

Serving in the Ministry of Initiating Adults into the Catholic Faith

1. Remember that you are a team member because you're called and gifted by the Holy Spirit.
2. Our model is Jesus Christ himself. We wash the feet of all who are involved in the Christian Initiation of Adults: the other team members and sponsors as well as the Inquirers, the Catechumens, and the Candidates. We will treat everyone as if we are their first example of what Jesus really like. This means we all have a spirit of community, an attitude of joyful servanthood, a willingness to share our love and gifts in service to others, and the humility of knowing that none of us are superior to those who are not as advanced as we are on the journey of faith or in Catholic education.
3. To foster the spirit of community, we set aside any critical spirit, negativity, bad-mouthing or putting others down. Regardless of whether a team member does or does not have formal training or past experience in Christian Initiation, all on the team are equally important, all are to be treated equally with respect, all have ideas equally worthy of being heard.
4. If you have any personnel conflict with anyone on the team, remember that as a witness of what it means to be truly a follower and imitator of Christ, you will not display any semblance of divisiveness. Conflicts are to be dealt with according to Christ's instructions in Matt. 18:15-17, i.e., first gently and lovingly speak one-on-one privately to the person with whom you disagree. Afterward, if necessary, take the matter to the RCIA Director. If it has to be escalated to the pastor and even this does not produce a solution that promotes unity on the team, the person(s) behaving divisively will be asked to take a break from the RCIA ministry to discern how to best share his/her gifts.
5. Familiarize yourself with the week's scriptures and/or class materials before each meeting. Take note of what happens at Sunday Mass: how do the songs, homily, etc., tie in to the topic?
6. Our program of initiating them into the Catholic faith will be tailored to the individual's needs and pace, not by a pre-determined schedule. Keep the RCIA Director informed of the progress you observe, as an assistant in discernment. If someone's journey is slowed by an annulment process or other impediments, that's okay; help him/her view the long journey as beneficial. Extra months spent in faith formation are always a blessing!
7. Extend the sense of community beyond the RCIA program. Look for the candidates after Mass and at parish events. Make it a priority to converse with them.



8. When sharing your story or insights in group or private discussions with candidates, speak from your heart and personal experiences, but say less than you want to, and listen more!
9. When listening, notice the feelings and inner struggles that might not be spoken out loud. Respond with empathy. If someone wants to cry, don't tell them to stop, but do offer comfort. When someone shares a problem, don't try to fix it or rescue them, but do suggest ways they can move forward in growing from them.
10. Protect all confidences; personal sharings do not leave the room.
11. No one is looked down on because of their current viewpoint or lifestyle. Do not talk unkindly about a member who is not present. Beware of being judgmental or jumping to conclusions, and always give others the benefit of doubt; you don't know their true intentions or motives.
12. Avoid Catholic jargon unless you take the time to explain its meaning. Examples are:
 - Feast day (Is that when we have a parish meal and pig out like on Thanksgiving?)
 - Immaculate Conception (As in really clean sex?)
 - Assumption (Yeah, like, you're assuming that I want to become Catholic.)
 - Make him a saint (We can't *make* someone be saintly.)
 - Venial and mortal sins (Mortal as in we're all mortal, but venial, never heard that word.)
 - Lourdes and Fatima (What happened there?)
 - Apparitions (ghosts?)
 - Our Lady (And our gentlemen, too, right?)
 - Novena (Never heard that word outside of you Catholics. What is it?)
 - Decade (Ten years?)
 - True Church (Don't imply that the church I grew up in had a false faith in Jesus.)
 - Catechism (What's that?)
 - Holy Orders (Is that an order of French fries on Good Friday?)
 - Devotion (As in sweethearts and romance? My darling has such devotion for me.)

What else can you add to this list?

13. Do not over-extend yourself by getting involved in too much of the experience of co-journeying with people who are coming alive in the faith. If it does not bring you life and personal enrichment, take time to prayerfully discern what's God asking you to let go of? Time should be spent to discern, not assume, your calling.