

WHAT TO EXPECT?

You should expect to be welcomed into our community, to meet Jesus in and through others, to grow in your understanding of the Catholic faith, and to deepen your own personal spiritual life, even if you choose not to become Catholic.

YOU SHOULD ALSO EXPECT TO:

- be treated with respect and understanding at all times
- have your previous religious and spiritual experiences sincerely valued
- be clearly informed about all aspects of formation and opportunities for participation in the Catholic faith community
- make your own free choice about your continued participation and eventual membership in our Catholic faith community
- be guided, encouraged, and supported in making and explaining to your family and friends your decision to join the Catholic Church

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the Apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the Apostles. (Acts 2:42-43)

WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP?

If you are interested in becoming Catholic, visit with a trusted friend or spiritual guide about your decision. Talk to someone you know who is an active Catholic. Visit Catholic parishes in the area and attend Sunday Mass often. Continue to pray for God's guidance and grace and seek more information about the Catholic Church so you can make an informed decision.

We are happy to answer any questions or discuss concerns you may have about joining the Catholic Church. If you would like to find out more about Becoming Catholic and the OCIA process at St. Francis of Assisi, please contact our **Faith Formation Office at 515-440-1030.**

BECOMING CATHOLIC & THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION



7075 Ashworth Road
West Des Moines, IA 50266
515-440-1030

saintfrancischurch.org/formation/becoming-catholic

Information for those considering
joining the Catholic Church or
inquiring about the Faith

WHAT IS THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION?

The *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* (OCIA) is modeled on the initiation ritual of the early Christian church. It is an experience of personal formation and spiritual growth which incorporates prayer, study, reflection, and discernment in a combination of public rituals and community preparations. It is the way unbaptized persons become Catholic.

FORMATION

We offer year-round formation, which means your journey begins when you are ready. Participants attend Sunday Mass and regular formation sessions.

The periods of formation include:

- Pre-Catechumenate: inquiry
- Catechumenate: dedicated formation and discernment
- Enlightenment: final preparation and discernment
- Mystagogia: continuing formation and reflection

RITEs

There is a series of sacred rites throughout the four phases leading to a solemn public celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism, Confirmation, and First Eucharist. This celebration generally takes place at Easter Vigil Mass.

SPONSORS

A sponsor and prayer partner, as well as other members of the Catholic faith community, accompany you throughout your journey.



HOW DO PEOPLE JOIN THE CHURCH?

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church welcomes individuals or families who are interested in joining our Catholic faith community.

UNBAPTIZED PERSONS

Those who have never been baptized will follow the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* (OCIA).

BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS

Those who have been baptized in another Christian faith community and desire to follow Jesus in the full communion of the Catholic Church will receive appropriate instruction and make a public profession of faith.

BAPTIZED ADULT CATHOLICS

Baptized adult Catholics who have not received the Sacrament of Confirmation will follow an individualized path.

WHAT ABOUT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES?

Children ages 4 or younger are usually baptized without formal preparation.

Children ages 5 to 6 may be baptized after a short period of informal catechesis.

Children ages 7 or older are expected to participate in a period of formal catechesis before being baptized (or making a profession of faith), confirmed, and receiving the Eucharist. This preparation includes regular participation in the parish religious formation program or Catholic school for at least one school year.

Parents are always expected to participate in preparation before their child is baptized.