

Order of Christian Initiation for Adults

- Are you interested in learning more about the Catholic Church?
- Are you unbaptized but recognize a need for spiritual dimension in your life?
- Are you baptized Catholic or baptized into another Christian tradition but have never received any formal religious education?
- Are you baptized into another Christian tradition and considering the possibility of becoming Catholic?
- Are you married to a Catholic and attend Mass but don't know what the next step is to becoming Catholic yourself?
- Are you baptized Catholic and your children are desiring to be baptized Catholic?

If you answered “yes” to any of the above questions, the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA) is the place for you. Every year adults are welcomed into the Church through Christian Initiation. The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults is a conversion process in which doctrinal instruction and spiritual formation bring you into a deeper relationship with Christ, and into full membership in the Catholic community of faith. Please contact Jaclyn Brown, 785.625.7339, ext 108 or email jbrown@ihm-church.com

WHAT IF MY WHOLE FAMILY WANTS TO BECOME CATHOLIC?

We have a Family Plan! At Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, we have Christian Initiation for Adults, Teens and Children. The entire family can learn about the Catholic faith and be prepared to receive their sacraments. The teaching is adapted to fit each age group. See below for information about the process for teens and children.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION ADAPTED FOR FAMILIES

If you have **unbaptized** children and/or teens from grades three through twelve, the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults Adapted for Families is for you! As parents, one of your most essential responsibilities before God is to raise your children in a Christian home where they learn to develop a relationship with God and live out a Christian life in the family, the Church, and society.

If you have **baptized** children and/or teens from grades three through twelve, who have not received their First Communion (typically completed in 2nd grade) and/or Confirmation (typically completed in 8th grade), the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults Adapted for Families is for you! As parents, one of your most essential responsibilities before God is to raise your children in a Christian home where they learn to develop a relationship with God and live out a Christian life in the family, the Church, and society.

Christian Initiation Adapted for Families process allows you as parents to deepen your relationship with Christ and grow in your faith as you accompany your children/teens on their faith journeys. For more information, please contact Jaclyn Brown, 785.625.7339, ext 108 or email jbrown@ihm-church.com

Pre-catechumenate and Evangelization

Welcome to Discovering Catholicism! We are excited to have you join us in discovering what the Catholic Church is all about. For many of us, we are searching for a place where we belong. Our lives have been empty, and we do not know the meaning of life. Or we are looking for happiness, attaching ourselves to the next best thing, job promotion, an RV, boat, or perhaps starting a new life, but we still feel empty.

This no obligation to join the Catholic Faith is a time for you to meet other Catholics and begin to participate in the parish life of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church. We will connect you with a sponsor from the parish who will walk with you and attend parish/social events, devotions, and even Sunday Mass every weekend.

It is necessary for parents to accompany your child(ren) on this journey of Christian Initiation. This journey allows you to deepen your relationship with Christ and grow in your faith as you accompany your children/teens on their faith journeys. Even though the parents are the one accompanying their child in this faith journey, there will still be an appointed sponsor to walk with your family on this journey.

Catechumenate

Once you are beyond Discovering Catholicism and ready to dive deep into what the Catholic Church teaches, we move to the Catechumenate stage. This is a more formal catechesis that teaches Catholic doctrine: what do we believe. We spend a lot of time in this period to give you the head knowledge of the Catholic Church. This stage is the longest period as there will be several phases that each person will move through as they progress through the process, growing a deeper understanding and knowledge of the Catholic Faith through each phase.

Again, there is no obligation to join the Catholic Church, but this phase initiates the process towards becoming part of the Catholic Church. Again, we will connect you with a sponsor from the parish who will walk with you and attend Sunday Mass every week.

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Purification and Enlightenment

At this point in the process, teaching Catholic Church doctrine ceases and we move into a period of more intense spiritual preparation, meaning we are in the immediate preparation to receive the Sacraments of Initiation. The foundation has been laid and is now built upon, as we go deeper into relationship with Christ through prayer and reflection. This time we prepare your heart to receive the sacraments and to reveal to you the beauty of your relationship with Christ.

This is the time when your decision to join the Catholic Church is a definitive YES! Typically this stage is during Lent, the 6 weeks leading up to Easter. During this time, there are several liturgical rites, one of which you are sent to the bishop of the diocese. With great honor he is excited to meet you and to pray for as you as you near the Easter Vigil. Then at the Easter Vigil will be when you are received into the Catholic Church and receive the Sacraments of Initiation.

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Mystagogy

After you received the Sacraments of Initiation, we accompany you in your Christian life as a Catholic for your first year. We welcome you to become involve in the Catholic Community through social and prayer groups/events. Formal meetings may cease during this period, but we do gather in reunion throughout your first year to check in with you and just to see how things are going.

We encourage you to become active in the parish life community by serving on committees, helping with formation of others, and serving in various parish ministries. There are various social groups to become involved in or even an opportunity to create your own social group. This is Stewardship! We give of our time, talent, and treasure. As part of the Stewardship to the parish in these three areas, we help our parish and Catholic schools to operate and be thankful for the many blessings to our Catholic community.

As a family, you can grow more in love of Jesus Christ and each other, the domestic church, by giving back to your parish community. What a witness to your parish family to love, support, and participate in a dynamic life way of

life. Your children can flourish, knowing that they have a place they belong and can share the fruits of the hard work you as parents put into their formal religious education!

EXPECTATIONS

This journey you are on is your journey. Your journey toward the Sacraments of Initiation is based on your desire and discernment. **There is no deadline that is set to when you are received into the church.** We truly desire that you have a tangible discernment experience that leads you to personally want this for yourself. We will walk (not run) with you at your pace, on your time. Our ultimate goal is to help you get to heaven and your desire to want to help others get to heaven. We are here to make you a disciple of Christ and in turn, the fire from within burns so bright that you want others whom you meet, work, and live with to have this same fire and become a disciple of Christ.

For those that are unbaptized, the Sacraments of Initiation happen only at the Easter Vigil. The Easter Vigil is a beautiful liturgy that takes us through the whole story of salvation history to lead us to the resurrection, the whole meaning of Easter, Jesus dying and rising from the dead.

For those validly baptized in another faith, receiving the Sacraments of Eucharist and/or Confirmation, could take place at the Easter Vigil, but in other circumstances, another appropriate date could be used. A Profession of Faith, meaning I truly believe what the Catholic Church teaches, will take place prior to receiving the Sacraments.

For those already baptized Catholic, and beyond the age of 7 years old, receiving the Sacraments of Eucharist and/or Confirmation, could take place at the Easter Vigil, but in other circumstances, another appropriate date could be used.

Mass Attendance

The Mass is the highest form of prayer in the Catholic Church! As a part of your journey, it is important for you to attend Mass every weekend, either Saturday evening or Sunday. Even though you will not be able to receive the Eucharist during communion, you may go forward, with your arms crossed across your chest, and receive a blessing until you have received your sacraments. If possible, Mass should be attended at Immaculate Heart of Mary parish. Mass times: Saturday at 4:00 pm. Sundays at 8:00 am, 10:00 am, Noon (Spanish), 6:00 pm.

During the school year, for children/teens, between the ages of 8-18, and living at home, it is necessary that your child fill out a Mass attendance card, and place in the collection basket during the Mass. If you attend another Catholic Church outside of Hays, you can grab bulletin, have the priest sign it and bring to class. Another way we can track attendance is if you attend Mass in another parish/town, take a selfie at the church, being sure to capture in the background either the outside architecture, the inside with the sanctuary or some sort of window, statue, or art, or *even a picture with the priest!* Then, if you are willing to give us permission, we will periodically share in a Flocknote newsletter the various places our parishioners have travelled and the interesting places they have attended Mass.

One nice thing about the Catholic Church is that it is universal. So no matter where attend Mass at a Catholic Church, in whatever language, you will find the Mass is exactly the same as here at Immaculate Heart. The readings for the day are the exact same in all the Catholic Churches around the world. So when we travel, there are always a Catholic Church nearby. **To assist you in finding a Catholic church wherever you travel, visit masstimes.org.**

As Catholics, there are other times that we attend Mass outside of the regular Sunday time. These days are called Holy Days of Obligation. These are days the Church has identified as principal liturgical feasts honoring the mysteries of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the saints. These important days are:

August 15-Assumption

November 1-All Saint's Day

December 8-Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

December 25-Christmas

January 1-Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

In some diocese, the Ascension is recognized as a Holy Day of Obligation, usually celebrated the 6th Thursday after Easter Sunday. In our diocese (Diocese of Salina) this holy day is moved to Sunday.

Praying through OCIA

Prayer is at the heart of a Christian's life of faith, and the discipline of dedicated and intentional prayer will make your experience of OCIA truly beautiful and transformative. It is in prayer that you will intimately encounter God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he will be your teacher and guide. Pray every day, even if only briefly. If you struggle with prayer, do not be discouraged; throughout the OCIA process we will help you cultivate a personal and life-giving prayer life.

What will we read in OCIA?

The Bible: The Catholic Church believes that the study of Scripture is the “very soul of sacred theology.” Thus, the OCIA experience is immersed in Scripture. Even if you are unfamiliar with the Bible, we encourage you to begin personal reading and study of Scripture, especially the Gospels, in preparation for OCIA. Read it every day. The best way to read the scriptures every day is to attend daily Mass, but we know lives are busy and we can't fit that into our schedule. But, you can still access the daily readings online from reputable sources like usccb.org or etwn.org. There is also an awesome podcast done by Fr. Mike Schmitz, call the Bible in a Year podcast. What is nice about this podcast is you can listen to it anywhere, and he gives some great insight into what the readings mean. Fr. Mike doesn't follow the daily Mass reading schedule, but you will still get through the bible in a year. We ask that you invest in a Catholic bible for you so that you can have it at home and bring each week to class. There are many translations of the bible and so the big thing is making sure it is a Catholic bible, because there is a difference.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church: The *Catechism*, promulgated in 1997, “aims at presenting an organic synthesis of the essential and fundamental contents of Catholic doctrine.” This text draws primarily from “the Sacred Scriptures, the Fathers of the Church, the liturgy, and the Church's Magisterium.” Everything we explore in OCIA will be found within the *Catechism*. We will also invest in a *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for you.

“Of course, this is always an adventure, but life can be successful only if we have the courage to be adventurous, trusting that the Lord will never leave me alone, that the Lord will go with me and help me.”

-Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

Marriage, Annulments, and Divorce

We will work with those who are married or have been married on a case-by-case basis. Every situation is unique and so we will work with you on any living together situations, marriages, annulments, and divorce.

*** Note: Baptized Catholics who are either cohabitating or married outside the Catholic Church should refrain from receiving any Sacraments until their marriage is validated in the Church. Non-Catholics who are either cohabitating, or who are married specifically to a Catholic outside the Catholic Church, should also refrain from receiving any Sacraments until their marriage is validated in the Church.**

Any other extenuating circumstances, we will work with you on a case-by-case basis. Again, your faith journey is yours and we are here to help, support, walk, and pray with/for you. Your faith journey is tailored to you!!