

Walk With Me is a resource designed specifically for secondary students on their journey towards Initiation in the Catholic Church based on the Church's Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

The resource assists those who accompany young people on their faith journey. It provides parishes and schools with theological background, detailed outlines and notes for weekly gatherings, references to the Church's rites, explanations of the Rites, links to online resources to the rituals of the RCIA, blessing prayers, glossary and more.

- The RCIA process encompasses the ritual journey in faith made by the baptised and the unbaptised to full initiation in the Church. It is:
a spiritual journey... that varies according to the many forms of God's grace, the free cooperation of the individuals, the action of the Church, and the circumstances of time and place. (ICEL 2003, Introduction, 5)

- The journey is a gradual deepening of the gift of faith which begins with a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and leads into deeper communion with our brothers and sisters in faith.

The school community is often the place where a young person first expresses their interest in the faith. The school, parish priest and parish community each have an important role to play in providing a welcoming and nurturing environment. All parishioners share in the duty of handing on the faith, including the initiation of new members, so need to support and engage with the process.

Sacraments of Initiation rely on a partnership which is:

- **Family centred**
Ideally the family accompanies the young person on their faith journey. The sharing of faith stories, answering of questions and encouragement to be involved in the liturgical life of the parish is especially important.
- **Parish -based**
The young person will be initiated into the parish community, so it is important the community accompany the young person in their reflection on the scriptures and by helping them integrate into the life of the Christian church.
- **School and Catechist supported**
The Catholic school provides one of the lived expressions of faith experienced by students. The school has a responsibility to provide a formal education in faith, and to provide nurturing environment in which they develop a personal relationship with God. The role of the catechist is to support the young person and their family through the process leading to the Sacraments of Initiation. Where the young adult does not attend a Catholic school they may also need to provide religious education.



Suggestions for implementing the process in the school and / or parish setting

- Create an initiation team with representatives from the parish, school, Catechist partnership
- Collaboration between the Priest, school and the parish is necessary in the preparation and celebration of the Rites of Initiation.
- The school may wish to acknowledge celebration of the Rites throughout the journey.
- **Companions in faith** Peers of the young enquirers, who have already experienced an encounter with Christ, are a powerful source of support. It is strongly encouraged that such young people, from the school and the parish be invited to accompany the enquirers on their journey.

Overview of the Catechetical Process and Sessions

The process is embedded in the catechetical approaches and content in keeping with the RCIA and practices of the early Christian Church.

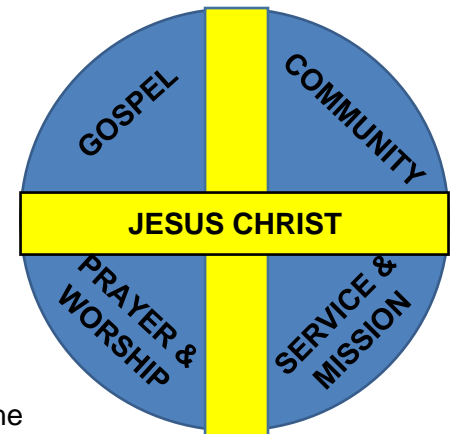
Jesus Christ (*Kerygma*): the initial proclamation of Jesus Christ through experience and encounter (*Being*)

The Good News of the **Scriptures** (*Evangelia*): hearing and living the Good News of the Scriptures, especially the Gospels (*Story*)

The **Christian Community** (*Koinonia*): wanting to be an active part of the Church community (*Belonging*)

Prayer & Worship (*Leitourgia*): personal prayer and communal worship in the liturgical life of the Church (*Spirituality*)

Service & Mission (*Diakonia*): the baptismal call to be missionary disciples (*Giving*)



The RCIA methodology is that established by St Ambrose of Milan (c340-397), who believed that scripture was a perfect tool for teaching the Christian faith and providing instruction in discipleship. He linked the sacraments to the bible showing they had their roots in Jesus Christ and the scriptures. He taught that sacraments were not an end in themselves, but a gateway to a new life in Christ and a means of deepening a relationship with him.

The methodology

- is centred on Jesus Christ and the Scriptures
- draws on personal life experiences
- gives guidance for Christian living
- leads to a conversion of heart and living a new life.

The methodology incorporates 5 steps which provide the session format.

1. Encountering and Listening – Begins with Prayer

Creating an environment in which young people can reflect on their own life and the world around them. The prayer incorporates **Encountering and Listening to the Gospel** in which Jesus himself speaks to us.

2. Pondering and Meditating

Provides time for participants to **Ponder and Meditate** on the circumstances of their own life.

3. Appropriating and Making a home for the Word

Appropriating a home for the word, is the heart of the process. Scripture is again read, then contemplated and broken open. Participants are invited to make a home for the scripture within their hearts and apply it to their lives. The process allows for a personal encounter with God, as revealed within the scripture. Insights into the Christian faith are identified and explored together.

4. Being challenged and Transformed

Together the group identifies how the new insights into the Christian faith **challenge** their current attitudes or way of life, and what might be needed for **transformation** to take place. Opportunities are identified that might lead to the changes that will bring about a conversion of heart.

5. Becoming a Living Witness

Accepting the challenge is an invitation to conversion and becoming a **Living Witness** ensuring our actions, words and attitudes reflect those of Jesus. As St Paul suggests, 'clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ.' [Romans 13:14]

These five steps lead towards a **CONVERSION OF HEART, and LIVING A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.**

DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The initiation process aims to form individuals willing to commit themselves to live as 'missionary disciples' of Jesus Christ. As with the general RCIA process, liturgical Rites mark stages on the journey. The Rites celebrate all that has taken place in the preceding stage and provide nourishment for the next stage of the journey.

Each of the Rites is preceded by a process of discernment during which the young adults and the catechists reflect on the spiritual growth of the individual, which is continually reflected on, shared, and expressed in the journal. Questions provided to assist in the discernment are linked to each of the five areas of focus.

Introduction to the Catechetical Sessions

Materials are organised over 27 sessions, which cover the five key areas of focus for RCIA. Sessions are designed 1 hour. Each is based on one of the 5 RCIA themes. Each theme has between 4-8 topics. Occasionally these may be stretched over a double session.

KERYGMA – Jesus Christ			
	The Historical Jesus	Jesus' Message and Vision	Images of Jesus in Art
	The life of Jesus	Jesus as God	
EVANGELIA – The Good News of the Scriptures			
	The structure of the Bible	The Teachings of Jesus	
	The Four Gospels	The Teachings of Jesus – the parables	
KOINONIA – The Christian Community			
	Pentecost	Joining the Christian Community	Ministries and roles within the Church (2 sessions)
	Early Christian Communities	Mary the First Disciple	
LEITOURGIA – Prayer and Worship			
	Sacraments of the Church (2 sessions)	The Sacrament of Reconciliation	The Liturgical Year
	The Eucharist (2 sessions)	Preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation	Saints
	Preparing to celebrate the Rite of Christian Initiation	Introduction to Prayer	
DIAKONIA – Mission and Service			
	Called to live as Christians (Part 1)	Living out the Mission	Social Justice and Church Teachings
	Called to live as Christians (Part 2)	Jesus' model of Servant Leadership	

