

# Christian Initiation of Adults

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## Focus on the Rite—Rite of Acceptance Part II

*Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens* is the first formal step in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The RCIA speaks of this and of the other major rites of initiation as *thresholds* or *gateways*, because they mark a genuine transition or turning point in the journey of faith.

The role of the liturgical **assembly** needs to be given special prominence when preparing the Rite of Acceptance. If possible, the entire assembly should gather outside the church at the beginning of the celebration to receive the candidates for the catechumenate. Such a gathering gives expression to joyful welcome of the candidates by the community of the Church. The assembly may also join in an appropriate song at the beginning of the rite as the candidates, sponsors, and presiding minister take their places. The faithful are asked to join the sponsors in committing themselves to “help these candidates find and follow Christ” (RCIA, 53). As the candidates are signed with the cross, the whole assembly may sing an acclamation, such as “Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ” (RCIA, 55).

The participation of the liturgical assembly in the rite expresses the nature of the Church as an initiating community, supporting, and nurturing those who are turning their lives over to God in Christ. Because the role of the faithful is so important, the rite should be celebrated at a time when a large number can be present, such as Sunday Mass.

October 1, 2009

## *Institute for Christian Initiation*

### Session I:

Overview of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* and the Period of the Precatechumenate.

Saturday, October 17 at  
St. Catherine of Siena,  
Horsham, PA from  
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



## Initiation library

### *The Way of Faith*

By Nick Wagner

A hands-on, comprehensive, enjoyable, and affordable guide to everything you want or need to know about the catechumenate process. This is exactly what team-trainers have been looking for: a resource packed with advice, tips, techniques, and tools to help them start or sustain the catechumenate in their parishes.

Available through Twenty-Third Publications.

**The priest** or deacon gathers the assembly in prayer as it welcomes new catechumens. He greets them in the name of the whole Church, questions them on their commitment to the way of Christ, leads them to places within the liturgical assembly, and in the homily breaks open the bread of God’s word.

**Catechists**, catechumenate directors, and other laypersons involved in the initiation ministry should also take an active role in the celebration of the Rite of Acceptance. For example, one of them might present each of candidates to the presiding minister and assembly at the beginning of the rite, and might assist in the presentation of the book containing God’s word to each of the catechumens after the homily.

**Musicians** should plan the song of the assembly in such a way that it is an integral part of the liturgical action, can be easily sung by all, and is of good musical quality.

**Sponsors** should have a clear understanding not only of their own role in the celebration, but also of the candidates’. In this way the new catechumens can be free to experience the rite, engaging in the dialogue with the presiding minister, joining in the songs and prayers receiving the cross and listening to God’s word.”

(RCIA, *A Pastoral Liturgical Commentary*, pp. 44-45)