

Diocese of Covington
RCIA Policies and Guidelines Manual
Evangelization

IV. Evangelization

- A. The Church exists to evangelize** – Christ charged his Apostles with the command to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (MT 28:19-20) Therefore, it is our duty to evangelize and bring people to Christ by our own ongoing conversion and by testimony of life (CCC, no. 905; LG, no. 35). This is the first step in the RCIA process – to evangelize those around us so that they will be moved to inquire about the Catholic Church and the RCIA process. The following sections provide guidance and suggestions for a parish’s evangelization efforts.
- B. Evangelizing the parish to evangelize** – The whole parish, every member of the believing community, should heed the words of Christ in the closing of Matthew’s Gospel, and all should be involved in evangelizing and bringing others to Christ in His Church. The following are suggestions for pastors and RCIA leaders to use in order to get parish members more aware of and involved in the RCIA process, thereby raising their awareness of their own need to evangelize.
1. Increase adult faith formation efforts in the parish so that parishioners have a strong foundation of faith. An increased knowledge of our faith would better equip parents, giving them confidence in passing on the faith to their children. This should result in increased retention of educated young adults who are knowledgeable and excited about the faith. *You cannot pass on what you do not have.*
 2. Ask an RCIA team member, sponsor, or new member to give a short witness talk following parish faith-based activities or retreats (e.g., a parish Bible Study). The talk should encourage those on fire with the faith from their recent experience or retreat to go out and invite others to consider the Catholic faith.
 3. Send periodic emails or publish eye-catching notices in the parish bulletin to encourage the laity to fulfill their baptismal responsibility of evangelization. Teach parishioners to take an active role in evangelization and particularly the RCIA process.

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4. Utilize personal witness comments from past RCIA participants to encourage parishioners to invite someone they know to join the RCIA journey of faith. These may be published in parish bulletins, distributed via email, posted on bulletin boards or parish websites, or delivered by witness talks at Masses or other parish gatherings.
 5. Invite those who may be considering joining the church to attend parish-sponsored devotionals (e.g., Rosary, Stations of the Cross, and Divine Mercy), speakers, and social events. Then remind the members of the parish to recognize and welcome them.
 6. Include a monthly petition in the general intercessions at Masses asking God to send more people to join the RCIA journey and for the success of the RCIA process throughout the year.
 7. Call for a parish day of prayer and fasting for more people to enter the RCIA process and for the success of the RCIA throughout the year.
 8. Assign parishioners as prayer sponsors to pray for the ongoing conversion of each person in the RCIA process.
 9. Display pictures of the catechumens and candidates in church to familiarize the parish with them and with the RCIA process.
 10. Ask parishioners to give personal testimonies of faith at RCIA sessions. (e.g., someone who experienced Christ's grace during the anointing of the sick could be a personal witness to the reality and power of this sacrament)
 11. Participate in a diocesan 'Evangelization Sunday' event where speakers give a witness about RCIA at Sunday Masses in the parishes and information is made available about the RCIA process in the parish.
- C. Invitation** – Pastors, RCIA leaders, and others in the parish should look for specific opportunities to invite those who are not Catholic to inquire about the Church through the RCIA:
1. Research all parish records to identify non-Catholic family members. Personally invite people on this list to inquire about becoming Catholic. This can be accomplished by a letter or phone call from the pastor or RCIA leader. Although all parishioners should be encouraged to invite, the priest's personal invitation can be extremely effective.
 2. Use funerals as opportunities for conversion or invitation to non-Catholic friends or family members of the deceased.

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3. Use weddings as opportunities for conversion or invitation to non-Catholic friends or family members of the bride and groom.
4. Use sacramental preparation programs or meetings as opportunities to invite non-Catholic family members to consider joining the Church. Information or brochures regarding RCIA should be available at parent meetings for Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation preparation and at Marriage preparation sessions. A brief talk about RCIA could also be given by the pastor or RCIA leader at these events.
5. Invite RCIA neophytes or those who have been through RCIA in the recent past (new members or sponsors) to give brief witness talks at Masses periodically or at least on one Sunday each year. The speaker would share something about his or her spiritual journey in the RCIA and invite others to make the journey. An opportunity should be given to meet the speaker or another person involved in RCIA after Mass and printed information about the RCIA process should also be available. This could be in conjunction with an 'Evangelization Sunday' throughout the diocese or may be something planned at the parish level. The focus should be on inviting non-Catholics to inquire about the Church and Catholics to invite someone to inquire. The priest may even find a way to build a message about evangelization into the homily that day.
6. Build a social event or activity into the early stage of the RCIA process. The social element is important in fostering early cohesiveness within the RCIA group and provides an opportunity for additional invitations to those still considering inquiring.
7. Invite those who are considering RCIA to attend Eucharistic adoration, which is open to people of all faiths. This could result in a conversion experience where God can speak and be heard. During the RCIA process, Eucharistic adoration can help the participants discern whether to enter the next stage of the process.

D. Publicity – The Church, the parish, and the RCIA process should be publicized and "marketed" to the whole community, so that we are constantly extending an open invitation for people to inquire about Christ, the Catholic faith and the Catholic Church.

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1. Have an RCIA brochure available to provide essential information describing the process and contact information. (See “RCIA in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Covington” brochure in the Appendix of this section.)
2. Use the church marquee to display a message of invitation to inquire about the Catholic Church or to come in and join us for Mass. Change announcements often, get creative.
3. Include a statement on church bulletins and websites which provides information about RCIA and the contact information for the RCIA leader and/or pastor. Be sure people do not have to wait until next September to begin RCIA. Develop a strategy for year round inquiry and pre-catechumenate.
4. Create an RCIA information table in the church or vestibule which contains information on what RCIA is, whom to call, and how to begin the process.
5. Have RCIA business cards available which can be given to anyone interested in becoming Catholic. Cards should give contact information for the pastor or RCIA leader.
6. Utilize social media. Create a Facebook page for RCIA that could include: upcoming events, photos of the participants, links to well-respected Catholic pages such as EWTN, Word on Fire and The Vatican. Create a Twitter account in order to communicate rapidly and provide timely articles to the RCIA group and parish. Facebook and Twitter may be effective in reaching teens and young adults.
7. Priests and all the faithful should speak publicly about RCIA outside of the parishes. Everywhere they go they need to inform people about RCIA.
8. Run ads in the Enquirer, Recorder (and other local papers) on a year round basis.
9. New members of the parish should receive a new parishioner package containing an RCIA pamphlet explaining the RCIA process. *Note:* Include the use of Holy Scripture in material targeted to inviting non-Catholics. This demonstrates the reverence the Catholic Church has for scripture.

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- E. Suggestions to be handled at the Diocesan level for use by parishes:**
1. Utilize Sacred Heart Radio, The Messenger, and local publications to invite people to inquire about the Catholic Church at their local parish. Ads could be run in the spring and summer to generate interest for those parishes that begin their catechumenate in August or September.
 2. Ask RCIA team members or new members to give a short witness talk at all Diocesan marriage preparation (pre-Cana) sessions to extend an invitation to non-catholic participants to inquire about the Catholic Church. This may be more powerful and effective than the future spouse asking or may reinforce an invitation already made by the Catholic future spouse.

