How to Become a Catholic
How long will it take?

- As long as you need it to take
- For those who are not baptized it will be a minimum of one year
- For those previously baptized, it will depend on your previous exposure to Christianity.
There is one baptism

If you are baptized in another Christian tradition then:

- You will not be re-baptized
- The date of your initiation into the Catholic Faith will depend on your need for Christian formation as a Catholic
- When you are initiated into the church you will be confirmed and receive first Eucharist
Your First Steps

• Reading this presentation and visiting this internet site
• Contacting RCIA Director: Annie McEntee rcia@saint-mikes.org or 804 527-1037 X48
• Attending an Inquiry session
Inquiry

- An informal period of questions and answers
- Sessions informally seek to answer questions about the Catholic faith
- A period of sharing our stories that led us to this moment of seeking God’s call in our lives
- Lasts as long as is needed, maybe weeks or months
- Ends when the inquirer discerns they are ready to take the first step in becoming Catholic
Rite of Acceptance/Welcoming

- Celebrated at the end of the Inquiry period
- The first step to become Catholic
- A public proclamation that the inquirer is ready to pursue life in the Catholic church
- Marked by a realization that God has acted in the inquirer’s life by noticeable changes in prayer or faith centered deeds
- Rite of Acceptance is for those not previously baptized
- Rite of Welcoming is for those baptized in another Christian faith tradition (Optional)
Catechumenate

- Period begins after the Rite of Acceptance/Welcoming
- Those who are not baptized are now called catechumens
- Those previously baptized are now called candidates
- This is a period of more intense study
- Catechumens and candidates are exposed to more formal teaching on the truths of the Catholic Faith
- Time is spent also on scriptural reflection and prayer
- For those who are previously baptized this period will last as long as needed, ending in discernment and initiation into the Catholic faith
- For persons who are not baptized this period will last at least a year.
Rite of Election

• Celebrated at the Cathedral the first Sunday of Lent for those to be baptized
• Marks the end of the Catechumenate Period
• Bishop calls seekers to the Easter sacraments of initiation
• Those seeking Baptism sign the book of the Elect
• Catechumens now known as “The Elect”
Purification and Enlightenment

- 40 days before Easter
- Coincides with Lent
- Marked by three scrutinies for those not baptized, a time to reflect on God’s call to conversion
- A time of prayer and reflection
Easter

- Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated at the Easter Vigil
- Those who are not previously baptized receive Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist
Mystagogia

- A period of reflection on the Easter mysteries
- Begin the process of becoming full and active members of the Church
Addendum
What is RCIA?

• Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
• Developed by the Catholic church for those who are not previously baptized and adapted for those baptized in another faith tradition.
• Based on the Christian Initiation celebrated in the early Christian Church
• Adapted for children over the age of reason who are not baptized, or were baptized in another faith tradition
Sacraments of Initiation

- **Baptism**: Basis for the Christian life, we are freed from sins, reborn as children of God, incorporated into the church.

- **Confirmation**: Necessary for the completion of Baptismal grace, perfects bond to the Church, enriches with a special strength of the Holy Spirit.

- **Eucharist**: Source and summit of the Christian life, Christ himself our Pasch, communion in the divine life and unity with the people of God.