

BECOMING CATHOLIC



How does somebody become a Catholic? A lot of Catholics are Catholic because their family is Catholic. We were born to Catholic parents, baptized as babies, and brought up “in the Church.” But what about the person who was raised in a different Christian tradition (e.g. Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, etc...), or someone who wasn't raised in the faith at all? What about the person who was baptized as a baby, but, for whatever reason, missed a Sacrament or two along the way (like First Holy Communion or Confirmation)?

Becoming Catholic means more than just registering to belong to a parish. We want to invite people into a journey of faith that is about getting to know Jesus Christ and learning about the Church that he founded. It's a journey of discovery, a journey of conversion. Ultimately, it's a journey towards discipleship!

This journey of becoming Catholic has been known for a long time as the RCIA, or Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. As Our Lady of Lourdes continues to work to build a culture of discipleship, we are excited to announce a new approach to the process of helping people become fully initiated members of the Catholic Church. This year we are launching two new programs designed to help everyone from the life-long Catholic all the way to the most skeptical of seekers, grow in a relationship with Jesus and in their understanding of the Catholic faith.

The first new program is called Alpha. Held over the course of 10 weeks, Alpha is a series of sessions designed to explore the basics of the Christian faith. Each session looks at a different question about the faith and is designed to create conversation. It's an open, informal, and honest space to explore and discuss life's big questions together. While Alpha is perfect for someone who is exploring whether or not Christianity is right for them, it's also a great opportunity for the life-long Catholic to learn more about what we believe and why. Dinner is included and childcare will be provided for a small fee. Alpha begins Thursday, September 27, at 6:00pm in the Parish Activity Center.



The logo features the word "Catholicism" in white text on a green rectangular background.The logo features the number "101" in white text on a blue rectangular background.

The other new program, Catholicism 101, is a chance to dig deeper into the teachings of the Catholic Church. Covering such topics as the origin and meaning of the Bible, the Sacraments, the Mass, the Saints, and Catholic Morality, Catholicism 101 is an opportunity to explore the Catholic faith, or to catch up on what you might have missed in Sunday School. Catholicism 101 begins in January, 2019.

In the Spring, people who are ready to be fully initiated in the Church (through one or more of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist), will participate in the final stages of the RCIA – the formal process by which an adult enters the Catholic Church. Ordinarily, by the time someone starts the RCIA, they will have participated in Alpha and Catholicism 101. Through a series of liturgical rites and small group discussions, those who are coming into the Church will be prepared to receive the sacraments at the Easter Vigil.



So how can you help somebody who might be thinking about joining the Church take the next step? First of all, **PRAY!** Pray for the people in your life who you think the Lord might be calling to a deeper relationship with himself and with his Church. Then, don't be afraid to **SHARE** your Catholic faith and the ways it has enriched your life! People will be drawn in when they see the difference your faith has made in your life. Finally, don't be afraid to **INVITE** people. Do you have a neighbor or a co-worker that you

think might be interested in Alpha? Invite them to join you to check it out. Has your spouse or someone in your family mentioned becoming Catholic? Now is the time to ask them if they'd like to talk to somebody about taking the next step. You might be surprised by the power of your invitation!

The first step for someone who wants to learn more about joining the Catholic Church is to set up a time to talk with someone in the parish office. We want to get to know them and help them get to know Our Lady of Lourdes. We will work with individuals to plot out a course that makes sense for them.



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