

St. Pius X Catholic Church

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults

2026-2027 Handbook



Office of Faith Formation

Lindsay Sartorio, Director

lsartorio@stpiusxnc.com

OCIA - OCIC

The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults & Children

St. Pius X parish community welcomes you. We are here to share with you our Catholic faith and the richness of our Sacramental way of life.

The following information is formulated to help in understanding the process of the Order of Christian Initiation in the Catholic Church.

Christian Initiation is a journey, but it is not a journey to a destination. Rather, it is a journey to a person – the person of Jesus Christ. “Becoming Catholic” is a response to God’s invitation by answering the call to follow Jesus as his disciple. This is a process of conversion, communion, and discipleship.

The goal of our OCIA process is to provide opportunities to experience and encounter the love of God through prayer, teaching, and community.

WHO IS OCIA FOR?

- Non-Catholics who want to find out more about the Catholic faith
- Those who want to join the Catholic Church through Baptism or a Profession of Faith
- Those who were Baptized Catholic but never received religious education, Confirmation, or the Eucharist

OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults), formerly called “RCIA, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults,” is the process through which one becomes a full member of the Roman Catholic Church. Full membership in the Catholic Church involves a whole formation process, which includes the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist. While coming to know Jesus and His invitation to become a disciple, the OCIA process involves a journey of faith and conversion. A person is introduced to the beliefs, life, liturgy, and Apostolic work of the Catholic Church.

This is not a program. The time frame is flexible according to the needs of the individual. If, when our formational classes are nearing an end, an individual is not ready to profess a belief in all the Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims – there is no obligation to celebrate the sacraments, and there is always an option for more time.

OCIA is also designed to prepare candidates already baptized for entry into full communion with the Catholic Church. Our OCIA program not only helps to facilitate conversion and growth in intimacy with Christ, it provides a complete means of educating people in the belief and teaching of the Church.

Non-baptized persons in the OCIA are known as **Catechumens**. They undergo a process of conversion as they study the Gospel, profess faith in Jesus and the Catholic Church, and receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist.

Baptized persons in the OCIA are known as **Candidates**. The Catholic Church recognizes baptisms performed by other Christian faiths performing a Trinitarian baptismal ceremony (“in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”) with water. Each Candidate is required to provide evidence of their baptism. It can take the form of a Baptismal Certificate issued by the church where you were baptized, a letter from a church official attesting to the baptism, or, in certain circumstances, a written affidavit from a witness attesting to the baptism. Please contact your church of baptism as soon as possible!

This process of OCIA consists of several stages. There is never any pressure to proceed, but each step along the way follows from a deeper commitment and informed decision.

INQUIRY

The Inquiry stage is a time of unhurried reflection and discovery, whereby a person begins to search out God’s call to enter more fully into the life of the Church. Helping the inquirer in this process are members of our own parish family who form the OCIA team.

CATECHUMENATE

Those who enter this stage are claimed for Christ and marked with the sign of the cross through a **Rite of Welcoming and Acceptance**. It is a period of learning and includes formal sessions on Catholic teaching and practice and is a time for the deepening of one’s faith and commitment. Although Catechumens and Candidates are not able to share at the table of the Eucharist, they can participate in the Liturgy of the Word and attend Mass each Sunday.

PURIFICATION & ENLIGHTENMENT

This stage begins during the Lenten season and includes a **Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion**. In local parishes, Catechumens inscribe their name in a book

which is presented to the Bishop (or his delegate) in a special ceremony. This is a period of prayer and reflection, as well as a time for the Candidates and Catechumens to continue growing in their faith. This stage culminates at the Easter Vigil, where those who are unbaptized will be baptized, and those who are seeking full communion will make a profession of faith.

MYSTAGOGY

The final stage of the OCIA is a period of rejoicing in the awareness of God's presence by praying and sharing at the table of the Eucharist. This stage concludes with the Feast of Pentecost, where, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit we are sent into the world to do the work of the Lord. There is also the new opportunity to share in the community of St. Pius X from here forward by participating in ministries of service both within and outside the parish.

OCIC

For children of families in OCIA, or for children who are in need of Catholic sacraments, their class placement will depend on several factors, and the best means of formation will be determined by our OCIA team and Pastoral Staff.

Children over the "age of reason" (typically considered age 8) who have not yet been baptized are to receive all three Sacraments of Initiation. They are considered to be old enough to understand the mysteries of our faith and participate in the sacraments.

SPONSORS AND GODPARENTS

Each Candidate and Catechumen is required to have a sponsor. The sponsor must be a practicing Catholic in good standing who attends Mass regularly and who would provide a good example and support in a life of discipleship. A sponsor could be a spouse, relative, friend, etc. For Catechumens, the sponsor will also serve as your Godparent. Though a spouse can fill the role of sponsor, they should not fill the role of Godparent.

*I have called you by name: you are mine.
Isaiah 43:1*

CURRICULUM & TOPICS

*Invited: Your Journey into
The Catholic Church*



Your materials will include:

- Participant's Workbook
- Sponsor Guide
- Program Videos (100% free in the Ascension App)
- *"Invited In: 101 Questions & Answers for New Catholics"*
- *The Ascension Mass Companion*
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church (Ascension Edition)*
- *The Great Adventure Catholic Bible (Revised Standard Version, Second Catholic Edition)*

The topics covered will include:

- What Do You Seek?
- How Can We Know that God Exists?
- God Reveals Himself to Us
- The Holy Trinity: God is Love in Relationship
- If God is Good, Why This Mess?
- Salvation History: God's Promise to Free Us
- Jesus Christ: God Becomes Man
- The Paschal Mystery: Jesus Delivers Us From Evil
- The Holy Spirit: God Dwells in Us
- Christian Prayer: God Invites Us Into Relationship
- The Old Law and the New: Learning Freedom
- The Church: God's Family
- The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints: Our Extended Family
- The Last Things: God Will Set All Things Right
- The Liturgy and the Sacraments: Christ With Us
- The Sacrament of Baptism: Christ Welcomes Us
- The Sacrament of Confirmation: The Holy Spirit Seals Us
- The Holy Eucharist: Christ Feeds Us
- The Mass: We Worship God
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation: Christ Forgives Us
- The Anointing of the Sick: Christ Accompanies Us in Our Weakness
- The Sacrament of Holy Orders: Christ Acts Through the Clergy
- The Sacrament of Matrimony: The Domestic Church
- Liturgical Prayer and Popular Devotions
- The Christian Moral Life: Knowing Right from Wrong
- The Social Doctrine of the Church and the Works of Mercy
- The Culture of Life: Protecting the Most Vulnerable
- Discipleship and Evangelization: Sharing the Joy

IMPORTANT DATES 2026-2027

ALL SUNDAYS

Catholics have an OBLIGATION to attend Mass.

You can start now! You should not receive Holy Communion – Catholics do not practice “open Communion.” However, you are welcome to attend all liturgies from here forward if you are not already doing so.

Week of September 7, 2026

First Week of Class for OCIA/OCIC
Wednesday Evenings 6:30 – 8:00 pm

Sunday, November 1, 2026

All Saints Day

Monday, November 2, 2026

All Souls’ Day

Week of November 23, 2026

No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday, December 8, 2026

Immaculate Conception (Holy Day)

Week of December 21, 2026

No Class – Christmas Break

Friday, December 25, 2026

Nativity of the Lord - Christmas (Holy Day)

Week of December 28, 2026

No Class – Christmas Break

Friday, January 1, 2027

Mary, Holy Mother of God (Holy Day)

Sunday, March 21, 2027

Palm Sunday (Holy Week Begins)

Thursday, March 25, 2027

Holy Thursday (Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper)

Friday, March 26, 2027

Good Friday (Stations & Veneration of the Cross)

Saturday, March 27, 2027

Holy Saturday (Easter Vigil Mass)

Sunday, March 28, 2027

Easter Sunday

Week of March 29, 2027

No Class – Easter Break

Week of May 10, 2027

Last Week of Class for OCIA/OCIC

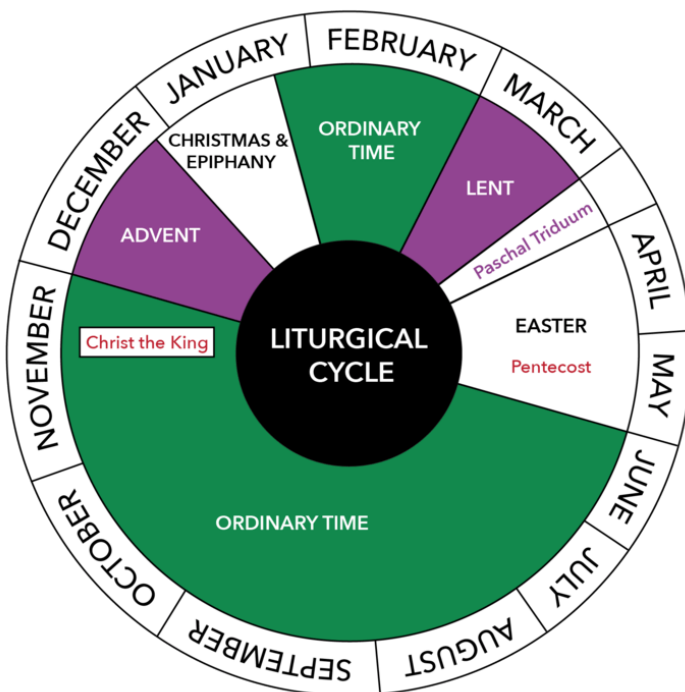
Sunday, May 16, 2027

Pentecost

PRECEPTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

From the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2041-2043)

- I. **Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation** - Catholics are to participate in the Eucharist and refrain from unnecessary servile work on these days.
- II. **Confess Your Sins at Least Once a Year** - The faithful must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation at least once annually (typically during the Lenten season and often called "Easter Duty").
- III. **Receive Holy Communion at Least Once a Year** - This is required specifically during the Easter season.
- IV. **Observe Days of Fasting and Abstinence** - Individuals must follow the Church's rules on fasting and abstaining from meat (e.g., Ash Wednesday and Good Friday).
- V. **Provide for the Needs of the Church** - Catholics are to contribute to the material needs of the Church, according to their own ability.



***“Catholics go to Mass.”
-Deacon Ron Steinkamp***

**What do the colors mean
that the priest wears?**

PURPLE - Penance,
Preparation

RED - Blood of Martyrs,
Sacrifice, Holy Spirit

ROSE/PINK – Anticipation

GREEN – Hope, Life,
Growth

WHITE/GOLD – Joy, Purity

FREQUENTLY CHALLENGED MORAL ISSUES

Based on Catholic doctrine and frequently cited "non-negotiable" moral issues, the most challenging teachings are those that often conflict with modern secular culture. The following five areas are considered fundamental moral teachings that require firm assent, as highlighted by sources like the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic moral teaching:

1. **Abortion:** The Church teaches that directly chosen abortion is the intentional killing of an innocent human being and is never permissible, regardless of circumstances.
2. **Euthanasia & Assisted Suicide:** Often called "mercy killing," the Church prohibits this, maintaining that no person has the right to take their own life or that of an innocent person, directly opposing the "right to die" movement.
3. **Same-Sex Marriage:** The Church teaches that marriage is the union of one man and one woman. While calling for the respect of individuals with homosexual tendencies, it opposes homosexual "marriage" and sexual acts outside of heterosexual marriage.
4. **Embryonic Stem-Cell Research & Human Cloning:** The Church holds that human embryos are human beings. Any research or scientific practice that involves the destruction of or experimentation on embryos is considered gravely immoral.
5. **Sexual Ethics (Contraception, Masturbation, and Premarital Sex):** The Church holds that human sexuality has a procreative and unitive purpose only within marriage. The use of artificial birth control is considered a misuse of sexuality, and it teaches that sexual acts must be open to life.

Other Frequently Cited Challenging Teachings:

1. **The Necessity of Sunday Mass: Deliberately missing Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is considered a mortal sin.**
2. **Confession for Mortal Sin: The necessity of sacramental confession to a priest for the forgiveness of mortal sins.**
3. **The True Presence in the Eucharist: The teaching that bread and wine become the actual Body and Blood of Christ.**

OCIA - OCIC Registration & Candidate Commitment Form

Each person enrolling in OCIA or OCIC will need to complete this paper form and return it when you come to the very first class.



Each person will also need to complete an online registration form and pay a \$50 materials fee. The materials are subsidized by the parish. If the materials fee prohibits you from enrolling, please contact the office for financial assistance. Scan the QR code here for the registration form.

Please check here to let us know that you have completed the online registration.

Please read over and initial next to the following statements. (Parents, if you have a child preparing in OCIC, please initial on their behalf.)

I am preparing for reception of the Sacraments of Initiation in the Catholic Church. As a Catechumen or Candidate, I promise the following:

_____ I will attend Mass every Sunday and on all Holy Days of Obligation.

_____ I will attend, and will fully participate, in all class sessions and activities.

_____ I will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before the Easter Vigil.

_____ I will commit to putting my talents and gifts at the service of others.

_____ I will commit to daily prayer, especially for growth in faith, hope, and love.

As I make these promises, I ask God to give me the grace to be open to his plans for my life – plans he reveals to me in prayer, in my talents and aspirations, and in the encouragement of those who know and love me. I place myself in the loving embrace of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in asking for help in fulfilling this commitment.

Printed Name

Signature

Sign and return this form to the parish Office of Faith Formation or the OCIA team.