

Frequently Asked Questions about How to Become a Catholic

Welcome! We are glad that you are interested in finding out more about the Catholic Church and we hope that this introduction will lead you to discover more

How do I find out about Catholic Christianity?

One of the best ways is to contact a Catholic parish near you to let them know that you are interested in finding out more about Catholic Christianity. You will be invited to join with others like yourself as you inquire into what "being a Catholic Christian" is all about: who we are, what we believe, how we pray, how we live our lives, and more.

What if I think that I want to become a Catholic Christian?

We believe that God calls individuals to live the Good News Jesus proclaimed and to become his disciples as members of the Catholic Church. If you want to become a Catholic Christian, you will participate in a process called the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (sometimes called RCIA or simply Christian initiation). Adults or children who have reached the age of reason (about 7 years old) learn about the teachings of Jesus as the Catholic Church has handed them on and put these teachings into practice by living as part of the Catholic community, praying and serving others.

What does initiation into the Catholic faith entail?

If you have not been baptized, the Christian initiation process prepares you to become a Catholic Christian by celebrating what we call the sacraments of Christian initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist or Holy Communion.

If you were baptized in another Christian tradition, the initiation process prepares you to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church by celebrating the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist or Holy Communion.

Finally, if you were baptized in the Catholic Church but never received any other sacraments, the RCIA process prepares you for the completion of Christian initiation by celebrating the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist or Holy Communion.

How long does it take to become a Catholic Christian?

Being a Catholic Christian is a life-long commitment. Therefore, in order to prepare to take this step, the Christian initiation process typically lasts from one to two years for the unbaptized, and from a few months to a year for baptized Christians from other traditions. Participants in the initiation process generally meet once or twice each week, including part of the Mass on Sunday, but each parish initiation schedule varies. The initiation of persons who are ready to become new members of the Catholic Church usually takes place at Easter (in March or April), although sometimes persons become members of the Catholic Church at other times throughout the year.

What if I change my mind?

You do not make any commitment or obligation by inquiring about Catholic Christianity or beginning the Christian initiation process. We want you to take the time you need as you think about becoming a Catholic Christian and we respect your decision to stop or to say, "not right now" at any time. While we love being Catholic Christians and hope that others will also want to become members of the Catholic Church, we do not exert pressure on anyone to do so. Our hope would be that at the very least, you would come to a greater appreciation of Catholic Christian beliefs and practices.