

Signs of Readiness: Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

Inquirers must show signs of a certain level of maturity in their faith to be ready for the challenges offered by the Catechumenate. The following is meant to be a guide only, in judging the external signs of readiness for the Rite. It is not intended that the candidate fulfill everything on this page, nor is the list exhaustive.

WHAT ARE INQUIRERS PREPARING FOR?

The Inquirers are preparing for the first stage of membership in the Roman Catholic Church, the Catechumenate.

WHAT ARE TEAM AND INQUIRERS LOOKING FOR?

Desire, motivation, and readiness should be the focus of discussion as well as any doubts, questions, or difficulties.

BASIC KNOWLEDGE

- Basic knowledge of and relationship with scripture.
Beginning ability to read scripture, feel comfortable with it, and apply it to personal situations.
- Lots of curiosity about their faith and the Church.
- Satisfaction at having answered basic questions about Christianity and Catholicism in the areas of Christology, personal relationship with God, death and afterlife, liturgy, church building, authority, morality, Sacraments, social justice, Ecclesiology.
- Evidence that they are engaged in personal spiritual growth through whatever means are available to them; reading, art, community.

PARTICIPATION IN THE GROUP

- Makes contributions that show thought during the week.
- Willingness to be flexible in relationship to changing circumstances in the group and differing beliefs of others.
- Commitment to the community in the form of attendance at Inquiry sessions and a growing concern for and relationship with others in the group.

SELF KNOWLEDGE AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- Gives evidence of initial conversion.
Acknowledgement of dependence on God, willingness to listen to and attempt to integrate Gospel values into their lives.
- Evidence of basic relationship with God.
Developing prayer life, turning to God with difficulties, gratitude for gifts given.
- Evidence of a developing prayer life.
Inquirers talk about personal prayer experiences at meetings.
- Clarity on important issues of faith for individual Inquirers, and willingness to discuss these issues in community during Catechumenate.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE LARGER CHURCH

- Willingness to pursue annulments.
- Willingness to explore stewardship: to give service to the community on their own or with a sponsor, to give monetary support within their means.
- Willingness to follow the laws of fasting within the Church.
- Fairly regular Mass attendance on their own.

Signs of Readiness: Rite of Election for the Sacraments of Full Initiation at the Easter Vigil

WHAT ARE CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES PREPARING FOR?

- Catechumens are preparing for full initiation into the people of God, the Priesthood of the Laity through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.
- Candidates are preparing to complete their initiation as ministering members in the Roman Catholic Tradition through the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

WHAT ARE CATECHUMENS, CANDIDATES, AND TEAM LOOKING FOR?

- **BASIC KNOWLEDGE**
 - Sufficient acquaintance with Christian teachings. Sacraments, Liturgical year, tenets of the Creed, Catholic Christian morality, Christology, Church History, prayer
 - Ability to read Scripture and apply it to their lives.
- **INVOLVEMENT IN THE GROUP**
 - Regular attendance at catechetical session and Sunday morning dismissal session.
 - Evidence of discipleship.
Have they reached out to each other and been willing to integrate new members into the group?
 - Effort made to notify team regarding absence.
- **RELATIONSHIP TO THE LARGER COMMUNITY**
 - Participation in service, seeing their own responsibility for the ongoing growth of the community.
Responsible involvement in parish activities.
 - Desire for the Eucharist and for participation in the Sacramental life of the Church.
Regular attendance on Sundays for Liturgy of the Word and continued study of the Gospel in dismissal sessions.
 - Evidence of willingness to take seriously Catholic moral teachings.
 - Completion of the annulment process and validation of existing marriage.
- **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**
 - Awareness that membership in the Church is not a "quick fix" for painful situations, but a discipline and a path towards finding meaning and growth.
 - Awareness that being part of the Body of Christ takes hard work.
 - Continued prayer life.
 - Desire for full initiation comes from personal need and attraction not for reasons related to pressure from family or friends.
 - Evidence shown of conversion of mind and conduct through reflection on Gospel values.
Example: increase in patience and lessening of anxiety in dealing with daily life, evidence that faith and Church have central importance in use of time.