



POLICY DOCUMENT

ARCHDIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY IN KANSAS

Issued Date: 8/24/2026

Last Reviewed Date: 8/21/2026

Subject: OCIA Supplemental Norms

Distribution: 08/21/2026

Archbishop Signature:

I. Purpose

This document establishes supplemental norms and procedures for the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) within the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. Its primary purpose is to provide clear, locally adapted guidelines for the initiation process, including terminology, stages of formation, liturgical rites, and pastoral considerations for catechumens, candidates, and children of catechetical age. The document ensures consistency, proper sacramental practice, and alignment with both national statutes and the unique needs of the archdiocese.

II. Definitions

1. **Catechumen** – An unbaptized person preparing for Christian initiation through the OCIA process.
2. **Candidate for Full Communion** – A baptized person (in another Christian tradition) seeking to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.
3. **Inquirer** – An unbaptized person exploring the Christian faith before formally entering the catechumenate.
4. **Elect** – Catechumens who have participated in the Rite of Election and are preparing to receive the Sacraments of Initiation.
5. **Neophyte** – A newly baptized person, especially during the period immediately following initiation.
6. **Rite of Election** – A liturgical rite in which catechumens are formally chosen (elected) for the Sacraments of Initiation.
7. **Scrutinies** – Special rites of self-searching and repentance for catechumens during Lent.
8. **Mystagogy** – The period of post-baptismal catechesis and integration into the Christian community.
9. **Sacraments of Initiation** – Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, which together fully initiate a person into the Catholic Church.
10. **Canonical Impediment** – A legal or sacramental obstacle (such as an irregular marriage situation) that must be resolved before receiving certain sacraments.
11. **OCIA** – Order of Christian Initiation of Adults, the process and rites for adult initiation into the Catholic Church.

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12. **Oil of Catechumens** – Blessed oil used in anointing catechumens as part of their preparation.

13. **Full Communion** – The state of being fully united with the Catholic Church, including participation in all sacraments.

III. Policy

1. As provided in Norm 18 of the National Statutes for the Christian Initiation of Adults, the term “convert” is to be used only for those who have converted to Christian belief from another religion; even in the case of baptized persons who, following their baptism, were never catechized nor even given to practice their faith, the fact of their baptism effects a sacramental reality whereby they are configured to Christ as adopted sons and daughters of God the Father.
2. During the Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate, the unbaptized are properly called inquirers, and should not be referred to as catechumens prior to their entrance into the Order of the Catechumenate.
3. Those individuals baptized in another ecclesial communion are properly referred to as candidates for full communion or, alternatively, candidates for reception (into full communion), and should never be called catechumens or even participants in the “parish catechumenate” or other terms which would confuse their baptized status.

PERIOD OF EVANGELIZATION AND PRECATECHUMENATE

4. Individuals making inquiry into the catechumenate should be met with individually by the pastor and/or parish OCIA coordinator as soon as possible after their initial inquiry, in order to discuss the motivations of their inquiry, their understanding of the nature of conversion to the Christian way of life, and their present (and, as applicable, past) marriage situation; additionally, they should be counseled on beginning and developing their conversation with God and prayer life.

PERIOD OF THE CATECHUMENATE

5. Catechumens should participate in the Period of the Catechumenate for at least one full liturgical cycle, from at least the Sunday before Ash Wednesday of one year through Lent of the following year, participating in the Rite of Election at the beginning of that (second) Lenten season preceding the Easter Vigil of their initiation.



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6. As circumstances suggest, catechumens may enter the Period of the Catechumenate on any day of the year except the Sundays of Lent, within the Octave of Easter, on All Souls' Day, on Ash Wednesday, and on the weekdays of Holy Week; however, in order to later participate in the Rite of Election and receive the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil, catechumens must have been catechumens at least one full season of Lent prior to the celebration of Election.
7. Before entering the Period of the Catechumenate, an inquirer must have at least demonstrated the following: the first experiences of Christian faith, a willingness to enter into a covenant relationship with God in Christ and the change of life it requires, a beginning sense of penitence and the habit of calling upon God in regular prayer, and an initial experience of the Church and the community of Christians; nothing more is to be required.
8. Persons in irregular marriage situations may be admitted into the catechumenate, but may not participate in the Rite of Election until their situation is resolved and made canonically regular (see number 17 below).
9. For serious pastoral need, catechumens may receive the Sacraments of Initiation on any day during which the Ritual Mass of Baptism may be celebrated according to the norms for the liturgical calendar; however, they must be catechumens for at least a year, and do not ordinarily participate in the Rite of Election, during which the Archbishop elects catechumens for initiation specifically for the upcoming Easter Vigil.
10. Upon entrance into the catechumenate, each catechumen's name is to be inscribed into the parish Register of Catechumens, which is then to be kept in the parish archives along with the other sacramental registers maintained by the parish.
11. At least once during the Period of the Catechumenate, each catechumen should be anointed with the Oil of Catechumens according to the rites found in the OCIA ritual. Additional anointings, along with the blessings and minor exorcisms provided in the ritual, should be done as determined pastorally advantageous for the catechumens, but should not be omitted altogether from the Period of the Catechumenate.
12. Pastors, in exceptional circumstances, desiring to use the Simpler Order of Adult Initiation (Chapter III of the OCIA), must first receive the permission of the Archbishop to make use of that form of adult initiation.
13. For the Christian initiation of individuals near or at the point of death, priests may use the Shorter Order, as found in Chapter IV of the OCIA, without further need of permission of the Archbishop.

PERIOD OF PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

14. Each year, on the First Sunday of Lent, the Rite of Election will be celebrated for those catechumens desiring to receive the Sacraments of Initiation at the upcoming Easter Vigil of that same calendar year.
15. Catechumens participating in the Rite of Election are to have been participants in the Period of the Catechumenate since the beginning of Lent the previous year.

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16. The term Elect should be used exclusively for those who have participated in the Rite of Election and have been elected by the Archbishop for the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil.
17. Only those catechumens without canonical impediment, including marriage impediments, may participate in the Rite of Election and be elected for the Sacraments of Initiation at the upcoming Easter Vigil (see number 8 above).
18. The celebration of the baptismal Scrutinies is not to be omitted from the Period of Purification and Enlightenment; however, in cases of serious pastoral need, the Archbishop can dispense from one or, in extraordinary circumstances, even two of the scrutinies; it is the responsibility of the Pastor of the catechumens to request dispensation from the Archbishop to omit one (or, if absolutely necessary, two) of the scrutinies.
19. For catechumens who will receive the Sacraments of Initiation outside of the Easter Vigil, the necessity of the baptismal scrutinies remains, and the process for dispensation from one or even two of them is the same as found in number 18 above.
20. Children of catechetical age who will receive the Sacraments of Initiation at the same celebration as adults should also celebrate the scrutinies with them according to the rites found in Chapter I of the OCIA; in the celebrations of catechumens who are children of catechetical age only, the rites for the scrutinies are found in Chapter II of the OCIA.
21. The rites of Handing on of the Creed and of the Lord's Prayer, celebrated respectively following the first and third scrutiny, are not to be omitted, and should be celebrated the week following the respective scrutiny, either within Mass or a Celebration of the Word.
22. A deacon may not preside over the celebration of the scrutinies during Mass, but may, when extraordinary circumstances require it, celebrate the scrutinies outside of Mass; however, when a priest is present, the priest himself must administer the scrutinies.
23. The Elect should participate in the Rites of Immediate Preparation on Holy Saturday unless serious needs prevent them from doing so; they should also, whenever possible, observe the Paschal fast, prescribed for all the faithful, from Good Friday through the celebration of the Easter Vigil (see the Roman Missal, The Sacred Paschal Triduum, number 1).
24. The celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation for the Elect at the Easter Vigil should not ordinarily be combined with the reception of baptized candidates into full communion, in order to preserve the baptismal character of the Easter Vigil.
25. When recourse must be made to combining the rites of initiation with the rites of reception into full communion, the rites found in the OCIA in Appendix I, number 4, should be faithfully employed while always maintaining the sacramental distinction between the two groups.



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26. The celebration of Confirmation by previously-baptized Catholic adults is not to take place at the Easter Vigil, but must take place either at the annual Adult Confirmation Mass celebrated by the Archbishop at the Cathedral on Pentecost Sunday, or at the next scheduled Confirmation Mass for the parish, or at an appropriate parish Sunday Mass with the delegation of the faculty to confirm requested of the Archbishop by the Pastor and granted by him to the priest who will confirm.
27. When the delegation of faculty has been granted, the Rite of Confirmation is to be inserted into the Mass of the day.

PERIOD OF MYSTAGOGY

28. Following the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil, every effort should be made to provide for the newly-baptized (neophytes) a suitable experience of the Period of Mystagogy, observed during the Easter season through Pentecost Sunday.

THOSE ALREADY VALIDLY BAPTIZED

29. Every distinction between those preparing for baptism and those already baptized who are preparing for reception into the Catholic Church or the celebration of Confirmation must be carefully preserved, even in the case of those already baptized yet who have received no Christian formation.
30. Candidates for full communion with the Catholic Church may benefit from participation in the catechetical and spiritual formation of catechumens, but should not be delayed in being received upon demonstration of their readiness to offer their profession of faith.
31. The rites associated with candidates for full communion before being received into full communion, as found in Chapter V of the OCIA, are not required, but may be used when deemed pastorally advantageous.
32. 32. Before being received into full communion (and/or confirmed and admitted to the Eucharist for the first time), candidates are to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation at least once.
33. Candidates for full communion who are Orthodox Christians are to be received into the Catholic Church without undue delay, and are received using only the rites found at numbers 490-492 of Chapter VI of the OCIA.
34. Orthodox Christians who enter into full communion with the Catholic Church are received, even when received using the Latin Rite, into the Catholic Rite corresponding to their former Orthodox Rite.
35. The celebration of reception into full communion should ordinarily not take place at the Easter Vigil (see 24 above).



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36. The reception of baptized Christians into full communion is to be recorded in the “Reception into Full Communion” register which is to be maintained by each parish and stored in the parish archives with the other sacramental registers of the parish; additionally, the information should be cross-referenced in the parish baptismal and confirmation registers.

CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE

37. The term OCIA applies to both adults and children having reached the age of discretion and catechesis; the term OCIC should not be used, as it is not a proper ritual or liturgical term.
38. For children of catechetical age who have not been baptized, their preparation for the sacraments should be carefully planned and never rushed, and the rites used in situations exclusive of them will be found in Chapter II of the OCIA.
39. When the parish OCIA ministry brings adults and children of catechetical age together for the rites, the rites of Chapter I are used.
40. It is permissible to serve two tracks of the OCIA — one for adults (employing the rites of Chapter I of the OCIA) and another for children of catechetical age (employing the rites of Chapter II of the OCIA) — including separate celebrations of the sacraments of initiation.
41. It is permissible, for pastoral advantage, to defer the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation of children of catechetical age to that time when children normally receive Confirmation from the Archbishop or his delegate; it is likewise permissible for their First Communion to be deferred to reception within their class of peers, especially if it is soon to take place (e.g., during the Easter season).