

Guidelines for One-to-One Spiritual Accompaniment in RCIA

Introduction

Spiritual accompaniment in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a sacred journey of *forming hearts*, not merely delivering lessons. It is a process of walking alongside another in faith, fostering conversion, healing, and lifelong discipleship. For RCIA Evangelizing Catechists (ECs), this accompaniment is both a ministry and a relationship rooted in love, reverence, and faith.

General Principles of Accompaniment

- **Prioritize your own relationship with God** and nurture your spiritual bond with fellow RCIA ECs. Together, form a spiritual family within the parish.
 - **Approach each candidate with reverence.** “Remove your sandals” before the sacred ground of their story, listening with deep respect.
 - **Practice loving acceptance** and listen without judgment.
 - **Keep confidentiality** with whatever that is shared. Once trust is broken, the person will stop sharing.
 - **Be a living witness of faith.** Faith is often *caught* through authentic relationships rather than *taught* through lessons.
 - **Avoid treating RCIA as an academic course.** It is a journey of conversion, healing, and mission, not a checklist of doctrines.
 - **Acknowledge personal wounds and longings.** Address the emotional and spiritual needs of each candidate as part of their faith journey.
-

Stage 1: Period of Inquiry (*Before the Rite of Acceptance*)

Focus: Building trust and friendship

- Engage in informal, relational actions such as home visits and shared meals to foster genuine connection.
- Share personal faith stories first, allowing inquirers to see how God works in everyday life. Openness invites openness.

- Encourage curiosity and trust rather than overwhelming them with doctrine.
- **Avoid** heavy theological discussions at this stage; the goal is to nurture initial faith and trust in God.

Stage 2: Period of Instruction (*Before the Rite of Election*)

Focus: Deepening prayer life and moral understanding

- Ask them how they are praying each day. Help them establish a daily prayer time.
- Clarify doubts and respond thoughtfully to questions about Catholic faith and life.
- Share personal experiences of faith practice and moral growth to model authentic Catholic living.
- Emphasize not only *what* the Church teaches but *why* it teaches it, and how to live it daily.
- **Avoid** reducing this stage to intellectual instruction; it is about deepening relationship and conviction.

Stage 3: Period of Enlightenment and Purification (*Before Baptism*)

Focus: Healing, forgiveness, and spiritual commitment

- Pray intentionally with candidates for healing, forgiveness, and spiritual strength.
- Share stories of reconciliation and mercy to reveal the depth of God's compassion.
- Guide candidates from fear toward trust and surrender as they approach the sacraments of initiation.
- **Avoid** allowing anxiety or fear to overshadow this sacred time of preparation.

Stage 4: Period of Mystagogy (*After Baptism*)

Focus: Lifelong growth and mission

- Reflect with the newly initiated (neophytes) on their RCIA journey and its personal meaning.
- Help them discern their spiritual and natural gifts, recognizing how the Holy Spirit calls them to serve.
- Encourage continued accompaniment beyond the sacraments, supporting their transition from *spectator* to *missionary disciple*.

- **Avoid** ending accompaniment after initiation; guide them in planning concrete steps for ongoing discipleship and service.
-

Conclusion

One-to-one spiritual accompaniment in RCIA is a ministry of presence, compassion, and faith-sharing. It calls for humility, authenticity, and a deep trust in the Holy Spirit's work within each person. Through attentive listening, prayer, and witness, RCIA ECs help form hearts that are open to lifelong conversion and mission in the Church.