



All areas in **Red** pertain specifically to Christian Initiation of Children (RCIC) who have reached catechetical age.

## **The Inquiry: (Precatechumenate)**

### ***How long is the period of inquiry?***

The period of inquiry (precatechumenate) can be as long as the inquirer needs.

### ***Can this phase be omitted?***

Although the rite of initiation begins with the admission to the catechumenate, the preceding period or precatechumenate is of great importance and as a rule should not be omitted. It is a time of evangelization: faithfully and constantly, the living God is proclaimed and Jesus Christ whom he has sent for the salvation of all.<sup>1</sup>

### ***What is the difference between a Candidate and a Catechumen?***

Both terms describe those applying and learning to become members in the Catholic Church. A catechumen is a person who has never been baptized in any Christian community. A candidate is a person that is already recognized as having a valid baptism from another Christian community.

### ***Godparent or Sponsor?***

It is a very ancient custom of the Church that adults are not admitted to baptism without godparents, members of the Christian community who will assist the candidates at least in the final preparation for baptism, and after baptism, will help them persevere in the faith and in their lives as Christians.<sup>2</sup>

The sponsor is responsible for seeing that the one confirmed lives as a true witness to Christ and fulfills faithfully the obligations connected with the sacrament. On the day of the Confirmation the sponsors bring their candidates to receive the sacrament, present them for anointing, and later help them fulfill their baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit whom they have received.

### ***When is a godparent or sponsor chosen?***

During the period of the catechumenate, the catechumens should give thought to choosing the godparents who will represent them to the Church on the day of their election. The choice should be made with the consent of the priest, and persons chosen, as much as possible, be approved for their role by the local community. Likewise, candidates should choose or be provided with sponsors from the parish. These godparents and sponsors are encouraged to attend all sessions with the RCIA team.

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<sup>1</sup> Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Concacan Inc., 1987, para 36

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Christian Initiation: General Introduction, para 8



***What are the criteria for children to participation in the rite of Christian Initiation?***

- have attained the use of reason and are of catechetical age (7 years of age at least)
- they seek Christian Initiation either at the direction of their parents or guardians, or, with parental permission, on their own initiative.
- Are capable of receiving and nurturing a personal faith and of recognizing an obligation in conscience<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, para 242