



Part I
Building and Leading the Team

Part II
Walking with People
in Real-Life Situations

Part III
Administration and
Keeping It All Together

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2.2a

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A reading from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew 13:44-48a

Jesus said to his disciples...

“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field,
which a person finds and hides again,
and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like
a merchant searching for fine pearls.
When he finds a pearl of great price,
he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea,
which collects fish of every kind.
When it is full they haul it ashore and sit down
to put what is good into buckets.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

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Lord of the harvest and the sea,
you call your Church to cast wide the net of your Kingdom,
welcoming all who are drawn to your love.

Today, as we reflect on the ministry of inquiry
and the pathways of formation,
we ask for your Spirit to guide us.

Give us open hearts to receive each person's story,
wisdom to discern their readiness,
and compassion to walk with them in patience.

May our parishes be places of welcome, healing, and joy,
where seekers find a home and disciples grow in faith.

Bless our work today,
that we may serve faithfully in building up the Body of Christ
and drawing all people into the embrace of your mercy.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Inquiry and the Precatechumenate

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Inquiry and the Precatechumenate

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When do people inquire?



When the Holy Spirit is active in their life!

When the Spirit stirs them to ask deeper questions . . .

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When do people inquire?



Liturgical Celebrations
Christmas, Easter, Sacraments

Life-Changing Events
*Death, Illness, Loss of a Job,
Birth of a Child,
Move/Transitions*

So, we need to be our best selves – liturgy, music, preaching, hospitality!

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When do people inquire?



Not necessarily on our schedule . . .

We must be ready to respond!

The goal is radical hospitality from the start!

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How Inquirers Find Us

Website, Social Media, Bulletin, Worship Aid

“OCIA” is insider language! →

Phone or Email

Ask Someone at the Parish
Pastor, Hospitality Ministers,
Parishioner They Know

Stop by Office

Registration Forms

Signage



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What's Your Approach?

We used to have...

Bulletin / Mass Announcement

August/September = "classes begin"

Inquiry Session

*scheduled on a certain date/time
advertised in bulletin
team members hoping
people show up*

One-on-One Meeting with Inquirers

Now we have...

QR Code

*outside the church, on the church van,
on the weekly worship aid (especially Christmas, Easter, First Communion,
Confirmation, Palm Sunday, Ash Wednesday)*

Social Media Posts

paid/sponsored; geared toward those in our zip codes

Emails

Phone Calls

Meet Me After Mass

One-on-One Meeting with Inquirers

Inquiry Session

*scheduled on a specific date/time (when people say they are available)
advertised in bulletin and social media*

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Welcoming Inquirers

Hospitality Training
for "First Welcomers"
office staff, receptionists, etc.

Importance of
Prompt Response

Meet as Soon as Possible!
in person, phone, video-chat



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Initial Meeting:

Ask Open-Ended Questions

- Can you tell me about yourself?
- Can you tell me a bit about your spiritual journey up to this point? Were you raised in a religious tradition or community? What was that like?
- What brings you to our parish? What are you seeking at this time?
- How would you describe who God is to you?
- If you could ask God one question that you know God would answer right away, what would it be and why?

This conversation should help us gather:

whether they identify with a particular religious tradition

what spiritual questions they have at this time

what they already know / the extent of their "formation", etc.

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How might our parish calendar, ministries, or mindset need to shift to make inquiry a standing invitation at any time of year?



If "evangelize" is an action verb, what concrete steps can each of us take outside the church building to invite others into conversation about faith?



What questions, comments, or take-aways do you have about inquiry?

2.4a

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Baptismal Status

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Baptized or Unbaptized?

- **Has the person been baptized in any Christian tradition? (If so, which one?)**
 - Baptismal church establishes which church or ecclesial community you belong to—this determines your “path” in OCIA.
 - Ask them to request a copy of their baptismal certificate from their baptismal church, unless they already have a copy.
- **Questions of Validity**
 - Baptism with water, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” with Trinitarian Faith.
 - Contact your (Arch)diocesan worship office if further questions if needed.

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“Catechized” / “Uncatechized”

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“Sacramentalized But Unevangelized”

[Many baptized persons] come for catechesis...
without any other initiation into the faith
and still without any explicit personal attachment to Jesus...
This means that “catechesis” must often concern itself
not only with nourishing and teaching the faith,
but also with arousing it unceasingly with the help of grace,
with opening the heart, with converting,
and with preparing total adherence to Jesus
on the part of those who are still on the threshold of faith.

Catechesi tradendae, 19

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Evangelized or Unevangelized?

- The OCIA will use the word “uncatechized” but we should read it as “unevangelized.”
- This is really a question of:
 - Have they heard the basic message of the Gospel (kerygma?)
 - Have they made an initial decision to follow Jesus?
 - Do they have a basic understanding of what the Christian life is all about? Have they begun to change their life to follow Jesus?

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Who's Who?

1. Unbaptized, uncatechized
2. Unbaptized, catechized
3. Baptized in another Christian tradition, uncatechized
4. Baptized in another Christian tradition, catechized
5. Baptized Catholic, uncatechized
6. Baptized in an Orthodox Christian or Eastern Catholic Church.



In a moment,
SORTING FISH
exercise.

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What does the OCIA ask of us?

A process that plans for and respects
the unique journey each person is on.

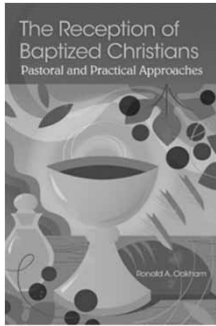
Different Journeys, Different Process →

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	FORMATION	rites
Unbaptized, Uncatechized: <i>Catechumens</i> (at different times, also known as <i>Inquirers, Elect, Neophytes</i>)	Catechumenate	See OCIA Pt. I, Ch 1 All Rites for the Unbaptized
Baptized, Uncatechized:  <i>Candidates</i> (non-Catholic Christian)  <i>Candidates</i> (Catholic, uncatechized)	Catechumenate-like Catechumenate-like	See OCIA Pt. II, Ch 5 Rite of Welcoming + Rite of Reception See OCIA Pt. II, Ch 5 [Rite of Welcoming?] + 1st Comm., Confirmation*
Baptized, Catechized:  <i>Candidates</i> (non-Catholic Christian)  <i>Candidates</i> (Catholic, catechized)	lack of a better phrase “Catholic Classes” CST, Prayer, Liturgy Adult Confirmation Preparation	See OCIA, Pt. II, Ch. 6 [Rite of Welcoming +] Reception into Full Communion Confirmation*

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A Note on Full Communion



resource from LTP

OCIA, 473

The rite by which a person born and baptized in a separated ecclesial Community is received into the full communion of the Catholic Church...

is so arranged that **no further burden is imposed than what is necessary to restore communion and unity.**

Sorting Fish

Who's coming to us?

The reign of heaven being “like a net thrown into the sea, which collects fish of every kind.” Matthew 13:47



Is “OCIA” the right place for everyone?

1. Order of Christian Initiation of Adults ⁽¹⁻²⁵¹⁾
2. Christian Initiation of Children Who Have Reached Catechetical Age ⁽²⁵²⁻³³⁰⁾
3. Simpler Order of Adult Initiation ⁽³³¹⁻³⁶⁹⁾
4. Shorter Order of Adult Initiation to Be Used in Near Danger or at the Point of Death ⁽³⁷⁰⁻³⁹⁹⁾
5. Preparing Adults for Confirmation and the Eucharist Who Were Baptized as Infants and Did Not Receive Catechesis ⁽⁴⁰⁰⁻⁴⁷²⁾
6. Order of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church of Those Already Validly Baptized ⁽⁴⁷³⁻⁵⁰⁴⁾



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Are they a **CATECHUMEN OR CANDIDATE**?
What might **FORMATION** look like for this person?
What other **INFORMATION** do you need? What **NEEDS** can you identify?



2-6

Anna is a fully initiated Catholic who has been away from the Church for almost thirty years.

She left the Church when she married.

As she prepared for marriage, her pastor told her that because of her fiancé's previous marriage, she could not participate in the sacraments if she married him.

She went ahead with the wedding and discontinued participating in church activities.

Now she has been widowed for almost two years and she wants to return.

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Are they a **CATECHUMEN OR CANDIDATE**?
What might **FORMATION** look like for this person?
What other **INFORMATION** do you need? What **NEEDS** can you identify?

Ben was raised in the Middle East with no religious affiliation.

He is unbaptized.

Only since his move to the United States has he come into contact with Christians.

It is through the influence of his neighbor that he came to St. Barnabas inquiring about Catholic Christianity.



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Are they a **CATECHUMEN OR CANDIDATE**?
What might **FORMATION** look like for this person?
What other **INFORMATION** do you need? What **NEEDS** can you identify?



Charlene is the wife of one of the parishioners.

She has been participating in the parish because she and her husband have been raising their two children in the Catholic faith.

The children are both enrolled in the parish school.

Charlene's involvement with their education is her primary source of contact with the parish.

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Are they a **CATECHUMEN OR CANDIDATE**?
What might **FORMATION** look like for this person?
What other **INFORMATION** do you need? What **NEEDS** can you identify?

Debbie is a young professional, single, and searching for “something more” in her life. Although baptized in the Methodist church as an infant, her family was not active in any church. She has had no formal religious training. Because of some conversations with a Roman Catholic colleague, she is interested in Catholicism.



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Are they a **CATECHUMEN OR CANDIDATE**?
What might **FORMATION** look like for this person?
What other **INFORMATION** do you need? What **NEEDS** can you identify?



Ernest was baptized in the Lutheran tradition. He and his family were very active in their church. After he married a Catholic, he began attending her parish, because, as he said, he did not see a lot of differences. He and his wife raised their three children as Catholics. Through those years, Ernest approached the pastor about his reception into full communion.

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Are they a **CATECHUMEN OR CANDIDATE**?
What might **FORMATION** look like for this person?
What other **INFORMATION** do you need? What **NEEDS** can you identify?

Frank is the father of two children (8 + 10). Their mother died when they were very young. Frank remarried within a year of his wife’s death, but this marriage lasted only a short time. Now he is dating an active Catholic, and they are moving toward marriage. Frank has no religious upbringing but has now become interested in the Church for himself and his children. Through the initial investigation for an annulment, Frank discovered that his grandmother had him baptized as an infant.



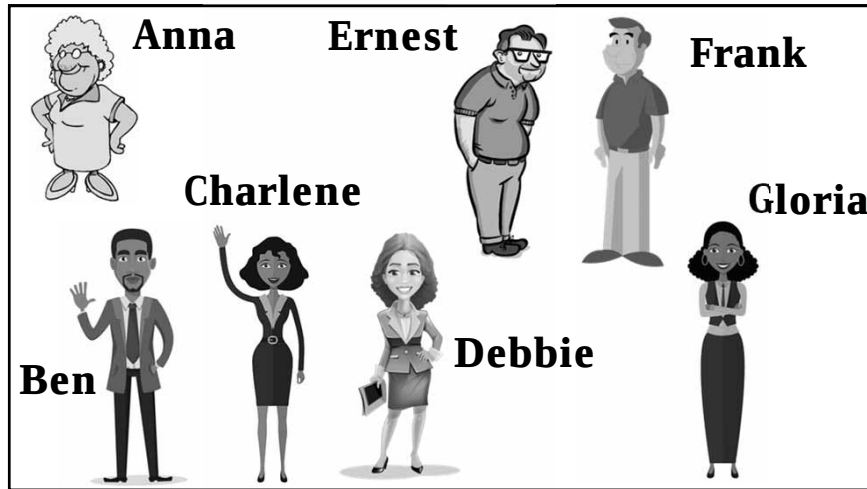
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Are they a **CATECHUMEN OR CANDIDATE**?
What might **FORMATION** look like for this person?
What other **INFORMATION** do you need? What **NEEDS** can you identify?



Gloria is in her midthirties. Her father was in the military. As a result, she lived in many places throughout her childhood. She was baptized as a Catholic and received First Communion in second grade. Although she continued to participate in catechetical programs, she missed Confirmation due to the family’s moving patterns and various age requirements of parishes. She regularly participated in parish life. Recently, because of a retreat she made, and the social justice ministry in which she is involved, she decided to be confirmed.

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What is the *Sorting Fish* exercise meant to teach us?



What questions, comments, or take-aways do you have about the *Sorting Fish* exercise?



2.4b

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What does all of this ask of us?

“How many programs do you want me to have??”

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Inquiry and the Precatechumenate

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Following the initial meeting...

NOW WHAT?

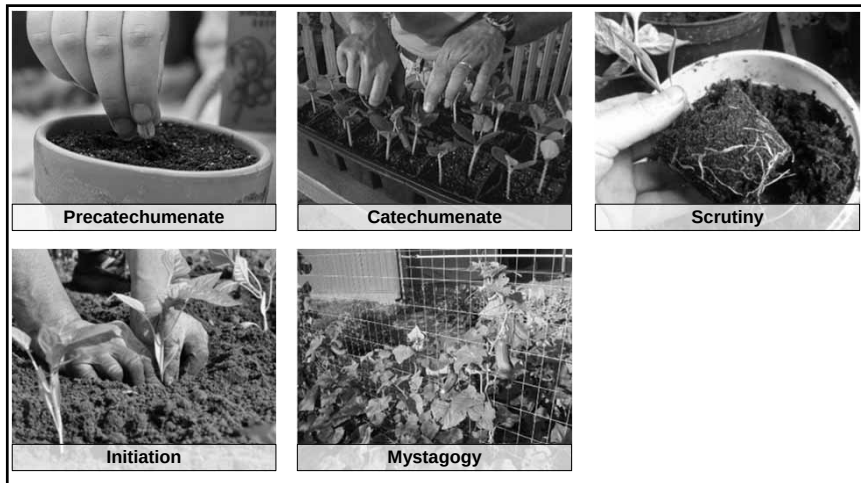
Precatechumenal Sessions

Encountering Christ in the Gospel
and the Church (the People of God)

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NEOPHYTE

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Rite for Entrance (prerequisites) See **OCIA, 42**

In order for them to take this step, it is necessary for:

- the **beginnings of a spiritual life**
- the **foundations of Christian doctrine** to have been planted (**first faith**)
- an **initial conversion**
- **desire to change their lives**
- **enter a relationship with God in Christ;**
- a **beginning of a sense of penitence** and of
- a **habit of calling on God** and of **prayer;**
- a **sense of the Church;**
- a **first experience of the company and spirit of Christians** through contact with a Priest, members of the community

What is the purpose
of the
precatechumenate?

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National Statutes for the Christian Initiation of Adults

Norm 1

The evangelization of unbaptized persons during the Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate will **lead them through Scripture, prayer, and friendly conversation to an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ** as the fullness of God's revelation.

What do precatechumenal sessions look like?

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The People of God **OCIA, #9.1**

In the time of evangelization and precatechumenate **the faithful** should remember that the apostolate of the Church and of all her members is principally directed toward **making known the message of Christ to the world by words and deeds** and toward communicating his grace.

They should therefore show themselves willing to exhibit a spirit of Christian community, to welcome inquirers into their families, into personal conversations, and also into some of the community's gatherings.

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Coffee between Inquirers and Parishioners

Inquirer to Parishioner

- What does being Catholic mean to you?
- Why do you attend this parish?
- Who is Jesus to you?

Parishioner to Inquirer

- Tell me about you. What's your life story?
- What has been your experience with faith, with God?
- How has your journey led you here? Why now?

The faithful should welcome inquirers personal conversations.

See OCIA 9.1

RUZICKI RULE OF 12

Inquirers should have the opportunity to meet at least twelve parishioners before the Rite for Entrance is discerned and celebrated.

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The Signing of the Senses **See OCIA, #54-57**

Forehead: "Learn to know him and follow him."

Ears: hear the voice of the Lord

Eyes: see the glory of God

Lips: respond to the word of God

Heart: that Christ may dwell there

Shoulders: bear the gentle yoke of Christ

Hands: Christ known in the work you do

Feet: walk in the way of Christ

Entire Being!



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The Rite for Entrance, Opening Dialogue **See OCIA, #50**

Celebrant: What is your name?

Entrant: __

The celebrant may use other words in asking them about their intentions and may permit them to reply in their own words, for example, after the first question:

Celebrant:

- What do you ask of God's Church?
- What do you desire?
- For what reason have you come?

The celebrant may then adapt his questions to their replies.

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Additional Thoughts

- Take notes on what they say, either during the conversation or after.
- After hearing a bit about their story, share what they can expect from the process: that everyone's journey is unique, that they are in the driver's seat... This is about them and their relationship with God.
- Answer any questions they may have.

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Evangelization & Precatechuminate

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What Are the Most Important Elements of This Stage?

Listening

Respect and trust are key.
How do we develop that?

Comfort

An environment that is comfortable and not "school room" setting.

Hospitality

More than just coffee, true welcome and relationship.

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Listening

Active Listening

Respecting
Confidentiality

“There are no
dumb questions.”

Open and
honest answers.



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Setting the Scene

What do you SEE in this
picture?



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Quick Tips to Create an Environment



- What does hospitality look like in your parish? Look at the normal way people are invited into Mass or meetings.
- The entire team (and parish) should be prepared for this shift.
- Reset your mind to this stage being about conversation and conversion, not catechesis.
- Prepare a few open-ended questions to start each session.

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Quick Tips to Create an Environment

- Find a space that is comfortable.
- Have simple setup for coffee, water, maybe cookies...
- Have a prayer table to focus on.
- Everyone sits, even the person leading.
- Mutual invitation



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Radical Hospitality!

GREEK
Philoxenia = love of a stranger

HEBREW
Hakhnasat Orchim = bringing in of strangers

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Radical Hospitality!

Let mutual love continue.
Do not neglect hospitality,
for through it some have
unknowingly entertained angels.

Hebrews 13: 1-2



Above all,
let your love for one
another be intense,
because love covers
a multitude of sins.

Be hospitable to one another
without complaining.

1 Peter 4: 8-9

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Radical Hospitality!



Rule of St. Benedict:

All guests who present themselves
are to be welcomed as Christ,
for he himself will say: I was a
stranger and you welcomed me.

Charism of Hospitality: hospitality should be a way in
which we bring the presence and love of God to others.

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Radical Hospitality!

Notice! Keep your eyes open.

Offer personal attention.

Follow up when needed.

3 Principles of Radical Hospitality, by Yvonne Gentile and Debi Nixon. www.churchleadership.com

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1. In what ways can the entire parish—not just the OCIA team—be drawn into a culture of hospitality toward inquirers?
2. Why is it important to “reset our minds” and recognize the precatechumenate as a time for conversation and conversion, not catechesis?
3. Questions, comments, or take-aways about the precatechumenate?

2.4c

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Paperwork

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Intake Forms

Catechumen Form
Catechumen

Inquiry Form
Initial Inquiry

Reception Form
Non-Catholic Candidate

Communion Form
Catholic Candidate

Download at www.LTP.org/ERCCI-RCIAforms

Initial Inquiry

Name _____	Were you confirmed? _____
Address _____	If yes, where? _____
Home phone number _____	Name and address of church _____
Cell phone number _____	
E-mail address _____	Have you been accepted as a catechumen or a candidate to the Catholic Church? _____
Date of birth _____	If yes, where? _____
Place of birth _____	Where? _____
Father's name _____	Name and address of church _____
Mother's name _____	
Where you baptized? _____	
If baptized, when? _____	
Name and address of church _____	Are you currently married? _____
	If yes, to whom are you presently married? _____
Denomination of church _____	Date and place of marriage _____
Date of baptism _____	Officiant _____
If baptized, provide a copy of baptismal certificate.	Prior to this marriage, have you ever been married to another person in church, civilly, or in common law? _____
Did you receive First Communion? _____	If yes, where? _____
Name and address of church _____	Has your spouse ever been married (prior to your marriage) to another person in church, civilly, or in common law? _____
	If you are currently not married, have you ever been married before to another person in church, civilly or in common law? _____
Date _____	Signature of the interviewee _____

The Archdiocese of Chicago Office of Christian Initiation, Division of Sacraments, Office of RCIA Training Publications, 2016-17

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Marital Status

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Marital Status

- Ask for this information early in the process. *(Intake form!)*
- Relationships matter. Our spiritual and religious lives impact our relationships and vice-versa. We care about the whole person!
- Keep a list of resources for support.
(Catholic divorce support, marriage prep, counseling)
- Be compassionate/sensitive.
- Assure confidentiality.
- Know your diocesan policy / marriage tribunal contact.
(If someone needs an annulment, who to contact? What's the process like?)

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Marital Status

- Never Married
 - Divorced
 - Married, first marriage for both
 - Married, one or both partners married before
- Situations in which pastoral care is needed:
- Annulments
 - Convalidation Needed
 - Marriage Prep concurrent with OCIA
 - Divorced, no intention to remarry
 - Other circumstances

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Annulments / Convalidations

Catechumens [candidates] needing annulments or convalidation of marriage must obtain them before celebrating the Rite of Election [the Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion].

Never promise a timeline !!!

National Statutes for the Christian Initiation of Adults

Norm 7:

While unbaptized persons in irregular marriages can enter the catechumenate, they are not to celebrate the Rite of Election until they are free to enter a canonical marriage.

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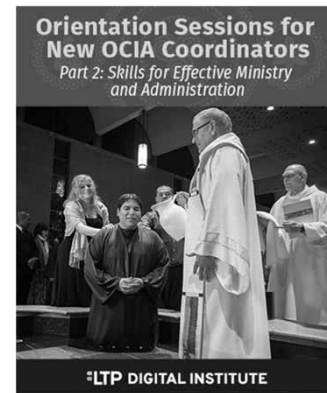
Special Pastoral Cases

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Special Pastoral Cases

- baptized but uncatechized Catholics
- mixed marriages
- people with disabilities
- cultural or family dynamics that affect the journey of faith

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Part I
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in Real-Life Situations

Part III
Administration and
Keeping It All Together

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