

PATHWAYS IN FAITH

Resources for Implementing the RCIA

Presented by:
Fr. Frank DeSiano, CSP and
Ms. Heather Kinney



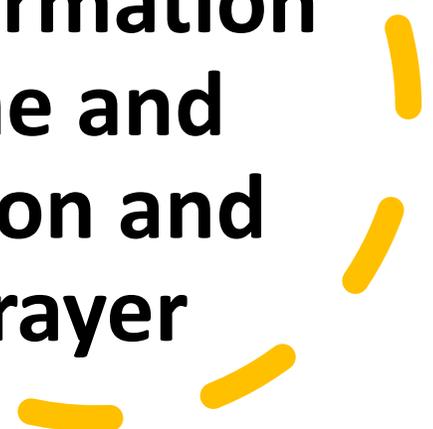
Pathways Prayer

Lord, loving God, you have created me with the ability to search, to know, and to love. You have given me the gifts to find myself and to find you. I ask for the guidance of your Spirit as I advance along the paths of my life. I ask for the grace to know the abundance of your love and mercy through Jesus, whom you sent into our history and lives. I pray for the grace to open my heart to accept your gift of faith. Let me be accompanied by the people you have called to your Church, that I may find my place in your Kingdom. I pray this through the Spirit of the Risen Christ. Amen.



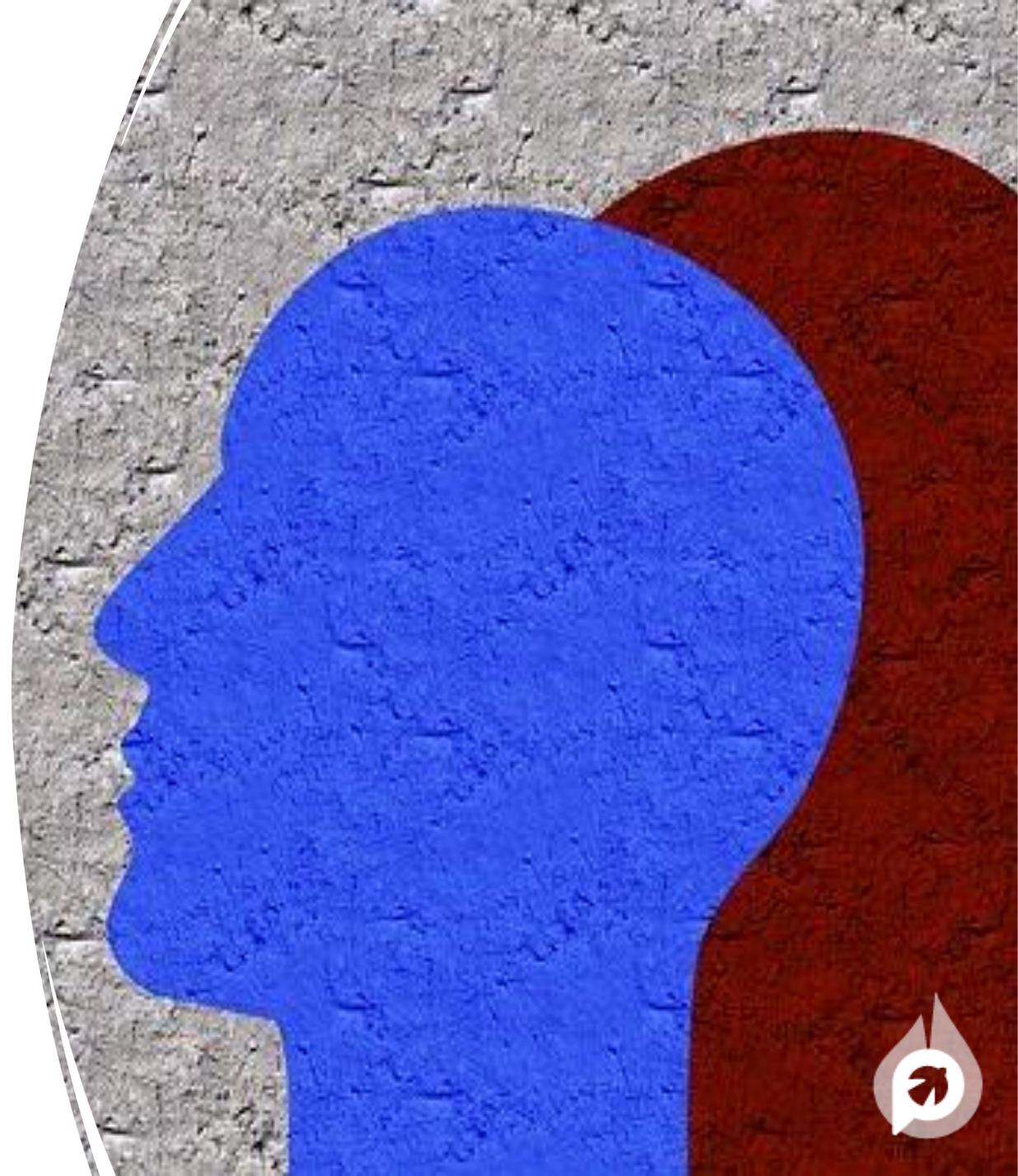
PATHWAYS IN FAITH

A set of resources to be used as part of RCIA formation reinforcing the relationship between doctrine and personal sharing through a process of reflection and conversation that leads to experiences of prayer



Issues

- The RCIA process has to revolve around individuals . . .
- RCIA looks too much like “classes” that give “information” . . .
- Directors are looking for new approaches and methods to help in the formation of catechumens and candidates . . .
- After the RCIA ends, so often also does the bonding . . .
- After the RCIA ends, how does formation persist in discipleship?





The Need—A Resource That is . . .

- Flexible
- Responsive to Individuals
- Able to reinforce group bonding

and . . .

- Connects participants in trusting conversation
- Respects the process by which adults learn
- Connects the process with Scripture and Prayer



Pathways in
Faith is
Responsive
to . . .



The *Directory for Catechesis*

The RCIA text

The way adults learn

The various dimensions of
conversion



Essential Elements of the Catechumenate

- **Paschal:** “everything is oriented toward the mystery of Christ’s passion, death, and resurrection”
- **Initiatory:** “an initiation into faith that leads catechumens to the discovery of the mystery of Christ and of the Church.”
- **Liturgical, ritual & symbolic:** “interwoven with symbols, rites, and celebrations that touch the senses and the affections.”
- **Community:** “a process that takes place in a concrete community . . .”
- **Ongoing conversion & witness:** “conversion is never fully accomplished but lasts a whole lifetime . . .”
- **Progressive:** “a dynamic process structured in periods that succeed one another in a gradual and progressive way. This evolving character responds to the actual life story of the person . . .”

Directory for Catechesis 64 (also see 62)



From the *Directory for Catechesis*: Perspectives That Shape Evangelization and Catechesis

- It reiterates firm *trust in the Holy Spirit*, who is present and acting in the Church, in the world and in the human heart. This brings to the catechetical effort a note of joy, serenity and responsibility.
- The act of faith is born from the *love that desires an ever-increasing knowledge of the Lord Jesus*, living in the Church . . . initiating believers into Christian life means introducing them to the living encounter with him.
- The Church, mystery of communion, is enlivened by the Spirit and made fruitful in bringing forth new life. This outlook of faith reaffirms *the role of the Christian community* as the natural setting for the generation and maturation of Christian life.
- The fundamental role of the baptized is recognized. . . . [A]ll believers are active participants, not passive consumers . . .
- Living the mystery of faith in terms of relationship with the Lord has implication for the proclamation of the Gospel. It requires, in fact, *overcoming any opposition between content and method*, between faith and life.

Directory for Catechesis 4



How Adults Learn:

Experience →

Meaning-Making

- **Adults need to know why: Why is it important to learn this? How is it personally relevant?**
- **Adults will learn if they want to learn and if they think it will help them better their lives.**
- **Adults bring their life experiences with them. These experiences are the lens through which they learn. “We all wear glasses.”**
- **Adults are independent, critical thinkers. They need time and space to analyze, digest, examine, and re-examine.**
- **Adults often learn best when they “do.”**





Discipleship (RCIA 75)

- **Encounter**
- **Integrating Faith and Life**
- **Accompanying and Being Accompanied**
- **Serving Others**
- **Living Catholic Values**



Purpose of RCIA

Conversion

Personal Dimension

***Communal Dimension
(parish community)***



Personal Conversion—Balance



*Knowledge of
Creed and doctrine*

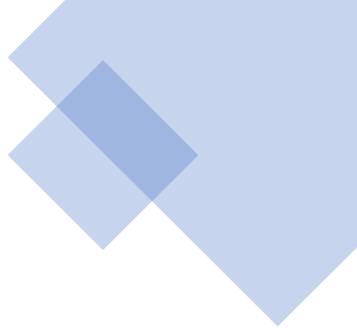
*Appropriation of
God's Word
personally and in
community*



Community

- **Faith only comes through some form of community.**
- **Community is the joint witness we make of our faith.**
- **Community means that faith comes through the dynamics of connecting with and sharing with others.**
- **Community becomes an instrument (sacrament) through which faith is communicated.**
- **Community involves listening and sharing, hearing others articulate faith, and finding one's own articulation in relationship with others.**





Creed and Kerygma

- **Elaboration of the Kerygma**
 - **Kerygma is the content of faith from the perspective of salvation and joy.**
 - **Central articles of the Creed articulate basic truths of human experience and God's relationship with us.**
 - **Kerygma expands into behavior because our lives reflect the truth we have discovered.**
 - **Creed shows identity with Christ and identity with Community.**
- 



Ideal Processes for Conversion

- **Hearing the Word of God and reflecting**
- **Exploring the Word of God**
- **Elaborating the Word of God through doctrine**
- **Sharing the Word of God with others**
- **Increasing identity with parish and Catholic community**
- **Ongoing exploration**
- **Prayer**





Pathways in Faith and the RCIA

DANGER

The RCIA process will overemphasize the “content” of faith as an exchange of information with the goal of receiving the Sacraments of Initiation.

OPPORTUNITY

Pathways in Faith offers essential doctrinal points in a format of reflection and sharing, which leads to the development of lifelong discipleship behaviors.



PATHWAYS IN FAITH

**Expanding our resources
to help seekers find faith
in the Catholic community**



Design of the Sessions

1) Welcome

-- Participants “check in” and reflect quietly and/or together on an introductory question.

2) Presentation of the Theme

-- Participants listen to the theme as expressed in Scripture and in the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*; a question to get the conversation going follows.

3) Discussion and Sharing

-- Participants explore the theme through various discussion questions that help them open up the theme and apply it to their lives.

4) Questions

-- Participants have the opportunity to ask questions about the theme, teaching, or other issues that emerged in the discussion.

5) Catholic Factoid

-- The leader briefly offers an informational piece on some aspect of Catholic life.

6) Prayer

-- Participants are invited into some kind of formal, explicit prayer.

7) Announcements

8) Hospitality



Session 8. My Experience of God

1) Welcome

- » How was your week? What's new or noteworthy—something that happened or an idea or discovery?
- » When do you feel closest to God?

2) Presentation of the Theme

While it is impossible to depict God because God is a Spirit, without matter or form, our imaginations demand some kind of picture. Even if we use only words, we still are attempting to depict God. Scriptures help our imagination about God.

The Scriptures often show how words struggle to communicate the fullness of God:

Upon this likeness of a throne was seated, up above, a figure that looked like a human being. And I saw something like polished metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed on all sides, from what looked like the waist up; and from what looked like the waist down, I saw something like the appearance of fire and brilliant light surrounding him. Just like the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day so was the appearance of brilliance that surrounded him. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. -Ezekiel 1:26-28

Does anything in Ezekiel's account of his experience of God resonate with you? What do you think of the words that he has to use to describe his experience?

From the *US Catechism*:

"Revelation is the self-disclosure of the living God. God shows himself by both great deeds, as narrated for us in Scripture, and by words that illumine the meaning of these deeds. ... In Revelation, the tremendous gulf between God and the human race is bridged. ... The process of Revelation, which took centuries to unfold, reached its magnificent fulfillment in the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (p. 13).

3) Discussion and Sharing

- » Think for a moment of Bible verses you might know. Which one is a favorite for thinking about God?
- » Imagine you were talking to a seven-year-old child. What words would you use to describe God to this child?
- » How has prayer affected the way you think of God?

4) Questions

What questions do you have about the ways you feel you have experienced God? Here we can also explore





Principles of Evangelization

USCCB
Pattern:
“Living as
Missionary
Disciples”

- The modules are gathered into basic faith-dynamics that follow widely adopted approaches to evangelization.
 - After the initial welcome and inquiry modules, the patterns shift to **encounter** in which aspects of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are presented.
 - Then follows a set of modules that emphasize the **accompany** parts of Catholic life, particularly in the Sacraments and moral life, all grounded in **community**.
 - These conclude with a final module on being **sent**, with an emphasis on continued discipleship, mystagogy, and sharing Good News with others.
- 
- 

Check Out the “Index” on the Website

<https://pathwaysinfaith.org/index/>

It shows how **Pathways in Faith** proceeds through the steps of the RCIA and relates these to the four dimensions of evangelization from *Living as Missionary Disciples*.





3) Catechumenate–Encounter (13 sessions)

MODULE 5: EXPERIENCING JESUS

- » **Session 15.** Who is Jesus?: His Words and Deeds
- » **Session 16.** Who is Jesus?: Human and Divine
- » **Session 17.** The Holy Spirit

MODULE 6: PRAYER AND SACRAMENTS

- » **Session 18.** My Experience of Prayer
- » **Session 19.** Liturgy: Prayer of the Church
- » **Session 20.** Baptism–Confirmation: Encounters with God in Jesus
- » **Session 21.** Eucharist: Sign of Sharing in the Kingdom

MODULE 7: GRACE AND SIN

- » **Session 22.** The Body of Christ: Union with God and Others
- » **Session 23.** Living the Sacraments
- » **Session 24.** Sin: Breakdown of Encounter

MODULE 8: THE SHAPE OF SIN

- » **Session 25.** Sins Against Faith
- » **Session 26.** Sins Against Hope
- » **Session 27.** Sins Against Love

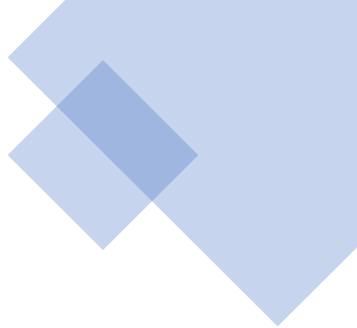




Using the Sessions

- It may be that directors will not use all the sessions.
- Directors are urged to mix these sessions with other dynamics to help people approach and absorb the material, i.e., more formal teaching, video, visits to a church building, etc.
- The 38 sessions are divided into 12 modules that proceed from an initial presentation of Kerygma to a filling out of that Kerygma with considerations of teaching, moral life, and spirituality.
- Each module offers, along with the PDFs for the sessions, a short video orientation and a live webinar offered monthly to connect participants with the wider faith community.





Attitudes to Cultivate

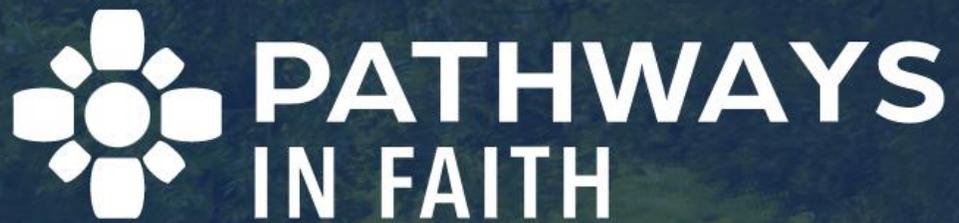
- **Flexible** use of the material depending on the composition of the group; some areas might be engaged more fully than others, i.e., how one develops the theme
 - Trusting in **conversation** so that people share their perspectives and build upon each other's insights
 - **Giving time** during the session for participants to absorb the conversation and teaching
 - Emphasis on **prayer** as an experience that can be replicated in other places outside the group
 - Helping all become comfortable with the use of **Scripture**
- 



Nuts and Bolts of Pathways in Faith

- Because **Pathways in Faith** makes no claim to being doctrinally exhaustive or an alternative to other sources of doctrine, it was determined that it did not need an “Imprimatur”.
- **Pathways in Faith** is being made available primarily through the Internet in the form of downloadable sessions, videos, and webinars.
- **Pathways in Faith** is available via subscription with parishes paying annually (\$200). Before subscribing, you can view the introduction, index, and a sample session at www.pathwaysinfaith.org





A New Online Resource for Catechumenal Ministry

Introducing subscription-based tools to make the catechumenate more responsive to personal sharing and conversion and to help adults explore dimensions of their faith

SUBSCRIBE

LOG IN

PREVIEW PATHWAYS IN FAITH

INTRODUCTION

SAMPLE SESSION

INDEX



Adult Faith Formation

- The sessions developed in [Pathways in Faith](#) are suitable for adult faith formation groups as well.
- Directors can offer certain modules as a way to deepen understanding about certain aspects of Catholic faith and life or, in many cases, as a way to introduce themes to Catholics who have not been sufficiently catechized.
- Some groups that might benefit from these sessions include young adults, parents of school-age children, and people preparing for Confirmation later on in life.





Hopes

- A ready resource for busy catechetical directors preparing RCIA sessions
- Different modules can be led by different parishioners throughout the year.
- Some modules may be repeated several times to help the parish approach an ideal of year-round catechumenal ministry.
- The approach of [Pathways in Faith](#) can provide a model for ongoing faith development after receiving the Sacraments of Initiation, such as the period of Mystagogy.



Discernment

The interactive experience will help individuals and pastoral leaders in the process of discernment—acknowledging when people are ready to make commitments to proceed to the next step in the conversion process or to enter the Church.





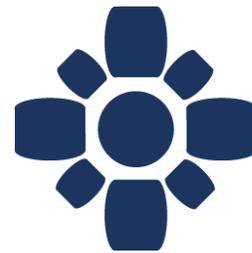
PEM Support

PEM staff are available to provide support and training for catechetical leaders and catechists using Pathways in Faith as a resource for implementing the RCIA.

We also will schedule periodic webinars on topics for training catechetical leaders and teams.

[https://pathwaysinfaith.org/
product/annual-
subscription/](https://pathwaysinfaith.org/product/annual-subscription/)

How to
Subscribe
to Pathways
in Faith

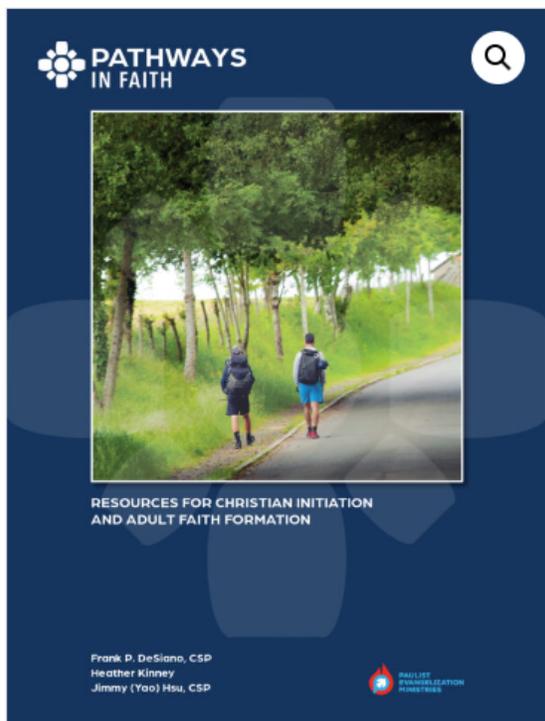


**PATHWAYS
IN FAITH**





Annual Subscription



Pathways in Faith a set of online, subscription-based tools to make the catechumenate more responsive to personal sharing and conversion and to help adults explore dimensions of their faith.

Subscriptions provide access to Pathways in Faith for one (1) year from date of initial purchase or renewal date. Materials may be reproduced only for the immediate use of parish or pastoral settings, and may not otherwise be duplicated or shared.

Annual subscription – \$200.

Payment Term

Choose an option ▼

SIGN UP NOW

Contact

- Fr. Frank DeSiano, CSP
Ms. Heather Kinney
- Paulist Evangelization Ministries
- PO Box 29121
- Washington, DC 20017
- www.pemdc.org
- www.pathwaysinfaith.org



**PAULIST
EVANGELIZATION
MINISTRIES**