, n. 530-561.

2ND LITURGICAL STEP FOR THE BAPTIZED
RITE OF SENDING AND...
 n. 434-445

- ✠ Presentation of Candidates (n. 439)
- ✠ Affirmation by Sponsors (n. 440)

...CALL TO CONTINUING CONVERSION
 n. 446-458

- ✠ Candidates are to "Join with [the Church]...in a spirit of repentance. Hear the Lord's call to conversion." (n. 454)
- ✠ "Because he is the sign of unity within the particular Church, it is fitting for the bishop to recognize these candidates. It is the responsibility of the parish community, however, to prepare the candidates for their fuller life in the Church." (n. 435)

Elements of the Call to Continuing Conversion

- ✠ Presentation of the Candidates (n. 451)
- ✠ Affirmation by Sponsors (n. 452-453)
- ✠ Act of Recognition (n. 454)

1ST PERIOD
... AND PRECATECHUMENATE
 n. 36-40, Ap. III, n.1

Name for the Unbaptized Person During This Period

The unbaptized person can be called an *inquirer* (cf. n. 39), or a *candidate*^o for acceptance into the order of catechumens. (cf. n. 38)

Length of This Period and Type of Formation

"The first period consists of inquiry on the part of the candidates and of evangelization and the precatechumenate on the part of the Church." (n. 7.1)

^oDuring this period, the RCIA Text, and therefore this chart use the term "candidate" for a person who is a "candidate for the Order of Catechumens."

Pastoral Aspects

- ✠ "The [catechumens] are to receive help and attention so that with a purified and clearer intention they may cooperate with God's grace. Opportunities should be provided for them to meet families and other groups of Christians." (n. 38)
- ✠ "A sponsor accompanies any candidate seeking admission." (n. 10)
- ✠ "In preparation for the Rite of Acceptance, inquirers should show...
 - Evidence of...an initial conversion and intention to change their lives and to enter into a relationship with God in Christ;
 - Evidence of the first stirrings of repentance;
 - A start to the practice of calling upon God in prayer;
 - A sense of the Church;
 - Some experience of the company and spirit of Christians through contact with a priest or with members of the community." (n. 42)

Catechetical Aspects

- ✠ "During this period, priests and deacons, catechists and other laypersons are to give the candidates a suitable explanation of the Gospel." (n. 38)
- ✠ "From evangelization, completed with the help of God, come the faith and initial conversion that cause a person to feel called away from sin and drawn into the mystery of God's love." (n. 37)

Liturgical Aspects

- ✠ There are no liturgical rites in this period because inquirers have not yet entered into a formal relationship with the Church through the Rite of Acceptance.
- ✠ "...pastors should help those taking part in [this period] with prayers suited to them..." (n. 40)

Type of Formation for the Baptized, Uncatechized Adult

"Even though uncatechized adults have not yet heard the message of the mystery of Christ, their status differs from that of catechumens, since by baptism they have already become members of the Church and children of God. Hence their conversion is based on the baptism they have already received, the effects of which they must develop." (n. 400)

"A program of training, catechesis suited to their needs, contact with the community of the faithful, and participation in certain liturgical rites are needed in order to strengthen them in the Christian life." (n. 401)

Type of Formation for the Baptized, Catechized Christian Who is Not Catholic

"The baptized Christian is to receive both doctrinal and spiritual preparation, adapted to individual pastoral requirements, for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church. The candidate should learn to deepen an inner adherence to the Church, where he or she will find the fullness of his or her baptism." (n. 477)

1ST LITURGICAL STEP FOR THE UNBAPTIZED

**RITE OF ACCEPTANCE
 INTO THE ORDER
 OF CATECHUMENS**

n. 6.1, 18, 28, 41-74

- "The prerequisite for making this first step is that the beginnings of the spiritual life and the fundamentals of Christian teaching have taken root in the candidates." (n. 42)
- This rite may be celebrated two or three times per year. (cf. n. 18.3)
- "God showers his grace on the candidates." (n. 41)
- "[T]he rite of acceptance...is of the utmost importance ...[T]he candidates who have completed the period of the precatechumenate declare their intention to the Church and the Church, in turn...accepts them as persons who intend to become its members." (n. 41) They "are accepted as catechumens by the Church." (n. 6.1)

Elements of the Rite of Acceptance

n. 48-74

- Receiving the Candidates (n. 48-50)
- Candidates' First Acceptance of the Gospel (n. 52)
- Signing of the Candidates with the Cross (n. 54)
- Presentation of a Bible (*optional*) (n. 64)
- Presentation of a Cross (*optional*) (n. 74)
- Blessing of Candidates (n. 431) and Dismissal (n. 432)

Following the Rite of Acceptance

- "The names of the catechumens are to be duly inscribed in the register of catechumens." (n. 46)

The Combined Rites

The Combined Rite of Acceptance and Rite of Welcoming can be found in Ap. I, n. 505-529

1ST LITURGICAL STEP FOR THE BAPTIZED

RITE OF WELCOMING

n. 405, 411-415

- "[A]dults are welcomed into the community and acknowledge themselves to be part of it because they have already been marked with the seal of baptism." (n. 405, cf. n. 412)

Elements of the Rite of Welcoming

n. 416-433, Ap. III, n. 25, n. 31

- Candidates' Declaration of Intent (n. 418-419)
- Affirmation by the Sponsors and the Assembly (n. 420)
- Signing of the Candidates with the Cross (n. 421)
- Presentation of a Bible (*optional*) (n. 428)
- Blessing of Candidates (n. 431) and Dismissal (n. 432)

The Catechumenal Process

Periods of Formation and Liturgical Steps

"The steps lead to periods of inquiry and growth; alternatively the periods may also be seen as preparing for the ensuing step." (n. 7)

EVANGELIZATION...

n. 7.1; cf. n. 36-40

The Journey of the Unbaptized Person

"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." (n. 1)

"The rite of initiation is suited to a spiritual journey of adults that varies according to the many forms of God's grace, the free cooperation of the individuals, the action of the Church, and the circumstances of time and place." (n. 5)

For the guidelines related to this group of people, see Part I of the RCIA Text, n. 36-251 and Ap. III, n. 1-24.

Explanation of This Period

"Although the rite of initiation begins with admission to the catechumenate, the preceding period... is of great importance. It is a time of evangelization: faithfully and constantly the living God is proclaimed and Jesus Christ whom he has sent for the salvation of all. Thus those who are not yet Christians, their hearts opened by the Holy Spirit, may believe and be freely converted to the Lord and commit themselves sincerely to him." (n. 36)

The Responsibilities of the Church in the Catechumenal Process

"The initiation of catechumens is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful. By joining the catechumens in reflecting on the value of the paschal mystery and by renewing their own conversion, the faithful provide an example that will help the catechumens to obey the Holy Spirit more generously." (n. 4)

"[T]he people of God, as represented by the local Church, should understand and show by their concern that the initiation of adults is the responsibility of all the baptized. Therefore the community must always be fully prepared in the pursuit of its apostolic vocation to give help to those who are searching for Christ." (n. 9)

"In the various circumstances of daily life... the followers of Christ have the obligation of spreading the faith according to their abilities. Hence the entire community must help the candidates and the catechumens throughout the process of initiation." (n. 9)

The Role of the Church in This Period

"During the period of evangelization and precatechumenate, the faithful should remember that for the Church and its members the supreme purpose of the apostolate is that Christ's message is made known to the world by word and deed and that his grace is communicated. They should therefore show themselves ready to give the candidates evidence of the spirit of the Christian community and to welcome them into their homes, into personal conversation, and into community gatherings." (n. 9.1, cf. n. 38)

The Journey of the Baptized, Uncatechized Person

This refers to those "adults who were baptized as infants either as Roman Catholics or as members of another Christian community but did not receive further catechetical formation nor, consequently, the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist." (n. 400)

For the guidelines related to this group of people, see Part II, Section 4 of the RCIA Text, n. 400-472 and Ap. III, n. 25-29.

Length of Formation for This Group

"As in the case of catechumens, the preparation of these adults requires a considerable time, during which the faith infused in baptism must grow in them and take deep root through the pastoral formation they receive." (n. 401, cf. n. 36)

The Journey of the Baptized, Catechized Person Who Is Not Catholic

"[The] doctrinal and spiritual preparation [of those who have already been baptized in another Church or ecclesial community]... should be determined according to the individual case." (Ap. III, n. 30)

For the guidelines related to this group of people, see Ap. III, n. 30-37 and Part II, Section 5 of the RCIA Text, n. 475-486.

Length of Formation for This Group

"Those baptized Christians who have lived as Christians and need only instruction in the Catholic tradition and a degree of probation within the Catholic community should not be asked to undergo a full program parallel to the catechumenate." (Ap. III, n. 31)