

Churches of St Michael, St Mary, and St Charles

Order of Christian Initiation (OCIA)



2025/2026 Syllabus

Instructor Information:

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Description:

Are you interested in becoming Catholic? Are you a Catholic who needs the sacrament of Confirmation? Or are you simply curious about the Catholic faith? If so, our OCIA class is perfect for you. Join us to explore what the Catholic Church teaches and why. There's no commitment required and no cost involved.

Parishes across the world welcome new Catholics into the Church through the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA). The OCIA program introduces people to the structure and content of the Catholic faith through weekly meetings and conversations with parishioners and each other. This is for non-Christians, Christians from other faith traditions, Catholic adults who have missed sacraments, and fully initiated Catholics that are seeking to grow in their faith.

Meeting Details:

OCIA will meet on the days listed in the schedule below from 6:15 pm to 8 pm in the St Mary's Great Hall (unless stated otherwise).

Address: 423 Fifth Street South, Stillwater Mn 55082 (Enter the southwest door which is the door closest to Pine Street West)

We will pray together and discuss key aspects of the Catholic Christian faith and the Catholic Church. Please let Jerry Buchman know if you must miss any of the scheduled sessions.

Course Materials:

Evangelium (Participant's Book)

Evangelium uses art and clearly organized lessons to ground participants in the full panorama of Catholic beliefs. Evangelium is designed for those coming into the Catholic faith as well as Catholics who want to learn more about their faith. Lessons follow the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd Edition

A catechism is a teaching tool (in Greek, “to echo” – students would repeat or echo answers to questions back to their teachers). The Catechism of the Catholic Church is an organized presentation of the essential teachings of the Catholic Church on both faith and morals. The main divisions of the Catechism are: the Profession of Faith; the Celebration of the Christian Mystery; Life in Christ; and Christian Prayer. However, the Catechism is not meant to stand alone as the only reference for Catholic teaching. The church’s rich tradition, the Bible, and liturgy all illuminate each other and help us grow in faith, hope, and love.

“In reading the Catechism of the Catholic Church, we can perceive the wonderful unity of the mystery of God.” —
Pope Saint John Paul II

Definitions:

Catechumens

Unbaptized persons who desire to be fully incorporated into the Catholic Church through the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.

Candidates

Those who have been baptized in the Christian faith and are seeking full communion in the Catholic Church through the Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.

Sponsors

Each catechumen and candidate selects a sponsor (Jerry will assist in selecting a sponsor as needed). Ideally, a sponsor is someone who has been instrumental in their life by way of example, words of encouragement, or lengthy discussions. It might be a close friend, a co-worker, a spouse or other family member other than a parent/guardian; it could be a number of different people. They must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church that is 16+ years of age and has received all Sacraments of Initiation. The sponsor will participate in the various Masses and rites with the catechumens and candidates, and is asked to attend class, if possible.

Cor Jesu

Cor Jesu is a Latin phrase for “Heart of Jesus.” It's an opportunity for everyone to continue to encounter Christ through Eucharistic Adoration, and Praise and Worship. It begins at 6:15pm in St. Michael's Sanctuary with the [Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament](#), followed by the [Litany of the Sacred Heart](#) and then [Benediction](#) at 7:05pm. There will be refreshments in Rose Hall afterwards, this is a great opportunity to meet other parishioners and other OCIA participants.

Course Schedule:

Evangelium Curriculum (Class Topics)

In the schedule below the topics for each class are color coded, corresponding with the four parts of the Evangelium Curriculum; **The Creed**, **The Sacraments**, **Morals**, and **Prayer**. This delineation is based on the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), which is structured using those same four parts. In brief;

1. **The Creed** - builds the foundation, our profession of faith, 'how we know what we know?' and 'what we know about the faith?'
2. **The Sacraments** - now that we know about the faith, what do we do? How do we enter into communion with the Holy Trinity?
3. **Morals** - learn to live as Christ lived, how we ought to conduct ourselves as a Christian in the world, and the reasons behind these moral precepts
4. **Prayer** - consider various aspects of prayer, meditation, contemplation. Learn from the Saints and other great teachers about different devotions and the Catholic mystical tradition

Rites

At different times in this initiation process there will be rites given, depending on the sacraments you're seeking. Those rows highlighted in **purple** are rites associated with Catechumens and those rows highlighted in **red** are rites associated with Candidates. Everyone should try to attend these, even if the rite is not specific to them, to show support for our fellow initiates. Rows highlighted in **blue** are combined rites for both Catechumens and Candidates.

* Classes are color coded based on topic and the Evangelium Participant's Book

** Everyone should attend all classes

Date	Topic(s) (alternative time & location)	Presenter (Attendee notes)
Sept 10	Welcome & Introductions. Introduction to Curriculum, Catechism, and other resources, The Meaning of Life (p 1)	Jerry Buchman / John Morton
Sept 17	Creation and Fall (p 3)	Jerry Buchman
Sept 24	Salvation History (p 5)	John Morton
Oct 1	The Incarnation (p7) / The Life of Christ (p 9)	Father Conklin
Oct 8	The Paschal Mystery (p 11)	John Morton
Oct 22	Movie: <i>The Human Experience</i>	(All should attend)

Oct 29	Praying the Mass (p 45), Mass Gestures (Meet in St. Mary's Church after 5:30 Mass)	Father Creagan
Nov 1 (Saturday)	All Saint's Day (no class)	(Attendance encouraged)
Nov 5	The Trinity (p 13) / Confirmation Saint Introduction	Jerry Buchman
Nov 12	The Church (p 15) / Cor Jesu Introduction	Father Conklin
Nov 19	Cor Jesu (6:15pm - St Michael's Church after 5:30 Mass)	(All should attend)
Nov 30 (Sunday)	Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens (9:15am Mass - St Michael's)	All should attend but only Catechumens have a part in Mass
Dec 3	Scripture & Tradition (p 17)	John Morton
Dec 8 (Monday)	The Immaculate Conception (Holy Day of Obligation - no class)	(All should attend)
Dec 10	Mary (p 19)	John Morton
Dec 17	Cor Jesu (6:15pm - St Michael's Church after 5:30 Mass)	(All should attend)
Dec 24	Vigil of Christmas (no class)	(All should attend Mass either at this vigil or following feast day)
Dec 25 (Thursday)	The Birth of Our Lord, Christmas (Holy Day of Obligation - no class)	(All should attend Mass either at preceding vigil or this feast day)
Dec 31	New Year's Eve / Vigil of Mary, Mother of God (no class)	(All should attend Mass either at this vigil or following feast day)
Jan 1 (Thursday)	Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (Holy Day of Obligation - no class)	(All should attend Mass either at preceding vigil or this feast day)
Jan 7	The Last Four Things (p 20) / Confirmation Saint & Sponsor Update	Jerry Buchman

Jan 14	Liturgy and Sacraments (p 21)	Jerry Buchman
Jan 21	Cor Jesu (6:15pm - St Michael's Church after 5:30 Mass)	(All should attend)
Jan 28	The Life of Prayer (p 41) / The Lord's Prayer (p 43)	Father Creagan
Feb 4	Baptism and Confirmation (p 23)	Father Bruno
Feb 11	The Eucharist (p 25)	Father Creagan
Feb 18	Ash Wednesday Mass (no class)	(All should attend)
Feb 22 (Sunday)	Archdiocesan Rite of Welcome - Rite of Election and Continuing Conversion (2 pm - The Cathedral of St Paul)	Bishop will preside (All attend)
Feb 25	Confession and Anointing (p 27)	Father Bruno
Mar 4	Marriage and Holy Orders (p 29) / Preparation for 1st Scrutiny	Jerry Buchman
March 8 (Sunday)	1st Scrutiny (11 am Mass - St Michael's)	All should attend but only Catechumens have a part in Mass
Mar 11	Moral Action (p 31) / Preparation for 2nd and 3rd Scrutinies	John Morton
March 15 (Sunday)	2nd Scrutiny (11 am Mass - St Michael's)	All should attend but only Catechumens have a part in Mass
Mar 18	Cor Jesu (6:15pm - St Michael's after 5:30 Mass)	(All should attend)
March 22 (Sunday)	3rd Scrutiny (11 am Mass - St Michael's)	All should attend but only Catechumens have a part in Mass
Mar 25	Natural Law and the Ten Commandments (p 33)	Dr. Michael Rota

Apr 2 (Thursday)	Mass of the Lord's Supper	(All should attend Mass)
Apr 3 (Friday)	Good Friday of the Lord's Passion	(All should attend a Good Friday Service)
Apr 4 (Saturday)	Easter Vigil (8:00pm Mass - St Michael's)	All should attend but only Catechumens have a part in Mass
Apr 8	Grace and the Beatitudes (p 35) / Preparation for Penitential Rite	Father Conklin
Apr 15	Cor Jesu (6:15pm - St Michael's after 5:30 Mass)	(All should attend)
Apr 19 (Sunday)	Penitential Rite (11 am Mass - St Michael's)	All should attend but only Candidates have role in Mass
Apr 22	Virtues and Vices (p 37)	John Morton
Apr 29	TBD	TBD
May 6	Christian Life in the World (p 39)	Jerry Buchman
May 13	Mercy and The Practice of Confession (p 47)	Father Bruno
May 20	Sacrament of Confession (Candidates) (meet in atrium - St Michael's)	Jerry Buchman / Multiple Priests
May 23 (Saturday)	Vigil of Pentecost (7pm Mass - St Michael's)	All should attend but only Candidates have role in Mass
May 27	TBD	TBD
June 3	Catholic Devotions (p 49)	Jerry Buchman
June 10	End of Year Celebration! Living Mission - Parish Life	Jerry Buchman