

## **How Do Children or Youth Become Catholic?**

*Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Luke 18:16*

The Catholic Church is delighted to welcome children into the community, no matter how old or young they are, and no matter how much previous faith formation they may or may not have had. We are simply glad they want to get to know Jesus better!

### **Children Younger than 7 Years Old**

If a child is less than 7 years old, but not yet baptized, the process is a very simple one. Parents are asked to attend a baptismal preparation class. This class is usually scheduled for the first Tuesday evening of the month, at 7 PM. Please contact the parish office to register for this class, (315) 638-0585 or [email@staugustinesparish.org](mailto:email@staugustinesparish.org). In addition, the child will become part of the usual faith formation process, and celebrate the other Sacraments of Initiation as scheduled for all baptized Catholic children.

If a child has been baptized, the Catholic Church recognizes baptism from most other Christian denominations. To become Catholic, he or she becomes part of the usual faith formation process, and celebrates the sacraments of initiation as scheduled for children who are baptized Catholic. For more information see our Faith Formation page.

### **Children 7-8 Years Old or Older**

Children age 7-8 years old or older (or are in the second grade or higher) have their very own process of becoming Catholic. This process is an adaptation of the *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults* or *RCIA* as it commonly known. At St. Augustine's we call it *RCIA - Youth*. Typically students and parents enter into a two-year commitment of weekly classes that culminate in the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) during the Easter season.

This process is for both students who have not been baptized as well as young people who were baptized in another Christian faith. The Catholic Church recognizes baptism from most other Christian denominations. If a child has already been baptized, but received no formal faith formation, he or she may be received into full communion with the Catholic Church through the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.

The RCIA has four stages. The beginning stage is called a time of *Inquiry* or the *Pre-Catechumenate*. The second stage is the *Catechumenate*, or the period of learning. The third stage is called the *Period of Purification and Enlightenment* and generally takes place during Lent. It is a period of intense prayer and reflection prior to

celebrating the Easter Sacraments. *Mystagogia*, the fourth period is one of “unpacking” and integration of the experience of celebrating the Sacraments. These periods of the process are all preceded by formal Rites that take place during a Sunday Mass. These Rites are your public affirmation to the community, as well as yourself, that you are ready to move on in your journey towards the Easter Vigil, your initiation into the Catholic Christian community.