

How Do I Become Catholic?

“Be doers of the word and not merely hearers.”
—James 1:22

God is calling. Now what?

Learning to Respond

God works in many different ways. Most of the time, God works through ordinary people and events—a parent, a friend, a beautiful sunset, a song, an inspiring story. Other times, we hear God’s call during crisis moments or major life-changes—a birth, an engagement, a sickness, a death. Sometimes, we just have a feeling that something is missing. No matter what your reason for thinking about becoming Catholic, the Church’s hope and prayer is that when God calls, you will respond. If you’re reading this, you’ve already begun to respond!

One part of the Catholic Church’s mission is to help people respond to God’s call as best they can by helping them become more and more like Jesus. For Christians, initiation means falling in love with Jesus and living as Jesus’s disciples. This is how we respond best to God’s call. Through the process of becoming Catholic, we try to help people learn how to respond to God’s call not just for the moment of baptism but for everyday of their lives. The way we learn to do that is by hanging out with Catholics and actually doing what Catholics do. So the process of becoming Catholic is not so much about learning things as in a classroom but entering a way of life, as an apprentice learns from a master and that master’s community.

The love of God is not generic. God looks with love upon every man and woman, calling them by name.

— Pope Francis

Becoming an Apprentice

At a university art department, a “master potter” was the teacher for all the pottery students. But his students didn’t really have classes in a classroom. What they did have was a lifestyle, or a discipline, and they all agreed to live by that lifestyle. In their discipline, the master potter agreed to teach them everything he knew, and the students agreed to watch the potter and follow his example. In a way, they became his disciples.

Every so often, the potter showed them a new skill, like making a tiny tea cup. Then he told them, “Now you try it. Practice making 100 tea cups like this every day for the next month. When you can do that, then you’re ready to go on to the next step.”

Yet the potter wasn’t only teaching skills; he was also introducing them to the life of a potter. So he had them eat together using the plates and cups they made, talk about their struggles and joys with one another, take walks in nature together for inspiration, and chop wood together for the kiln to fire their pottery. Little by little, day by day, the students were *becoming* potters, learning by watching, doing, and living as the master did.

Our master potter is Jesus, and becoming Catholic is a lot like being his apprentices. We follow stages, watch for benchmarks, help each other, and learn and practice disciplines before moving on the next step. The process for this apprenticeship into the Christian way of life is called the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (often called RCIA).

If you’re ready to respond to God’s call, contact your local Catholic parish and ask them to help you learn to follow Jesus.



Words to know

baptism: the ritual that makes a person a full member of a Christian religion; in the Catholic Church, the ritual involves immersing the person in water and calling upon God using the traditional names of “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

Catholic: a person who lives out the Christian faith that follows the disciplines established by the Catholic Church

Christ: the Greek title given to Jesus meaning “anointed one”; in Hebrew, the title is translated as “messiah”; title that acknowledges that the person is specially chosen by God to lead and protect God’s people

Christian: a person who believes that Jesus was the Son of God, the Christ, who follows the teachings of Christ, and is baptized into the Christian faith through the ritual of baptism

discipline: habits of a group that make up a way of life based on the teachings of a person considered the group’s leader

RCIA: stands for “Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults;” process for adults for becoming Catholic

What made you read this flyer? Has something happened in your life that has made you wonder about becoming Catholic? What questions would you ask a Catholic person?

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