

Archdiocese of Milwaukee | OCIA – Hierarchy of Rites

Rite/Event	Timing	Notes	Catechumen	Candidate (Bapt/UnCat)	Candidate (Bapt/Cat)
Period of Evangelization & Precatechumenate (36-40)	As long as is needed to introduce Gospel values and allow the beginnings of faith to manifest	- No fixed duration or structure - Minor exorcisms may be used for unbaptized			
Intake Meeting	As soon as individual reaches out	- Must assess baptismal status - Must assess marital status - Set no timelines, make no promises!	Required	Required	Required
“Mentor”/Sponsor	As soon as feasible; no later than Rite of Entrance/Welcome	- Assigned by Pastor/Leader at beginning of journey - Godparent (“initiation sponsor”) can be different - Must fulfill requirements of Sponsors in Can. 874	Required	Required	Required
Discernment Meeting #1 (42-43)	1-2 weeks before Rite of Entrance/Welcome	- Proper disposition must be evident/discerned by pastor/leader - For some, may be included with intake meeting	Required	Required	Required
Rite of Entrance into the Catechumenate (41-74)	2-3 fixed times during the year (18)	- Should be recorded by parish - Optional rites (64, 70-74): - Presentation of the Gospels - Exorcism/Renunciation of False Worship - Giving of a New Name - Presentation of a Cross	Required		
Rite of Welcoming the Candidates (411-433)	2-3 fixed times during the year (18)	Can be combined w/ Rite of Entrance using 505-529.		Expected	Optional (478)

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Period of the Catechumenate (75-80)	Lengthy period; from before Lent of one year through Easter of the next (Norm 4)	- Preparation takes place in the parish. - Formation is comprehensive and includes learning, insertion into the community, and introduction to the liturgy - Catechumens now possess rights and duties, especially obligation to attend Mass on Sundays & Holy Days (Norms 8-9)			
Dismissals/Celebrations of the Word (81-89)	- Special sessions - Sunday Mass w/ dismissal after - w/in catechetical session	- Foremost Minor Rite - Can be combined with exorcisms, anointings, and blessing of catechumens	Expected	Encouraged	Optional
Minor Exorcisms, Blessings, Anointing of Catechumens (90-105)	As appropriate during sessions or outside of them	For catechumens only, not the baptized	Encouraged		
Discernment Meeting #2	2-3 weeks before Rite of Election	- An enlightened faith and considered intention must be present in each catechumen (118-122) - Godparent ("initiation sponsor") should be chosen and verified by this time - Catechumens and candidates in irregular marriages may not celebrate Election/Call to Cont. Conv. until free to enter a canonical marriage (Norm 7)	Required	Required	Required (if going through a series of stages)

Rite/Event	Timing	Notes	Catechumen	Candidate (Bapt/UnCat)	Candidate (Bapt/Cat)
Rite of Sending (106-117, 434-445, OR combined rites 530-546)	First Sunday of Lent OR preceding week	Takes place at parish	Encouraged	Encouraged	Optional
Rite of Election (118-137)	First Sunday of Lent	- Takes place at the Cathedral - Must be recorded at parish in the Book of Elect - When impossible to attend at Cathedral, may take place at parish and during the week before/after First Sunday	Required		
Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion (446-458)	First Sunday of Lent	- When necessary, may also take place during the week before/after First Sunday - Can be combined w/ Rite of Election using 547-561		Expected	Optional but Encouraged for those to be initiated at Easter

Period of Purification & Enlightenment (138-140)	Lenten Season	- Decided shift to spiritual recollection and final preparation for initiation - Retreat experience encouraged			
Scrutinies (141-146)	3rd Sunday of Lent (150-156) 4th Sunday of Lent (164-170) 5th Sunday of Lent (171-177)	- Must use readings from Year A during Mass - ONLY for the unbaptized	Required		
Handing on of the Creed (148, 157-163)	Week following first Scrutiny	- Should be memorized and recited publicly on day of Baptism (during Rites of Immediate Preparation) - May take place during Catechumenate if beneficial	Expected	Encouraged	Optional

Rite/Event	Timing	Notes	Catechumen	Candidate (Bapt/UnCat)	Candidate (Bapt/Cat)
Handing on of the Lord's Prayer (149, 178-184)	Week following third Scrutiny	- May take place during Catechumenate if beneficial - May be deferred to Rites of Immediate Preparation	Expected	Encouraged	Optional
Penitential Rite (459-472)	2 nd Sunday of Lent or a weekday of Lent	- For candidates only - Prepares for Reconciliation - If initiation happens outside of Easter Vigil, do at a suitable time prior to initiation		Expected	Encouraged
Sacrament of Penance	During Lent (after Penitential Rite)	- Must occur before initiation - All serious sin since baptism should be confessed - Formation in examining one's conscience is essential		Required	Required
Discernment Meeting #3	1-2 weeks before Holy Week	Final check-in to make sure Elect/Candidate is ready	Required	Required	Required
Rites of Immediate Preparation (185-192) - Recitation of the Creed (193-196) "Ephphatha" (197-199) - Choosing of a Christian Name (200-202)	Holy Saturday	- The rites are for the Elect only, though Elect & Candidates should keep themselves free on Holy Saturday to give time to prayer and recollection (185) - Elect & Candidates are encouraged to keep the paschal fast from Good Friday through the end of the Vigil (Norm 12)	Expected	Encouraged	Encouraged
Celebration of Initiation (206-243, 487-504, OR combined rites 562-594)	Easter Vigil		Easter Vigil is required absent serious reason	Easter Vigil is normative and expected	No further burden/delay than necessary

Rite/Event	Timing	Notes	Catechumen	Candidate (Bapt/UnCat)	Candidate (Bapt/Cat)
Period of Mystagogy (244-251)	Easter Season	• Deeper understanding of the Paschal Mystery with the eyes of Faith and benefit of sanctifying grace • Helps transition Neophytes from “womb” of OCIA to parish life • Celebration of Penance should take place for all • Includes “Neophyte Masses” and catechetical sessions unfolding the mysteries • Concludes around Pentecost celebration • Neophyte Mass with the Archbishop	Expected	Expected	Encouraged

Definitions & Other Notes:

- **Baptized/Uncatechized:** a validly baptized person (Catholic or non-Catholic) who did not receive catechesis after baptism, e.g.
 - baptized Catholics who have not received/prepared for Eucharist
 - baptized Christians who were raised outside of any church practice
- **Baptized/Catechized:** a validly baptized person (non-Catholic) who was raised within a faith of some kind.
 - Formation may still be seriously lacking, necessitating a formation approach similar to the unbaptized
 - Nonetheless, no further burden or timeline is to be imposed except what is necessary to restore unity and communion
 - The candidate should be consulted about what path might be best for him/her
- **Required Rites:** these rites *must* be done unless there is a grave or serious pastoral reason to omit them
- **Expected Rites:** these rites *should* be included, but pastoral reasons may exist that lead to their omission
- **Encouraged Rites:** these rites are still *good* for catechumens/candidates, but may be omitted without issue
- **Gray boxes:** these rites may not be done with the corresponding group
- **We encourage a “maximalist” approach to OCIA** – these rites are given to confer grace on your people! Do not without it from them, but work to include as much as possible while preparing them well to receive fruitfully the grace they bestow.