



RCIA CALENDAR & SYLLABUS 2011-2012

Our weekly class sessions take place **Mondays** from **7:30 – 9:30pm** in the **Duffy Parish Center Main Level**. The other dates cited refer to special events and the times/places are noted within this syllabus.

“USCC” refers to the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults and “Compendium” refers to the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Compendium #'s are question numbers; not page numbers. The articles are taken from the bound packet of readings (see table of contents).

INQUIRY / PRE-CATECHUMENATE

This inquiry period has usually begun long before anyone calls the church. It begins when the person hears the good news of Jesus Christ from a friend, a co-worker, a neighbor, a spouse, a parent, a stranger. Someone or something has drawn them to the parish and they want to find out more. During this first period of the process we will help you to discover just what it is that you are seeking. You are under no obligation to become a Catholic and can decide at any time just to sit through the classes and learn more about the Catholic Faith.

Mon Sep 12 **Orientation to the RCIA**
No Reading Assignment

- What led you to inquire about the Catholic Faith?
- What do you hope to gain out of this class?



Mon Sep 19 **God's Loving Plan of Salvation**
USCC: Ch. 1 & 2
Article: “God's Plan of Salvation”
Compendium #261-262

- Someone approaches you and asks, “Are you saved?” How would you respond?
- Can salvation be earned? Can you guarantee your own salvation? Why or why not?



Mon Sep 26

The Blessed Trinity

USCC: Ch. 5

Article: "The Blessed Trinity"

Compendium #44-49



- What is the basic Catholic understanding of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
- Why do you think it matters that God's nature is that of a community, or family?

Fri Sep 29

Feast of the Archangels

The Archangels are St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael. Angels are created spirits, without bodies, having intellect and free will. See *Revelation 12:7-9* about the story of St. Michael, the Archangel.

Mon Oct 3

Sacred Scripture & Tradition

USCC: Ch. 3

Article: "Sacred Scripture"

Article: "Sacred Tradition"

Compendium #11-24



- What does it mean to say that the Bible is the "Word of God?"
- Why is Scripture alone not enough? What role does Sacred Tradition play in the life of the Church?
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Fri Oct 7

Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary

All the mysteries of the rosary are rooted in the Bible. The mysteries have their foundation in the life of Christ and help bring us closer to Jesus and His mother, Mary, who is also our mother.

Mon Oct 10

COLUMBUS DAY – NO CLASS

Mon Oct 17

The Person of Jesus Christ

USCC: Ch. 7

Article: "Did Jesus Always Know He Was God?"

Article: "Did Jesus Have to Suffer and Die?"

Compendium #79-93



- Jesus asked His apostles this question: "Who do you say that I am?" Imagine yourself there today... how would you answer?
- Why do you think the Resurrection is the most decisive event in all of Christianity?

Mon Oct 24

The Communion of Saints

Article: "Communion of Saints"

Compendium #194-195



- Why do you think God calls every person to be a saint?
- What is the relationship between the saints in heaven and the Church on earth?

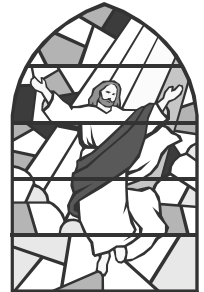
Mon Oct 31

Church Tour

Article: "A Tour of a Catholic Church"

Class meets directly in the church tonight.

- As you look around the church building, what questions come to mind about the architecture, stained glass windows, statues, and holy objects, etc.?
- Why do you think these objects were placed there?



Tue Nov 1

Feast of All Saints

The word "saints" means holy ones. A saint is simply someone who is in heaven with God. Every person is called to be a saint. This feast commemorates all the saints in heaven, as we ask for their prayers and intercession to help us along the way here on earth.

Mon Nov 7

Mary: Mother of God and Our Mother

USCC: Ch. 12

Article: “Mother of God and Our Mother”

Article: “Five Doctrines on Mary”

Compendium #94-100



- Why is Mary’s role in the Church so important and indispensable?
- How can we pray to Mary without worshipping her?

Mon Nov 14

Church Teaching & Authority

USCC: Ch. 11

Article: “The Magisterium”

Article: “Infallibility”

Compendium #15-17



- What is the Magisterium and what role does it play in the life of the Church?
- How is the exercise of papal infallibility related to the Holy Spirit?

Mon Nov 21

Introduction to Prayer

USCC: Ch. 35 & 36

Article: “Introduction to Prayer”

Article: “A Simple Guide to Prayer”

Compendium # 534-598



- Which definition of prayer most speaks to you? Why should we pray?
- The Compendium # 572 speaks of the “battle of prayer.” Why is prayer a battle? Have you ever experienced it this way?

Mon Nov 28

The Liturgical Year

USCC: p. 173

Article: “The Liturgical Year”

Compendium # 241-242



- What is your favorite season of the Church year and why?
- How does the Liturgical Year help us enter into the mysteries of our Faith?

Sat Dec 3

RCIA DAY OF RETREAT

8:30 am – 2:30 pm

Location: TBD

- Why do you think prayer, and in particular, weekly attendance at Sunday Mass, is so essential to the Christian life?
- What questions do you have about the Mass?



Sun Dec 4

Rite of Welcoming & Acceptance

10:30 am Mass followed by *Reflection on the Word*

Blessed Sacrament Church

About the Rite of Welcoming & Acceptance. Once the inquirers have experienced an initial conversion to Jesus Christ, they celebrate the first major liturgical ritual of the initiation process. This first ritual is the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens. During this Rite of Acceptance, which is usually celebrated during Sunday Mass, the candidates for initiation are publicly welcomed for the first time. They “declare their intention to the Church and the Church in turn...accepts them as persons who intend to become its members” (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, no. 41). The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens completes the first stage or period of the initiation process and opens the door to the second period of the process, the period of the Catechumenate.

CATECHUMENATE

During the Catechumenate stage, those who wish to be initiated at Easter learn more about the Sacred Scriptures and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. We meet weekly at Mass to hear the Word of God proclaimed. The catechumens (unbaptized) and candidates (those baptized Catholic or in another Christian denomination) are dismissed after the homily. That is, you will be invited to leave the main body of the Church in order to meet and discuss the Scriptures you just heard proclaimed at Mass. We call this session, *Reflection on the Word*. This study and Reflection on the Scriptures is an important part of your formation and helps you prepare for the day when you will receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

Mon Dec 5

Sacraments in General

USCC: Ch. 14

Article: “The Sacraments”

Compendium #224-232

- Define sacrament. What are the seven sacraments?
- Define grace. How are the sacraments related to God’s grace?



Dec 8

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

This a holy day of obligation, which means that Catholics are required to attend Mass today as if it were Sunday. The feast celebrates when Mary was conceived in her mother's (St. Anne's) womb.



Sun Dec 11

Reflection on the Word

Following 10:30 am Mass (11:00 – 11:30 am)
Duffy Parish Center Main Level

Mon Dec 12

Baptism

USCC: Ch. 15
Article: "Baptism"
Compendium #252-264

- Which effect of Baptism stands out to you the most? Why?
- What does the gift of this sacrament say to you about God?



Sun Dec 18

Reflection on the Word

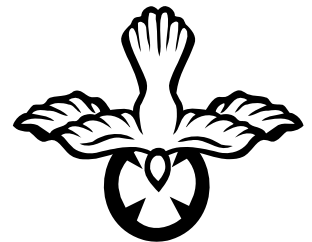
Following 10:30 am Mass (11:00 – 11:30 am)
Duffy Parish Center Main Level

Mon Dec 19

Confirmation

USCC: Ch. 16
Article: "Confirmation"
Compendium #265-270

- How do you think Confirmation is related to Baptism?
- What does this sacrament ask or require of each person?



Sun Dec 25 **NO REFLECTION ON THE WORD**

Mon Dec 26 **CHRISTMAS BREAK – NO CLASS**

Sun Jan 1 **NO REFLECTION ON THE WORD**

Mon Jan 2 **CHRISTMAS BREAK – NO CLASS**

Jan 1

Feast of the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God

This a holy day of obligation, which means that Catholics are required to attend Mass today as if it were Sunday. The feast celebrates Mary’s unique role as the Mother of God.

Sun Jan 8

Reflection on the Word

Following 10:30 am Mass (11:00 – 11:30 am)
Duffy Parish Center Main Level

Mon Jan 9

Eucharist

USCC: Ch. 17
Article: “The Eucharist”
Compendium #271-294

- Why do you think the Church refers to the Eucharist as “the source and summit of the entire Christian life?”
- What are the effects of receiving the Eucharist?



Sun Jan 15

NO REFLECTION ON THE WORD

Mon Jan 16

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY – NO CLASS

Sun Jan 22

Reflection on the Word

Following 10:30 am Mass (11:00 – 11:30 am)
Duffy Parish Center Main Level

Mon Jan 23

Reconciliation

USCC: Ch. 18

Article: "Reconciliation"

Article: "What is Sin?"

Compendium #296-312, #391-400

- If God hears and answers all of our prayers, why do we need to confess mortal (serious) sin to a priest?
- What is the difference between mortal and venial sin?
- Is there any sin that cannot be forgiven?



Sun Jan 29

Reflection on the Word

Following 10:30 am Mass (11:00 – 11:30 am)

Duffy Parish Center Main Level

Mon Jan 30

Anointing of the Sick

USCC: Ch. 19

Article: "Anointing of the Sick"

Article: "The Christian Meaning of Human Suffering"

Compendium # 313-320

- Who can receive the Anointing of the Sick? What are the effects of this sacrament?
- According to the Church, how has the problem of human suffering been answered?



Sun Feb 5

Reflection on the Word

Following 10:30 am Mass (11:00 – 11:30 am)

Duffy Parish Center Main Level

Mon Feb 6

Holy Orders

USCC: Ch. 20

Article: "Holy Orders"

Compendium #322-336

- What are some key differences in the roles of a bishop, priest, and deacon?



Sun Feb 12

Reflection on the Word

Following 10:30 am Mass (11:00 – 11:30 am)
Duffy Parish Center Main Level

Mon Feb 13

Matrimony

USCC: Ch. 21
Article: “Matrimony”
Compendium #337-350

- What sets Christian Marriage apart from all other civil marriages?
- Why is marriage indissoluble? What is the difference between an annulment and a divorce?



Sun Feb 19

NO REFLECTION ON THE WORD

Mon Feb 20

PRESIDENT’S DAY – NO CLASS

Wed Feb 22

Ash Wednesday

This marks the beginning of the Lenten season. Catholics receive ashes on their forehead as a reminder that “once we were dust and to dust we shall return.” RCIA participants are most welcome to receive ashes on this day.

PURIFICATION & ENLIGHTENMENT

This final period of preparation is one of intense, spiritual recollection that usually coincides with Lent. It is a period of purification and enlightenment. It is a time for deeper reflection and prayer. The catechumens, now called the elect, purify their minds and hearts by celebrating several rituals. The three purifying rituals, known as the *Scrutinies*, strengthen the elect and help them to complete their conversion. The Presentation of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer enlighten the minds of the elect in the final weeks of their preparation for the sacraments.

Sun Feb 26 **Rite of Sending**
10:30 am Mass – Blessed Sacrament Church
NO REFLECTION ON THE WORD TODAY

About the Rite of Sending. On the day of the Rite of Election, we celebrate a Rite of Sending at Blessed Sacrament as a way of acknowledging the candidates/catechumens' upcoming election to the Easter sacraments and sending them forth to Archbishop Wuerl for their admission to the final period of preparation for the sacraments.

Sun Feb 26 or Mar 4 **Rite of Election**
3:00 pm – Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

About the Rite of Election. The second major ritual of the RCIA usually occurs on the First Sunday of Lent. The catechumens have been elected (chosen) by God to receive the sacraments of initiation. This is an Archdiocesan-wide celebration and the presiding celebrant will be Archbishop Wuerl. The celebration that we will attend is one of two (for the entire Archdiocese of Washington) and takes place at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

Mon Feb 27 **RCIA attends the Parish Mission**
Preacher: Fr. Dick De Lillio, OSFS

Class meets directly in the church at 7:00 pm

What is a Parish Mission? Traditionally during Lent, many Catholic Churches offer parishioners an opportunity to carve out a few evenings during the week to hear a priest or guest speaker talk on some topic related to growth in personal holiness and our relationship with God.

Sun Mar 4 **Reflection on the Word**
Following 10:30 am Mass (11:00 – 11:30 am)
Duffy Parish Center Main Level

Mon Mar 5

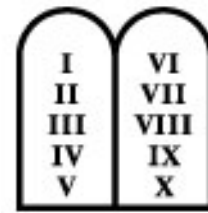
Foundations of Catholic Morality

Article: "God's Law"

Article: "The Christian Meaning of Freedom"

Compendium #357-371

- What is the Christian meaning of freedom?
- How does God's law make us truly free?



Moral Decision Making

USCC: Ch. 23 & 24

Article: "Light of Conscience"

Compendium #372-376

- Define conscience according to the reading.
- How can we properly form our consciences?



Sun Mar 11

First Scrutiny

10:30 am Mass

Followed by Reflection on the Word

(11:00 – 11:30 am)

Duffy Parish Center Main Level

Mon Mar 12

Promoting the Culture of Life

USCC: Ch. 29

Article: "Sanctity of Human Life"

Compendium #466-486

- What are the root causes of the culture of death?
- How can we promote the value of human life in all its stages in contrast to abortion, euthanasia, and capital punishment?



Sun Mar 18

Second Scrutiny

10:30 am Mass – Church

Followed by Reflection on the Word

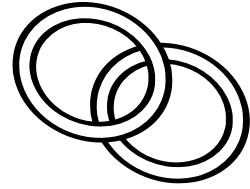
Mon Mar 19

God's Design for Human Sexuality

USCC: Ch. 30 & 33

Article: "Chastity and Modesty"

Compendium #487-502



- Based on the reading, how do you understand God's design for human sexuality?
- How does Pope John Paul II's theology of the body help you to appreciate the beauty of the gift of sexuality?

Mon Mar 19

Feast of Saint Joseph

St. Joseph is the foster father of Jesus and a great role model for husbands and fathers. Although he doesn't appear much in Scripture, the Church has given him the title of "Patron of the Universal Church."

Sat Mar 24

RCIA Retreat 8:30 am-3:00 pm

School Auditorium and Chapel



Sun Mar 25

Feast of the Annunciation

This feast celebrates the conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary. It commemorates when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, asking her to be the Mother of God. When Mary said yes, she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Sun Mar 25

Third Scrutiny

10:30 am Mass - Church

Followed by Reflection on the Word

Mon Mar 26

Catholic Social Teaching

USCC: Ch. 31

Article: "Social Teaching of the Church"

Compendium #401-414, #509-512



- What insights have you gained from reflecting on the U.S. Bishops' statement of themes related to Catholic social teaching?
- Which theme stands out the most for you? Why

Sun Apr 1

Attend 10:30 am Mass (Palm Sunday)

Followed by Brunch Out

NO MORE REFLECTION ON THE WORD

Mon Apr 2

The Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven, & Hell

USCC: Ch. 13

Article: "The Four Last Things"

Compendium #202-216



- What is the meaning of Christian death?
- Why is the resurrection of our bodies important?
- What does it mean for us?

Sat Apr 7

The Great Vigil of Easter

Practice at 7:00 pm in the church with your sponsor. Mass begins at 8:00 pm with reception to follow in the Parish Center Main Level.



About the Easter Vigil. At the Easter Vigil after sunset on Holy Saturday, the elect and previously baptized candidates celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism (for the unbaptized), Confirmation and Eucharist. The elect are baptized and reborn in Christ through the water that is poured on their heads; then configured to be more like Christ through the sacred chrism (oil) of Confirmation; & finally, the culmination of their initiation happens when they receive the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist. It is at this Mass that you will officially become a new Catholic!

Mon Apr 9

EASTER BREAK - NO CLASS

MYSTAGOGY

During the four week period of *mystagogia*. (Greek for a “deeper reflection of the mysteries of our faith”), the neophytes (newly initiated) gather to deepen their grasp of the great paschal mystery into which they have just been incorporated. During this time, our class focus will shift toward some more practical aspects of living the Christian life.

Sun Apr 15

Divine Mercy Sunday

Pope John Paul II instituted this feast to take place on the Sunday after Easter. It celebrates the Merciful Jesus, as He appeared to St. Faustina Kowalska in the 1940s. Her diary, “Divine Mercy in My Soul” has become a spiritual classic.

Mon Apr 16

Sharing Your Faith

Article: “Evangelization”



- What is evangelization?
- Why is it so important to the life of the Church?

Mon Apr 23

What is Ministry?

Article: “Works of Mercy”



- How do you define ministry?
- Distinguish between the corporal works of mercy and the spiritual works of mercy.

Mon Apr 30

The Universal Call to Holiness

Article: “Holiness and Joy”



- What does it mean to be “holy”?
- What is the relationship between holiness and joy?

Mon May 7 **RCIA Farewell Mass & Banquet**

6:30 pm Mass – Parish Center Chapel
Banquet immediately to follow