



Diocese of Allentown The Rites of Acceptance and Welcoming

INTRODUCTORY RITES

RECEIVING OF THE CANDIDATES

Those who are to be accepted into the order of catechumens, along with those who are candidates for the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist, their sponsors, and a group of the faithful gather outside the church (or inside at the entrance or elsewhere) or at some other site suitable for this rite. As the priest or deacon, goes to meet them, the assembly of the faithful may sing an appropriate song.

Sign of the Cross

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

All: *And with your Spirit.*

Please be seated.

Celebrant:

The celebrant greets the candidates in a friendly manner. He speaks to them, their sponsors, and all present, pointing out the joy and happiness of the Church. He uses these or similar words:

Dear friends, the Church joyfully welcomes today those who will be received into the order of catechumens. In the months to come they will prepare for their initiation into the Christian faith by baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist.

We also greet those who, already one with us by baptism, now wish to complete their initiation through confirmation and Eucharist or to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

For all of these, we give thanks and praise to the God who has led them by various paths to oneness in faith. My dear candidates, you are welcomed in the name of Christ. I now invite them forward with their sponsors.

Celebrant (or a deacon) calls each by name.

Catechumens: _____

Candidates for Full Communion: _____

Respond: Present (response after their name is called)

OPENING DIALOGUE WITH CATECHUMENS & CANDIDATES

Celebrant will address the *Catechumens* only.

Celebrant: What do you ask of God's Church?

Catechumens: *Faith*

Celebrant: What does faith offer you?

Catechumens: *Eternal life.*

Celebrant will address the *Candidates* only.

Celebrant: What do you ask of God's Church?

Candidates respond: *To be accepted as a candidate for catechetical instruction leading to Confirmation and Eucharist.*

Celebrant: What does this period of formation offer you?

Candidates respond: *A fuller sharing in the life of the Church.*

CATECHUMENS' FIRST ACCEPTANCE OF THE GOSPEL

Celebrant will address the *Catechumens* only.

Celebrant:

God is our Creator and in him all living things have their existence. He enlightens our minds, so that we may come to know and worship him. He has sent his faithful witness, Jesus Christ, to announce to us what he has seen and heard, the mysteries of heaven and earth.

Since you acknowledge with joy that Christ has come, now is the time to hear his word, so that you may possess eternal life by beginning, in our company, to know God and to love your neighbor. Are you ready, with the help of God, to live this life.

Catechumens: *I am.*

Celebrant will address the *Candidates only*.

Celebrant:

Those of you who seek to complete your Christian initiation or are to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church, are you prepared to listen to the apostles' instruction, gather with us for prayer, and join us in the love and service of others?

Candidates: *I am.*

Celebrant will address the *sponsors* and the *assembly*.

Celebrant:

Sponsors, you now present these candidates to us; are you, and all who are gathered about us, ready to help these candidates follow Christ?

Sponsors and assembly respond: *We are.*

Celebrant:

Father of Mercy, we thank You for these Your servants. You have sought and summoned them in many ways and they have turned to seek You. You have called them today and they have answered in our presence: we praise you, Lord, and we bless you.

Sponsors and assembly respond: *We praise You, Lord, and we bless You.*

THE SIGNING OF THE CATECHUMENS WITH THE CROSS

Celebrant: Catechumens, come forward now with your sponsors to receive the sign of your new way of life as catechumens.

Celebrant signs each with the Sign of the Cross [followed by their sponsors]
and they respond with the following:

Celebrant: **N.**, receive the cross on your forehead. It is Christ himself who now strengthens you with this sign of his love. Learn to know him and follow him.

Response: *Glory and Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

THE SIGNING OF THE CANDIDATES WITH THE CROSS

Celebrant: Candidates for Confirmation and Eucharist, come forward now with your sponsors to receive the sign of your life in Christ.

*Celebrant signs each with the Sign of the Cross [followed by their sponsors]
and they respond with the following:*

Celebrant: **N.**, receive the cross on your forehead as a reminder of your baptism into Christ's saving death and resurrection.

Response: *Glory and Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Celebrant returns to the chair.

COLLECT:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, by the cross and resurrection of your Son you have given life to your people.

Your servants have received the sign of the cross:
make them living proof of its saving power
and help them to persevere in the footsteps of Christ.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. AMEN.

INVITATION TO THE CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

Celebrant: My dear Catechumens and Candidates, come into the Church, to share with us at the table of God's word.

Catechumens and Candidates return to their seats.

INTERCESSIONS FOR THE CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES

Celebrant: These catechumens and candidates, who are our brothers and sisters, have already traveled a long road. We rejoice with them in the gentle guidance of God who has brought them to this day. Let us pray that they may press onwards, until they come to share fully in our way of life.

Deacon/Lector: That God our Father may reveal his Christ to them more and more with every passing day, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon/Lector: That they may undertake with generous hearts and souls whatever God may ask of them, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon/Lector: That they may have our sincere and unfailing support every step of the way, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon/Lector: That they may find in our community compelling signs of unity and generous love, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon/Lector: That their hearts and ours may become more responsive to the needs of others, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon/Lector: That in due time the catechumens may be found worthy to receive the baptism of new birth and renewal in the Holy Spirit and the candidates may be found worthy to complete their initiation through the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist, let us pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

PRAYER OVER THE CATECHUMENS AND CANDIDATES

Celebrant:

Almighty God,
source of all creation,
you have made us in your image.

Receive with love those who come before you.
Lead our catechumens to the baptism of new birth,
and our candidates to a deeper share in the paschal mystery,
so that, living a fruitful life
in the company of your faithful,
they may receive the eternal reward that you promise.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

R. Amen.

DISMISSAL OF THE CATECHUMENS

Celebrant: My dear friends, this community now sends you forth to reflect more deeply upon the word of God which you have shared with us today. Be assured of our loving support and prayers for you. We look forward to the day when you will share fully in the Lord's Table.

OR

Celebrant: Catechumens, go in peace, and may the Lord remain with you always.

Catechumens: Amen.

OR

If for serious reasons the catechumens cannot leave and must remain with the rest of the liturgical assembly, they are to be instructed that though they are present at the Eucharist, they cannot take part in it as the Catholic faithful do. They may be reminded of this by the celebrant in these words:

Celebrant: Although you cannot yet participate fully in the Lord's Eucharist, stay with us as a sign of our hope that all God's children will eat and drink with the Lord and work with his Spirit to re-create the face of the Earth.