

What should you expect?

You should expect to be welcomed into our community, to meet Jesus in and through others, to grow in your understanding of the Catholic faith and to deepen your own personal spiritual life, even if you choose not to become Catholic.

You should also expect to...

- be warmly welcomed and sincerely accepted by members of the Catholic faith community.
- be treated with respect and understanding at all times.
- have your previous religious and spiritual experiences sincerely valued.
- be clearly informed about all aspects of formation and opportunities for participation in the Catholic faith community.
- make your own free choice about your continued participation and eventual membership in our Catholic faith community.
- be guided, encouraged, and supported in making and explaining to your family and friends your decision to join the Catholic Church.

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. (Acts 2:42-43)

What's the next step?

If you're ready to find out more, the first step is an inquiry conversation with a member of our parish team. To schedule a conversation, call the parish office.

You might also...

- talk with a trusted friend or spiritual guide about your decision
- talk to someone you know who is an active Catholic
- visit Catholic parishes in the area and attend Sunday Mass or a weekday Mass
- continue to pray for God's guidance and grace and seek more information about the Catholic Church so you can make an informed decision.

If you would like to find out more about *Becoming Catholic* and the *OCIA* at St. Boniface, please contact:

Faye Akers
Director of Evangelization
& Discipleship
St. Boniface Catholic Church
fayeakers@stbonifacechurch.org
(515) 987-4597

We are very happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have about joining the Catholic Church!

Thinking about Becoming Catholic?

*Information for adults
who are inquiring
about the Faith
or considering joining
the Catholic Church*



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stbonifacechurch.org

How do people join the Catholic Church?

St. Boniface welcomes individuals or families who are interested in joining our Catholic faith community.

Unbaptized Persons

Those who have never been baptized will be accompanied on a journey called the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA)*.

Baptized Christians

Those who have been baptized and raised in another Christian faith community and now desire to follow Jesus in the full communion of the Catholic Church will receive appropriate instruction and make a public profession of faith.

Baptized Adult Catholics

Baptized adult Catholics who have not received the Sacrament of Confirmation will follow an individualized path.

Depending on your faith background, the length and pace of your journey to become Catholic may differ from others. Rites and sacraments take place when both the individual *and* the parish are ready.

About Marriage and Initiation

Individuals who have divorced and remarried may enter the *OCIA*, but will need to receive an annulment before they celebrate initiation in the Church.

Individuals who have divorced but not remarried may enter the *OCIA* and celebrate initiation in the Catholic Church. They will need to have an annulment before entering a second marriage.

You will have the opportunity to discuss the details with a priest or deacon.

What is the Order of Christian Initiation?

The *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA)* is modeled on the initiation ritual of the early Christian church.

It is an experience of personal formation and spiritual growth which incorporates prayer, study, reflection, and discernment in a combination of public rituals and community preparations. It is the way unbaptized persons become Catholic.

Four Phases of Formation in the OCIA

Pre-Catechumenate: a period of inquiry

Catechumenate: a period of continuing formation and discernment

Enlightenment: a period of final preparation and discernment

Mystagogy: a period of continuing formation and reflection

Becoming Catholic Rites, Sessions, Sponsors

There is a **series of sacred rites** throughout the four phases leading to a solemn public celebration of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist. This celebration generally takes place at Easter.

Formation sessions are offered at different times during the year and cover a basic introduction to the Catholic faith with an opportunity for discussion, as well as a question and answer period. In addition to formation sessions, participants also attend Mass weekly, take part in parish events and outreach, and may also meet on Sunday mornings after Mass.

Participants in the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* do not travel alone. **You will have a parish sponsor and prayer partner**, as well as other members of the Catholic faith community who accompany you on your journey.

Prayerful discernment is always a part of each person's journey.

What is "Breaking Open the Word?"

Unbaptized adults who desire to become Catholic are invited to participate in "Breaking Open the Word," which takes place during a portion of our Sunday Masses at certain times during the year.

During these sessions you will discuss God's Word in the Sunday scripture readings and how it relates to your personal journey of faith.

What about children and families?

Children ages 4 or younger are usually baptized without formal preparation. Parents are expected to attend a preparation class before an infant or young child is baptized.

Children ages 5-6 may be baptized following a period of informal catechesis for both the child and parents.

Children ages 7 or older are expected to participate in a period of formal catechesis along with their parents before being baptized or making a profession of faith.

This preparation includes **regular participation for both children and parents** in the parish religious formation program, or participation in a Catholic school for at least one school year.