

## **I Want to Follow Jesus**

Jesus is God made flesh, the invincible power that made the entire universe taking on our human weakness and carrying our sins—all for love of us so that we can live with him. Following Jesus is how we fulfill the purpose for which God created us, becomes the best version of ourselves, and reach lasting happiness.

Following Jesus means becoming part of his body, which is the Church.

## **So I Want to Join the Catholic Church**

We were hoping you'd say that. If you:

1. Have never been baptized – or
2. Were baptized in another Christian tradition – or
3. Were baptized Catholic but never received First Communion

then **RCIA is for you.**

**Questions?**

**Want to join?**

**Want to volunteer?**

**Please contact:**

**Joshua and Nora Paine  
RCIA Coordinators  
813-944-4896**

[leader-RCIA@stmarktampa.org](mailto:leader-RCIA@stmarktampa.org)

# **Want to Become Catholic?**



**Rite of Christian  
Initiation for Adults  
at  
St Mark the Evangelist  
Catholic Church**

## What is RCIA?

The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) is a **process of formation** punctuated and made holy by certain rites (solemn ceremonies) and culminating in **Baptism** (if you are not yet baptized), **Confirmation**, and **Eucharist**. You will be formed in:

- **Scripture:** God's word to us
- **Teaching:** what Catholics believe
- **Prayer:** how we speak with God
- **Liturgy:** how we worship together
- **Mission:** living what we believe

## Step 1: Inquiry

If you believe God is calling you to himself but you're not sure what to do yet, you may spend a while in Inquiry. The RCIA team hosts open inquiry sessions at least twice a month. Come talk about God's presence in your life, learn about prayer, or get answers to some of your "What do Catholics believe about \_\_\_\_\_?" questions.

Inquiry can go on for years, or it might take only a single meeting. When you're ready, you move to Step 2 through the **Rite of Welcome**, celebrated three times during the year at St. Mark the Evangelist.

## Step 2: Catechumenate

A period of study and apprenticeship in Catholic Christian Living, the meat of the RCIA process. We meet together at the **8:30 AM Sunday mass every week**, break open the readings and homily, break bread (snacks) together, and learn about an aspect of Catholic faith and practice related to the readings. We're done by 11:15 AM.

This is a critical time to grow in prayer, develop your relationship with God, and grow in awareness of God's presence and activity in your life. At the beginning of Lent, if you are ready, you enter Step 3 through the **Rites of Sending and Election**.

## Step 3: Purification & Enlightenment

This is the final, intense period before you celebrate the sacraments of initiation. We continue our Sunday morning meetings but with a new emphasis on:

- Recognizing our sin and weakness
- Repentance; seeking God's healing and strength
- Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving
- Preparation for the sacraments

The Sacraments of Initiation, cele-

brated on Easter Vigil, make you a full member of the Catholic Church.

## Step 4: Mystagogy

Praise God, you're a fully initiated Catholic Christian! Like most milestones, though, this is the beginning, not the end. Sunday morning sessions continue for seven weeks until Pentecost. These shorter sessions will give you the opportunity to break open the special Scripture readings of Easter in light of your sacramental experience of God's grace. After Pentecost, we'll continue to meet monthly until next Easter.

## How Long Does it Take?

If you have never been baptized, steps 2 & 3 together are meant to take at least a year. Scheduling constraints sometimes make it shorter, but steps 2 & 3 will take at least six months.

That may seem like too long to you. But remember: this is a learn-by-doing apprenticeship, not a memorize-now-do-someday class. You're following Jesus now, through the process. However, if you're serious about becoming Catholic but our schedule would be a serious hardship for you, get in touch. Let us figure out how we can help.