

## RCIA Periods and Steps

|         | <b>First Period</b>  | <b>First Step</b>  | <b>Second Period</b>  | <b>Second Step</b>  | <b>Third Period</b>   | <b>Third Step</b>                   | <b>Fourth Period</b>  |
|---------|--|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|
|         | EVANGELIZATION AND PRECATECHUMENATE  | RITE OF ACCEPTANCE   | CATECHUMENATE   | RITE OF ELECTION  | PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT  | SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION            | MYSTAGOGY or POSTBAPTISMAL CATECHESIS   |
| Name    | Inquirers or candidates  |  | Catechumens   |   | Elect   |                                     | Neophytes   |
| Aim     | Awaken faith, foster initial conversion, introduce to Christian community, answer questions                    | Acceptance into formal relationship with Church  | To deepen conversion; pass on church's tradition, teachings, prayer, way of life                | To discern evidence of election by God for the sacraments of initiation   | Uncover, eliminate what is weak, sinful; affirm and strengthen what is holy; final preparation for initiation | To unite with Christ and his church | Deepening of faith, sacramental life, and communal life as a baptized Christian |
| Content | Proclamation of Gospel, build relationship with Christ and community, share faith stories, examination of life | First formal introduction, statement of intent, welcome  | Deepen faith within the living community through catechesis, fellowship, prayer, apostolic life | Questioning of godparents, Bishop's declaration of election               | Recollection, Lenten retreat, preparation for Easter sacraments   | Full initiation                     | Reflection on Gospel, Eucharist, mission of Church                              |
| Time    | No fixed time  | Whenever candidate and community are ready; one or more times per year; when the community is gathered | One or more years   | Beginning of Lent preceding Easter Vigil at which they are to be baptized | Lent  | Easter Vigil                        | Easter season, one full year  |
| Rites   | No specific rites  | Questioning, first acceptance of Gospel, signing of senses, entrance into the church                   | Celebrations of word, dismissals, minor exorcisms, blessings, anointings                        | Questioning of godparents, catechists; signing of Book of the Elect       | Scrutinies, Presentations of Creed and Lord's Prayer, Holy Saturday preparatory rites                         | Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist    | Sunday Eucharist, celebration with Bishop                                       |