

Preparation for the Rite of Election

Set aside time for this preparation session one to two weeks prior to the celebration of the Rite of Election. Invite the celebrant for the Rite of Sending (celebrated at the parish), the children and their parents, sponsors, catechists, and the coordinator of the OCIA process to attend. Remember that, while parents have a significant role in the rites of the OCIA, they cannot serve as the godparents or Confirmation sponsors.

Although optional, many parishes do celebrate the Rite of Sending of the Catechumens for Election on the day of or in close proximity to the day of the celebration of the Rite of Election at the diocesan cathedral. The Rite of Sending is outlined in paragraphs 106–117 of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults. The Rite of Election is outlined in paragraphs 118–137 (for adults) and in paragraphs 277–290 (for children and youth in the OCIA process).

The following is a suggested outline for a preparation session.

Preparation

1. Set the environment with chairs arranged so that each child is seated with his or her parents and godparents in their own circle. Arrange the circles around a larger focal point of a prayer table covered in the color of the liturgical season, an open Bible, the Book of the Elect, and a candle.
2. Prepare ahead of time directions to the diocesan cathedral or to the location where the Rite of Election will be celebrated and copies of the discussion questions to be used in this preparation session.
3. Provide each participant with a piece of drawing paper and crayons or markers.

Welcome

1. Welcome everyone. Explain that the focus of today’s session is to prepare for the Rite of Sending (if it is being celebrated at your parish) and the Rite of Election.
2. Invite all participants to use the drawing paper and crayons or markers to write the letters of their names vertically. Then ask them to create name acrostics by using each letter of their names to write a word or short phrase that tells something about them. For example, “M” could stand for “musical.” “A” could stand for “amazing.”



Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

RESOURCE ARTICLE

Deepen

1. Begin with prayer. Sing or play a recording of “God Has Chosen Me” (B. Farrell/OCP) or another appropriate song. Offer a spontaneous prayer for all gathered and for the celebration to come.
2. Invite each person to speak his or her name aloud and to share his or her name acrostic. Encourage parents to share why they gave their child his or her name.
3. Lead a discussion, highlighting the importance of names.
 - Begin by asking about the times that one needs to sign his or her name, such as when signing up for a team or for a class, signing a marriage license, signing a homework or test page, signing a driver’s license, signing a petition, signing a letter or card, and so on.
 - Then ask the participants to name all the people they can think of who call them by name (*parents, children, teachers, friends, coworkers, neighbors, family members, and so on*).
 - Remind the group that each of our names is special to God, too. The Book of Isaiah tells us that God calls us by name (see Isaiah 43:1) and that our names are written on the palm of his hand (see Isaiah 49:16).

Distribute copies of the discussion questions listed below to each family group, and give the groups time to discuss the questions. When enough time has been given, invite large-group sharing.

Thinking about your OCIA journey from when you started to today; what have you learned about Jesus?

How have you put into practice what Jesus tells his disciples to do?

Why do you want to be baptized and confirmed, and to make your First Holy Communion?

How has being a part of the OCIA process changed your life?

1. Conclude by explaining the following.
 - God calls us first. God has been waiting for us to come to him.
 - In the Rite of Election, we answer God’s call. We say yes to coming to him in the Easter Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist.
 - We commit to preparing for the celebration of the sacraments and to becoming Catholics by signing our names in the Book of the Elect. When we sign our names, we enter into a covenant, or sacred promise, with God and the Church.

Challenge

1. Encourage the parents, children, and godparents to continue to discuss the meaning of signing the Book of the Elect and entering into a covenant, or sacred promise, with God and the Church.
2. Before concluding with prayer, take time to review the directions to the diocesan cathedral or to the location where the Rite of Election will be celebrated. Discuss any other important details, such as carpooling, arrival time, dress, and so on.

Pray

Invite all participants to quiet themselves and to offer a quiet prayer to Jesus, thanking him for calling them to be his disciples. You may wish to conclude with the song or hymn you used at the beginning of this session.