

AN RCIA GUIDE TO MAKING THE GOOD NEWS GREAT!



A conversation with Joe Paprocki

Joe Paprocki, DMin, is a national consultant for faith formation at Loyola Press. He is the author of many popular books on catechesis and faith formation. His latest is *Under the Influence of Jesus: The Transforming Experience of Encountering Christ* published by Loyola Press. Find him at catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com.

1. Why is focusing on the core message of who Jesus is so important?

- ⇒ Nothing can happen in Christian initiation until we first proclaim Christ (see RCIA, #1)
- ⇒ Rules are important, but that's not how we proclaim the core message
- ⇒ Look at the Woman at the Well (John 4)
 - She did not change until she had heard and understood the core message of Jesus
 - The townspeople she evangelized were converted by the core message
- ⇒ Look at Saint Peter's Pentecost sermon (Acts 2)
 - Event → Attribution → Invitation

"The rite of Christian initiation presented here is designed for adults who, *after hearing the mystery of Christ proclaimed,* consciously and freely seek the living God and enter the way of faith and conversion as the Holy Spirit opens their hearts." —RCIA, #1



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2. What do we mean by "the core message"?

One example: The Apostles' Creed (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part One, Section Two)

1. I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth,
2. and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
3. who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
4. suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;
5. he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead;
6. he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
7. from there he will come again to judge the living and the dead.
8. I believe in the Holy Spirit,
9. the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
10. the forgiveness of sins,
11. the resurrection of the body,
12. and life everlasting.



"Who's got the nuts?" by Ralph Uden | flickr, CC BY 2.0

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2. What do we mean by “the core message”? (continued)



An outline of the core message: General Directory for Catechesis, #102

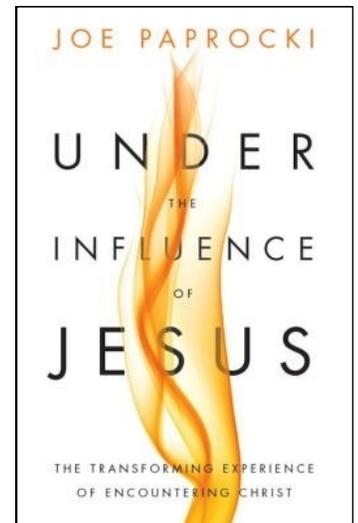
1. God is not an absent Father.
2. There is nothing to be afraid of.
3. The reign of God is justice and righteousness.
4. Jesus is a big deal,
5. We are a big deal too.
6. It only gets better from here.

See also teamrcia.com/rlui

3. How do we communicate that message in a way that makes sense to us and to the people we are trying to reach?

In *Under the Influence of Jesus*, Joe Paprocki lists six strategies:

1. Spread news that reflects well on us.
2. Tap into what's on people's minds.
3. Provoke emotion.
4. Offer something that can be seen.
5. Offer something practical.
6. Tell our story.



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4. What would happen if we communicated the core message of Jesus in this way?