

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 accepted by members of our 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 our faith community.
- make your own free choice about your continued participation and eventual membership in our faith community.
- be guided, encouraged, and supported in making and explaining to others 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.

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

Faye Akers

Director of Adult Faith Formation
St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
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(515) 440-1030 ext. 104

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



ST. FRANCIS
of ASSISI
CATHOLIC CHURCH



Becoming Catholic at Saint Francis of Assisi

INFORMATION FOR ADULTS WHO ARE CONSIDERING JOINING
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OR INQUIRING ABOUT THE FAITH

How do people join the Catholic Church?

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

Unbaptized Persons

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

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.

Baptized Adult Catholics

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

About Marriage and Initiation

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

Individuals who have divorced but not remarried may enter the *RCIA* and celebrate initiation in the Church. An annulment is necessary before entering a second marriage.

You will be able to discuss detail with a priest or deacon.

What is the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults?

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) 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.

Four Phases of Formation

Pre-Catechumenate: a period of inquiry

Catechumenate: a period of continuing formation and discernment

Purification and Enlightenment: a period of final preparation and discernment

Mystagogia: a period of continuing formation and reflection

Formation Sessions, Rites, Sponsors

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

There is a series of sacred ritual 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 the Easter Vigil Mass.

Participants do not travel alone. You will have a parish sponsor and prayer partner, and others in our faith community will accompany you on your journey.

What is "Breaking Open the Word?"

Unbaptized adults who desire to become Catholic are invited to participate in Breaking Open the Word, which takes place each week during Sunday Mass. During these sessions you will 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.

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.