

Diocese of Covington
RCIA Policies and Guidelines Manual
Rite of Acceptance/Rite of Welcome

VIII. Rite of Acceptance / Rite of Welcome

- A.** After the period of inquiry, when the inquirers are ready, the Church celebrates the rite of acceptance for the unbaptized or the rite of welcome for those validly baptized non-Catholic.
- B. Pastoral Aspect**
1. The celebration of the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens should be delayed until the inquirers have had sufficient time to conceive an initial faith and to show the first signs of conversion. (RCIA, no. 18) (See Precatechumenate section VII.B.1 – 6 for more on discernment of readiness.)
 2. The rite of acceptance is a very significant step, so much so that for the catechumens (the unbaptized), “One who dies during the catechumenate receives a Christian burial.” (RCIA, no. 47)
 3. After the rite of acceptance until their Baptism, catechumens are dismissed after the Liturgy of the Word to break open the Word with a team member or another designated person. Candidates may also be dismissed along with the catechumens. Since they are unable to participate fully in the Eucharist, this gives the catechumens and candidates an opportunity to be nourished by the Word of God and reflect on its meaning in their lives.
 4. This rite can be celebrated as often as needed throughout the year as inquirers are discerned ready to take this step in the RCIA process.
- C. Catechetical Aspect** – Those who are to celebrate the rites should receive instruction about the rite, the details of its celebration, and its significance in their lives and in the RCIA process.
- D. Liturgical Aspect**
1. There is a rite of acceptance to be celebrated only for inquirers (unbaptized). (RCIA, nos. 48 – 74)
 2. There is a rite of welcome to be celebrated only for candidates (validly baptized non-Catholics). (RCIA, nos. 416 – 433)
 3. A combined rite of acceptance and welcome is celebrated when some are inquirers (unbaptized) and some are candidates (validly baptized non-Catholic). (RCIA, nos. 507 – 529) When using the combined rite, it is important to make a distinction between the *baptized* and *unbaptized*. (RCIA, no. 506)

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4. These rites are celebrated within the Sunday Mass when the community is assembled. The inquirers declare their desire to become members of the Catholic Church in the presence of the parish priest and the parish community. The church then welcomes them into the next phase of the RCIA process – the catechumenate. Those who are unbaptized are now *catechumens* and those validly baptized non-Catholic are now *candidates* for reception into the full communion of the Church. The parish community agrees to support the catechumens and candidates. (RCIA, nos. 41-47, 411-415, 505-506)
 5. The RCIA ritual book suggests three possible locations for the beginning of the rite.
 - a) Outside the church building (for rite of acceptance only or combined rite of acceptance and welcome)
 - b) Inside the entrance of the church (for rite of acceptance only or combined rite of acceptance and welcome)
 - c) “. . . with candidates seated in a prominent place among the faithful” (RCIA, no. 416) (for rite of welcome only)
 - d) Some other suitable site
- E.** A priest or deacon, following the ritual rubric, speaks of welcome and joy to the inquirers and/or baptized candidates. (RCIA, no. 48)
1. It is desirable that these rites take part with the entire Christian community or some part, consisting of friends and relatives of the inquirers and/or candidates. The presiding celebrant is a priest or a deacon. The sponsors attend and present the inquirers and/or candidates.
 2. These rites consist of the reception of the inquirers and/or candidates, the celebration of the Word of God and the dismissal of the catechumens and/or candidates. Celebration of the Eucharist may follow.

Notes
