

PERIODS AND STEPS IN THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

Period of Inquiry (Precatechumenate)

A period of no fixed duration or structure, for inquiry and introduction to the Gospel values as expressed in the Catholic faith.

❖ First Step: Rite of Acceptance / Welcome

A *liturgical rite* which marks the beginning of the catechumenate proper, as the candidate expresses and Church accepts their intention to respond to God's call to follow the way of Christ

Period of Catechumenate

The period of time, corresponding to the progress of the individual, for nurturing and growing in faith. This is the period of time with the Sunday dismissals, prayers, and occasional anointing to assist the process of faith development.

❖ Second Step: Rite of Election or Enrollment of Names

A *liturgical rite*, usually celebrated on the first Sunday of Lent, by which the Church formally ratifies the catechumen's readiness and willingness to receive the sacraments of initiation.

Period of Enlightenment

A period of time which precedes the elects' initiation, usually occurs during the Lenten season. It is a time marked by celebrations of the scrutinies and with optional presentations of the Creed and Lord's prayer

❖ Third Step: Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

A *liturgical rite*, usually integrated into the Easter Vigil, by which the elect are initiated through baptism, confirmation and Eucharist.

Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis or Mystagogy

A period of time, usually the Easter season, following the celebration of initiation, during which the newly initiated may gather occasionally for pertinent catechesis.

COMPARABLE PERIODS AND STEPS IN COURTSHIP

Period of Casual Dating

A time of getting to know several people and becoming aware of a general attraction to the opposite sex.

❖ First Step: "Going Steady"

A decision that marks a time to date one person exclusively and get to know them better with the intention of a long term relationship.

Period of Exclusive Dating

The period of time when people spend a lot of time together getting to know each other and becoming comfortable with each other. Getting to know the other person's family.

❖ Second Step: Engagement

A formal declaration that there is an intention to make a lasting commitment and the beginning of intense preparation for that commitment.

Period of Engagement

A time marked by intense preparation for the sacrament of marriage i.e. Pre-Cana, Engaged Encounter, meetings with the priest, contacting the hall for the reception. There are optional rites that go along with this time, for example, wedding showers and bachelor parties.

❖ Third Step: Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage

A *liturgical rite*, which marks the beginning of a life-long commitment to the married way of life and the reception of the graces to live that commitment.

Period of Marriage

Joy and adjustment to the new commitment mark the early part of this period. This is a time of learning how the new responsibilities will be lived out. There is a need for continued support from the community.