

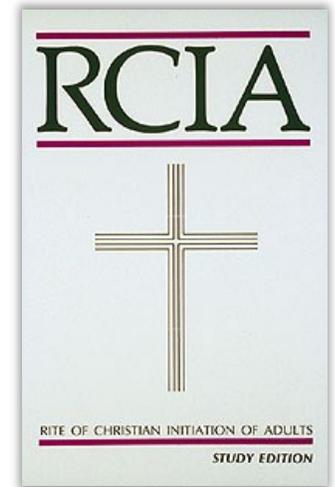
HOW TO PROVIDE A SUITABLE RCIA CATECHESIS FOR CATECHUMENS



“The catechumenate is an extended period during which the candidates are given suitable pastoral formation and guidance, aimed at training them in the Christian life. In this way, the dispositions manifested at their acceptance into the catechumenate are brought to maturity. This is achieved in four ways.

1. A suitable catechesis is provided by priests or deacons, or by catechists and others of the faithful, planned to be gradual and complete in its coverage, accommodated to the liturgical year, and solidly supported by celebrations of the word. This catechesis leads the catechumens not only to an appropriate acquaintance with dogmas and precepts but also to a profound sense of the mystery of salvation in which they desire to participate.”

—*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), #75 and #75.1*



<http://bit.ly/rciatext>

1. Why is a suitable catechesis important for RCIA seekers?

First, we have to ask *who* the catechesis is for:

- ⇒ RCIA catechesis is for *adults* who have *heard* the *mystery of Christ*.
 - * Yet, the mystery of Christ encompasses more than can be contained or explained in words alone.
 - * The core of the mystery is the living God who—mysteriously—chooses to self-reveal in a personal, ongoing, and gratuitous way.
 - * God chooses to say “I AM” to each of us in ways we can know and understand.
 - * This knowing and understanding is of the heart.

The RCIA 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

Second, we have to ask *what* the catechesis is for:

- ⇒ The catechesis we provide is for *opening the hearts* of the seekers and *leading them to conversion*.

Third, we have to ask *why* this kind of catechesis is necessary:

- ⇒ So that their lives will be changed.

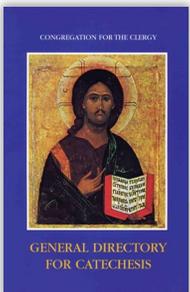
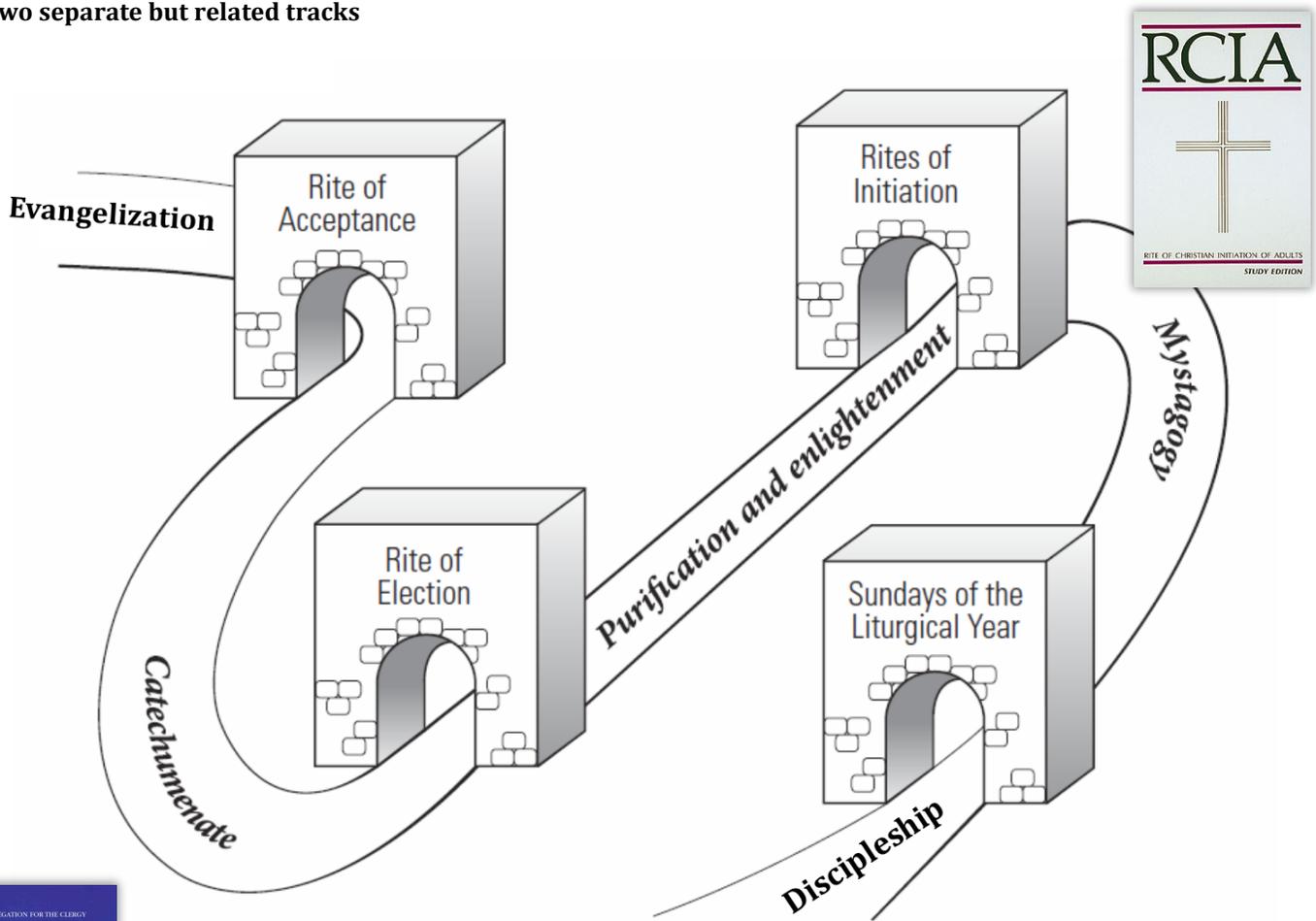
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2. What kind of catechesis is suitable for RCIA seekers?

RITUAL TRACK & CATECHETICAL TRACK

Two separate but related tracks



see *General Directory for Catechesis*, chapter 2

Primary proclamation

- * implicit proclamation and
- * explicit proclamation of Gospel to those who do not yet know Christ

Initiatory catechesis

- * Word, leads to acquaintance with dogmas, precepts, and sense of mystery of salvation
- * communal life, self-sacrifice
- * worship and prayer
- * apostolic witness in word and deed

Ongoing catechesis

- * Scripture study
- * Christian reading of current events
- * Liturgical catechesis
- * Occasional catechesis
- * Spiritual formation
- * Systematic theological instruction

HOW TO PROVIDE A SUITABLE RCIA CATECHESIS FOR CATECHUMENS



3. How do we provide a suitable RCIA catechesis?

A suitable catechesis is:

- ☑ gradual and complete in its coverage
- ☑ accommodated to the liturgical year
- ☑ solidly supported by celebrations of the word
- ☑ leads the catechumens to an appropriate acquaintance with dogmas and precepts
- ☑ leads the catechumens to a profound sense of the mystery of salvation

—see RCIA, #75.1

A. Make your catechesis gradual by letting the liturgical year be your guide:

- The liturgy does 90 percent of your work for you
- The liturgical year teaches the catechumens the core of our faith

B. Use a mystagogical process to link the experience of the catechumens in the liturgy with the dogmas and precepts of the church:

1. First, help the catechumens remember what they experienced in the liturgy
 - * What most spoke to them in the liturgy?
 - * What moved them? What impressed them?
 - * What spoke to their hearts?
2. Next, ask the catechumens to draw conclusions
 - * Did they learn anything from the experience?
 - * Did they get any insights into Jesus or our faith?
 - * Do they know something now that they didn't know before?
3. Then, guide them to a deeper, next level
 - * Do they know of any other similar Scripture stories related to what they learned in the liturgy?
 - * Talk about saints who reflect the qualities of the "teaching"
 - * Point out what the church believes/teaches about this issue
 - * Affirm the catechumens' insight

C. Ask, "So what?":

- This final step of mystagogy leads the catechumens to a profound sense of the mystery of salvation

4. What would happen if we prepared a suitable catechesis for each catechumen this way?