

Crossroads

The **Crossroads** resource is designed specifically for young people across two age groups: 9 to 12 years and 13 to 16 years. It adapts the principles of the RCIA to be age-appropriate for young people. (See RCIA 242–249).



The sessions contained in this resource invite young people to enter the journey of conversion and faith by developing a relationship with Christ, as the Spirit opens their minds and hearts. Milestones on the journey will be the receptions of the Sacraments which Pope Francis tells us:

...express and realise an effective and profound communion among us, for in them we encounter Christ the Saviour and, through him, our brothers and sisters in faith.

When we celebrate the Eucharist it is the living Jesus who brings us together, forms us into a community, allows us to adore the Father. Each one of us, in fact, through Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist, is incorporated into Christ and united to the entire community of believers.

Therefore, if on the one hand it is the Church that “makes” the Sacraments, on the other, it is the Sacraments that “make” the Church, that build her up, by generating new children, by gathering them into the holy people of God, by strengthening their membership.

[Pope Francis, General Audience, 6th November, 2013]

Purpose of the Resource

The *Crossroads* resource provides parishes with the means to support young people who wish to explore and develop their faith, with the intention of receiving the Sacraments of Initiation. These Sacraments are stepping stone on the journey, not the journey's end. The invitation is for young people to become missionary disciples, people who strive to live every aspect of their lives as followers of Jesus.

The young people who choose to journey towards Christian Initiation are responding to the Holy Spirit, moving in their heart. They are now seeking to live a Christian life within the Catholic community. Each will bring their particular experiences of life and the Christian faith. Some young people seeking full initiation into the Church may, have been baptised in the Catholic Church, or another tradition, but have received ongoing catechesis, or been encouraged to practice their faith. Others may have received catechesis and being actively involved in a faith community but are now seeking full communion with the Catholic Church while others may come with no experience of any faith at all.

Regardless, of the individuals background, the *Crossroads* resource provides a framework for guiding young people who have or have not been baptised on the journey to full initiation in the Catholic Church. The *Crossroads* resource will assist catechists in accompanying young people on their faith journey.

Content and format of the Sessions

The sessions in the *Crossroads* resource have a consistent format. The process invites young people to enter this journey of conversion and faith by developing a relationship with Christ, as the Spirit opens their minds and hearts.

Session plans Crossroads has adaptable session plans for catechists to use during each of the first three RCIA periods; the fourth are still a work in progress. The sessions are designed to help catechists walk the journey with the young people. Together they will:

- Engage in prayer and quiet meditation (including different kinds of religious songs)
- Hear and share stories (which witness to faith)
- Hear and break open the word of God
- Explore the topic with discussion questions
- Develop understanding of the Church and its Mission
- Feel a growing sense of belonging to the parish and wider Church Community
- Learn what it means to live a Christian life

The session notes are the backbone for the learning experience. However, the Spirit often moves the discussion in other directions. It is reasonable to deviate from the plan to allow fruitful conversations on a matter that is of importance to the young people. Catechists need to be open to this.

Journey Stage	9-12's Young Adolescents	13-16's Young Teens
<i>Inquiry Period</i> 3 sessions for both age groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All about me and God • Jesus • Preparing for the Rite of Acceptance and Welcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All about me and God • Jesus • Preparing for the Rite of Acceptance and Welcome
<i>Catechumenate</i> 8 Sessions 9 – 12 10 Sessions 13 – 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Father, Son and Holy Spirit • The Bible – God's Word • Jesus • Sacraments of Initiation – 1 • Sacraments of Initiation – 2 • The Mass • Inspirations in Faith • The Christian Life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Father, Son and Holy Spirit • The Bible – God's Word • Jesus • Sacraments of Initiation – 1 • Sacraments of Initiation – 2 • The Mass • Prayer • Mary and the Saints • The Christian Life • Mission
<i>Purification and Enlightenment</i> 5 Sessions for both age groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for the Penitential Rite – Scrutiny • The Penitential Rite – Scrutiny • Presentation of the Creed • Presentation of the Lord's Prayer • Preparation for Initiation <p>Additional materials are provided to make clear the practicalities involved in the Rite of Initiation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for the Penitential Rite – Scrutiny • The Penitential Rite – Scrutiny • Presentation of the Creed • Presentation of the Lord's Prayer • Preparation for Initiation <p>Additional materials are provided to make clear the practicalities involved in the Rite of Initiation.</p>
<i>Mytsogogy</i> 2 sessions for both age groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing the Journey • Disciples of Christ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing the Journey • Disciples of Christ

Personal reflection and consolidation

Putting in writing thoughts, important learning points and in particular questions that arise during a session is really important. Each session includes opportunities for making notes and identifying areas to ponder further. The notes help the individuals to record their faith journey.

A colourful Activity Book accompanies the *Crossroads* resource for the 9 to 12 age group. The books can be purchased via the Crossroads website www.crossroadsrcia.org

The 13-16 age group are to be given a blank journal at the beginning of their journey, the Inquiry period, in which to include reflections during the session. Individuals are also encouraged during the week to note down the disappointments and joys experienced, and any insights gained from the events, especially ways they can recognise God at work in their lives.

Discernment

Activity books and journals are also helpful for the discernment process, in which the young people become more aware of the presence of God and the ways they are responding to the invitation to be in relationship with God and others. On a regular basis it is important to ask the young people:

- How is it going?
- How are you feeling?
- Is this making a difference in your life?

The questions not only help the young person discern God's presence in their life, they provide an opportunity to address any concerns or questions that may have arisen.

The Four Stages through which the young people travel towards Christian Initiation

Throughout their journey of faith and conversion, young people will pass through a number of phases, experiencing liturgical rites while focusing on developing a relationship with Christ and the Parish community. The journey for the unbaptised unfolds in the following way:

1. Period of Evangelisation and Pre-catechumenate (Inquiry)

- Concludes with the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens.

2. Period of the Catechumenate

- Concludes with the Rite of Election.

(Although there is no mention of the Rite of Election in part II of the RCIA which deals with initiation of children who have reached catechetical age, it is recommended that where possible the young people be invited to attend the Cathedral for the Rite of Election on the first Sunday of Lent, or whenever held.)

3. Period of Purification and Enlightenment

- Includes the Penitential Rite (Scrutiny).
- Concludes with the Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation.

4. Period of Mystagogia

- Learning to live the faith more fully.