



Preparing for the Rite of Sending and the Rite of Election

Who Participates in the Rites of Sending and Election?

Child and adult catechumens who participate in the Rite of Sending and Rite of Election have been discerned ready and eligible for full initiation at this year's Easter Vigil (ie; anyone still pending an annulment, for example, should not participate in the Rite of Sending, nor someone who just inquired about joining the church).

Criteria for discernment can be found in the Rites book:

Before the rite of election is celebrated, the catechumens are expected to have undergone a conversion in mind and in action and to have developed a sufficient acquaintance with Christian teaching as well as a spirit of faith and charity. (120)

For more assistance understanding discernment, check out these brief articles by TeamRCIA:

[Are your catechumens ready for the next stage?](#)

[RCIA discernment – how do you know if they “know enough”?](#)



When to Celebrate the
Rite of Sending?



What is the Rite of Sending?

The Rite of Sending involves "sending" the Catechumens to the Bishop and the people of the Local Church; sending them for "election." The Rite of Sending affords the parish the opportunity to express its approval, to rejoice in the decision to receive the sacraments of initiation and to assure the Catechumens of the community's care and support.

The ritual text states that the Rite of Sending the Catechumens for Election may be celebrated at a "suitable" time prior to the rites [RCIA 108]. It may take place within a Celebration of the Word or within Mass.

In the Richmond Diocese for 2019, parishes participating in the Rite of Election on Saturday, March 9 will celebrate the Rite of Sending the weekend preceding, at a regularly scheduled Mass. Eastern Vicariate parishes may do the same or may choose to celebrate the Rite of Sending at a parish mass immediately preceding the 3:00pm Sunday Rite of Election on March 10.



How to Prepare for the Rite of Sending?

Pastors and RCIA teams will want to be familiar with the purpose of the Rite of Sending as it leads to the Rite of Election so to assist the catechumens and parish community in seeing the significance of this rite. Procuring the parish Book of the Elect and having a place of honor from which it can be signed are needed for the celebration of the Rite of Sending. Registration for the Rite of Election must be completed by February 25 by the parish RCIA leader. [Registration](#) is required for child and adult catechumens so that their names are announced as part of the Rite of Election (whether or not they are attending!)

Catechumens are informed that they are signing the Book of the Elect which is presented to the bishop. When their name is announced at the Rite of Election, they are no longer catechumens, but "the Elect" of the church. They have been discerned ready and willing to live a life of discipleship in the Catholic faith and are entering the period of purification and enlightenment where they join the rest of the church in prayer and sacrifice as we await the joy of Easter. Opportunities for the catechumens to reflect on the journey they have already taken should be made, and growth in faith should be celebrated by the team and the parish community.

Godparents need to have been selected and should be present at the Rite of Sending. This may or may not be the same person who has served as a sponsor for them during the catechumenate (RCIA, 10 – 11). The godparent(s) will speak on behalf of the catechumen, witnessing to their conversion.



How to Prepare for the Rite of Election?

RCIA Teams...

benefit from reflecting on their own baptismal call and the gift and responsibility it is to live as a child of God. Assist your team, and the whole parish, with this reflection on being called:

[Help your assembly prepare for the rite of election](#)

Look to the Rite ...

one option in the Rite (131B) lists the criteria necessary for “election”. Use this for discerning readiness and for celebrating conversion:

Have they faithfully listened to God’s word proclaimed by the Church?

- What are favorite Scriptures they have heard? To which biblical characters do they best relate?

Have they responded to that word and begun to walk in God’s presence?

- How has their daily life changed? Has prayer increased? Response to others’ needs?



Have they shared the company of their Christian brothers and sisters and joined with them in prayer?

- Do they come to mass regularly? Are they participating in parish events? Do they feel a part of the community and understand what it means to be a part of the Body of Christ?



After the Rite of Election

The Period of Purification and Enlightenment, while not intended for catechetical formation, provides the opportunity to reflect back on what they have come to know and believe. Take time to process the Rite of Election the week after you have attended. Re-enter the experience with the elect and help them use all their senses to experience the presence of God in that celebration.

Look to our next newsletter for a mystagogical reflection you can use with your elect after the Rite of Election.

Questions?

Look to the book - the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The introduction to each section gives valuable insight to the theology behind each period of the journey.

Contact us, we want to help.

Formation and discernment questions? Sheri Kemp 804-622-5113,
skemp@richmonddiocese.org.

Liturgical or worship questions? Fr. Sean Prince, 804-622-5235,
sprince@richmonddiocese.org

Annulment or marriage questions? Call the Office of the Tribunal, 804-355-6235.