



# Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

## Background

### Why it matters

By this ritual, those who have inquired about becoming Christians enter into the Order of Catechumens. Although they are unbaptised:

- They become part of the household of Christ because they are nourished by the word of God and sustained by liturgical celebrations
- A distinct rite of marriage is used when two catechumens marry or when a catechumen marries an unbaptised person
- A catechumen who dies receives a Christian burial

### Discernment of readiness

You are to discern with those who have inquired about becoming Christian whether the following have occurred during the period of evangelisation:

- The beginnings of the spiritual life and fundamentals of Christian teaching have taken root
- Evidence of first faith and an initial conversion and intention to enter into a relationship with God in Christ
- Evidence of the first stirrings of repentance
- A start to calling upon God in prayer
- A sense of the Church
- Some experience of the community of Christians through the parish

### When to celebrate this ritual

This rite is celebrated at a time suited to local conditions. You want to welcome inquirers at any time and the catechumenate is to last as long as is necessary. However, if you anticipate someone being ready for baptism at the following Easter Vigil, you will want to hold the Rite of Acceptance before the start of Advent of the previous year.

## The rite itself

The rite itself is found on pages 17 – 35 in the RCIA book. Contact [worship@adelaide.catholic.org.au](mailto:worship@adelaide.catholic.org.au) if you do not have a copy or require a printout for planning purposes.

### Prepare this rite

The rite is DYNAMIC and has the potential to be powerful for those about to become catechumens and for your entire community. Take time to prepare in advance:

- Familiarise yourself with the rite by reading the introduction and the rite and its rubrics
- Think through how you want to stage it
- Enlist the other ministers to collaborate with you and to practice
- Refer to any of these preparation tools about the Rite of Acceptance from Team Initiation:
  - [Rite of Acceptance – Team Initiation](#)
  - [A checklist for preparing the Rite of Acceptance](#)

### Key points to keep in mind

- The rite has two high points
  - Signing with the cross and entrance into the church
  - Intercessions for the catechumens
- Initially the celebrant with some of the faithful move out to meet the candidates for the catechumenate and their sponsors. If you adapt to ensure people can see and hear, be sure to retain the concept by choosing a suitable place within the church to go to and then, after the rite, to invite the catechumens in to hear the word of God.
- The dialogue preceding the signing with the cross is not fixed. The candidates should be prepared in advance to reflect upon the questions and have their own answers. The celebrant should know something of them and their story so that he can authentically engage in the dialogue. Use the texts in the book as a guide.
- All the movements and responses can be supported by a cantor or musicians 🎵
- After inviting the catechumens to join the Liturgy of the Word, the lectionary is carried in procession to the lectern, where it may be incensed
- The intercessions are not general or universal, they are particular to the catechumens. If you wish to omit the general intercessions of the Mass after the homily, you may add those intentions following the intentions for the catechumens

### Rehearsal and Reflection

Rehearse with the musicians, servers, and sponsors, NOT with the seekers. Their preparation is spiritual. Invite catechumens to reflect on the experience afterwards – what they experienced, how it connects to the Christian story, what it means for them going forward.