

What should you 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 warmly welcomed and sincerely accepted by members of the Catholic faith community.
- 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 your decision to join the Catholic Church to your family and friends.

What's the next step?

If you are interested in becoming Catholic but are not sure, 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.

If you would like to find out more about *Becoming Catholic* and the *RCIA* at St. Francis of Assisi, please contact:

Faye Akers
Director of Adult Faith Formation
St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
fakers@saintfrancischurch.org
(515) 223-4577

We are eager to discuss your interest in the Catholic Faith.

We are willing to answer any questions or concerns you may have about joining the Catholic Church.



Revised 3/10/2016

Are you interested in Becoming Catholic?

Information for adults who are considering joining the Catholic Church or inquiring about the Faith

St. Francis of Assisi
West Des Moines, IA
saintfrancischurch.org
(515) 223-4577

How do people join the Catholic Church?

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

Baptized Christians

Those who have been baptized and raised 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.

Unbaptized Persons

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

Baptized Adult Catholics

Baptized adult Catholics who have not received the Sacrament of Confirmation are also welcome to participate.

About Marriage and Initiation

Individuals who have divorced and remarried may enter the *RCIA*, but will need to receive an annulment before they celebrate initiation in the Church.

Individuals who have divorced but not remarried may enter the *RCIA* and celebrate initiation in the Catholic Church. They will need to have an annulment before entering a second marriage.

You will have the opportunity to discuss the details with a priest or deacon.

What is the Rite of Christian Initiation?

The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)* is modeled on the initiation ritual of the ancient Christian community. 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 new members are welcomed into the Catholic Church.

Four Phases of Formation

Pre-Catechumenate: a period of inquiry

Catechumenate: a period of continuing formation and discernment

Enlightenment: a period of final preparation and discernment

Mystagogia: a period of continuing formation and reflection

Becoming Catholic Sessions, Rites, Sponsors

Formation sessions meet most Thursdays from 7 - 8:30 pm, throughout the year. In addition to the Thursday evening sessions, participants also attend Mass weekly and meet many Sundays.

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

Participants in the *Rite for Christian Initiation of Adults* do not travel alone. You will have a sponsor and parish companion, members of the Catholic faith community who accompany you on your journey.

What is "Breaking Open the Word?"

Adults who are interested in becoming Catholic are invited to participate in Breaking Open the Word, which takes place each week during Sunday Mass. Breaking Open the Word is an opportunity to discuss God's Word in the Sunday scripture readings and your personal journey of faith.

What about children and families?

Children ages 4 or younger are usually baptized without formal preparation. Parents are expected to attend a preparation class before baptizing an infant or young child.

Children ages 5-6 may be baptized following a short period of informal catechesis, depending upon the custom of the local parish.

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