

LITURGY PREPARATION FOR THE

Combined Rite of Sending Catechumens and Candidates

(see RCIA 530ff)

For the Rite of Sending Catechumens ONLY see RCIA 106 ff.

For the Rite of Sending Candidates ONLY see RCIA 434 ff.

Questions to Prepare for the Rite

BEFORE THE RITE

1. Will the catechumens/candidates be in the entrance procession? Will the Book of the Elect be in the procession?

2. Where will the catechumens and candidates be seated?

It might be helpful to seat each group on different sides of the center aisle or in different pews. Where will godparents/sponsors be seated?

3. How will you inform the parish that the Rite of Sending will be taking place?

Announcements could be made for several weeks before the Rite at all Masses and communicated in other ways (e.g., in the bulletin, on a website, at parish meetings, etc.). On the day of the Rite, the coordinator or celebrant could make a brief announcement before the Rite begins.

4. How will a distinction be made between the catechumens and candidates in the Rite?

For example, bring up each group separately in front of the altar, or, if the church configuration allows, gather the catechumens around the baptismal font and the candidates around the altar.

PRESENTATION OF THE CATECHUMENS

5. Who will present the catechumens?

The Christian initiation coordinator, a deacon, or a representative of the RCIA team of the parish?

AFFIRMATION BY THE GODPARENTS AND THE ASSEMBLY

6. What questions will you use?

The questions given in RCIA 538 or adaptations of these questions?

7. Will testimony be given? If so, by whom?

RCIA 9.3 suggests that the community “should be sure to give honest and carefully considered testimony about the catechumens.” If appropriate and feasible, will the godparents or other members of the community offer a brief prepared reflection on the progress the catechumens have made?

8. How will the entire assembly be asked to express approval?

There is no text given in RCIA 538. One option is to use the “Affirmation by the Godparents and the Assembly” from the Rite of Election (see RCIA 131).

SIGNING OF THE BOOK OF THE ELECT

9. Will the Book of the Elect be signed at the Rite of Sending or at the Rite of Election?

Most dioceses have the Book of the Elect signed at the Rite of Sending, but the RCIA leader should check to be sure. If at the Rite of Sending, where will the Book of the Elect be placed for signature, and how will the signing take place? Will godparents come forward with the catechumens? A person at the Rite should have an extra pen ready, if needed.

10. What will be said to introduce the signing of the Book of the Elect?

There is no text given in the RCIA text. Here is one suggestion for what the celebrant might say: “My dear catechumens, the Book of Revelation makes reference to a ‘Book of Life,’ in which are inscribed the names of those who have chosen to follow the Lord Jesus and be baptized. Those of us who are already baptized, as

Catholics or in other denominations, have had our names “written” in the Book of Life at our Baptism. I now invite you to come forward and sign this Book, which we call the Book of the Elect as a sign of your desire to be numbered among the elect, who are preparing for Baptism.”

11. Will music be used while the Book of the Elect is being signed?

If there are enough catechumens to allow time, a song or psalm response that has been used throughout the initiation process could be used.

12. Where will the catechumens go after they have signed the Book of the Elect?

Will they return to their pews or move to another place while the candidates are recognized?

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

13. Who will call the candidates’ names?

The Christian initiation coordinator, a deacon, or a representative of the RCIA team of the parish?

14. Where will the candidates stand?

If the catechumens have not returned to their pews, be sure to make a visual distinction between them and the candidates.

AFFIRMATION BY THE SPONSORS AND THE ASSEMBLY

15. What questions will be asked?

No questions are asked of the candidates, but the sentences in RCIA 541 could be turned into questions.

16. Will testimony be given? If so, by whom?

17. How will the fact that the candidates are already baptized be recognized?

Since the candidates for full communion have already been baptized, they do not sign their names in the Book of the Elect. However, as a way of recognizing the candidates’ Baptism, at this point, the celebrant might say, “I now invite the candidates to place their baptismal certificates on the Book of the Elect as a reminder of the Baptism which they have already received.”

INTERCESSIONS FOR THE CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES

18. Will you include intercessions for the whole Church?

There is an option to include the general intercessions at this point. If the ritual has taken some time, it might be wise to do so. The profession of Faith may be omitted and intercessions combined with earlier ones.

DISMISSAL OF THE CATECHUMENS FOR THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

19. Who will go with the catechumens to the Reflection on the Word session (also perhaps reflecting on the Rite)? Will the candidates join them?

20. Will you do anything different today after this Rite and/or before the Rite of Election?

Some parishes hold a potluck meal following this liturgy prior to departing for the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion so that the catechumens and candidates do not have to leave the parish and return

Checklist

- Reserved pews
- Book of the Elect prepared with proper page marked and dated
- Pen to sign the book (and an extra)
- Lectern on which to sign the book, if the altar is not used
- Worship aid for the congregation (handout explaining the Rite and/or with desired liturgical responses)
- Lists of names to be called (catechumens and candidates)
- Baptismal certificates for the candidates (see question 17 above)
- Intercessions for reader
- Script for presider, musicians, etc.
- Congratulations cards from team, clergy, intercessors, etc.
- Arrangements for a potluck meal, if planned
- Arrangements for transportation to the Rite of Election prepared