

The Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate



DISCUSSION GUIDE

part 1 of 7



The Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate

The Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate is crucial to the initiation process; its primary purpose is to awaken the faith of the inquirers. During this period, members of the community warmly welcome inquirers into their families, into personal conversations, and into participation in the community's gatherings (RCIA/OCIA, 9.1). Surrounded by the welcome and support of the community, inquirers are invited to hear the Gospel message shared with them by catechists, deacons, priests, and other members of the faithful (RCIA/OCIA, 38). Moved by the Holy Spirit already at work in their hearts, inquirers are drawn by this proclamation to put their faith in Christ, to turn from sin, and to grow in their desire to share his life through baptism.



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August 1-3, 2023 • Chicago
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FOR YOUR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

PROCLAIMING GOD'S GRACE BY WORD AND DEED

In our communities, we make the message of Christ known by the ways we preach and live the Gospel message in our everyday lives. When we feed the hungry and visit the imprisoned, we proclaim human dignity. When we advocate for the voiceless and tackle oppression, we exemplify holy justice. When we celebrate diversity and honor harmony, we preach inclusivity and welcome. Nourished and sent from the liturgy, Catholic parishioners communicate God's grace through personal conversations and by welcoming inquirers into their homes and community gatherings.

- In which ways can we help our parishioners make the connection between Gospel-inspired service and the teachings of the Church?
- How does the celebration of the liturgy prepare our parishioners to share the message of Christ outside the doors of the church?

WHEN THE SPIRIT MOVES

Someone moved by the Holy Spirit inquires about becoming Catholic; should they wait until September? Conversion follows the Spirit, not our timeline. Whenever the Spirit opens the heart of someone to seek God in Jesus Christ, we need to be prepared to welcome them. Although Christian initiation formally begins with entrance into the catechumenate, the time of evangelization prior to that is crucial. It doesn't have to be complicated: all you have to do is help them meet other Christians so that they can hear about the living God and be drawn into the mystery of God's love.

- Identify three people, couples, or families in your community who embody the spirit of hospitality and could welcome inquirers.
- Identify one parish activity every month to which you could invite an inquirer to meet Christians and hear about God.

ARE YOU READY?

We believe in a life-changing Gospel. Those who hear the loving offer of salvation are invited to live in relationship with God and begin the lifelong process of becoming more like Christ. Some signs that the love of God has taken root in an inquirer's heart include changes in their life and attitudes, a greater desire for prayer, and drawing closer to the Christian community. When an inquirer manifests these signs of readiness, it is time to prepare him or her to celebrate the Rite for Entrance into the Catechumenate.

- How might we better shape the formation provided in the Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate to help to foster these interior changes in the life of an inquirer?
- What do you look for in the life of an inquirer to ensure that he or she is ready to celebrate the Rite for Entrance into the Catechumenate?