



# National Gathering on Christian Initiation™

A Conference for Catechumenal Ministers  
and Pastoral Leaders

The RCIA Adapted for Children  
2020

July 2–3,  
2020  
Chicago, IL



## REGISTRATION BOOKLET

“As more and more families are coming to the Church asking for initiation of their older children, now is the time to learn effective implementation strategies for the RCIA with children. At NGCI 2020, you’ll gain a deeper understanding of the beauty and vision of initiation for children, as well as practical ideas for how it will work in your parish.”

—Rita Burns Senseman  
2020 NGCI Team Member



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*The RCIA presents the expanded notion of catechesis that Christians are made, not born. The name of catechesis represents the whole of the efforts within the Church to make disciples. NGCI 2020 will explore the goal of catechesis—the “making” of young disciples! Here are the overarching understandings about discipleship: Discipleship is a way of life. Discipleship is lived in the context of a community. Discipleship is not a sacramental moment but a dynamic of becoming. Discipleship is an identity; it names who we are. The making of disciples in our Church is based on the understanding that faith is handed on—Catechesis. Mystagogy is life in baptism, not after baptism.*

**—Sr. Sandra DeMasi, ssj, 2020 NGCI Team Member**

## Mission

To promote the liturgical formation “of the faithful and also their active participation in the liturgy both internally and externally, taking into account their age and condition, their way of life, and their stage of religious development” so all the faithful may “become thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy.”

—*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 19, 14

## Misión

Promover la formación litúrgica “y la participación activa de los fieles en la liturgia, interna y externa, conforme a su edad, condición, género de vida y grado de cultura religiosa”, de modo que todos ellos “se impregnen totalmente del espíritu y de la fuerza de la liturgia”.

—*Constitución sobre la Sagrada Liturgia*, 19, 14

## Contact Us



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# An Invitation from LTP

The RCIA adapted for children can be a big challenge, as we face a wide range of questions that can have a significant impact on our overall ministry.

*How do we minister to children seeking Christian initiation and to their families?*

*What is the best way to offer each child appropriate catechesis and formation in Christian life?*

*How do we receive children who have been baptized in other Christian traditions into the full communion of the Catholic Church?*

*How does this fit in with our parish catechetical programs?*

*How do or can we involve parents and families?*

*What is the role of the liturgy and the community?*

Join us at the 2020 **National Gathering on Christian Initiation** to find the answers to these and many other questions and to discover parish-tested practices for dealing with diverse pastoral situations.

New in 2020 is the addition of a Spanish-language track. We're excited to offer this track to better meet the needs of our Spanish-speaking initiation ministers.

As we did last year, we are again offering a discounted rate for groups of four or more people, as well as a variety of housing options for differing budgets. I invite you to visit [www.NGCI.org](http://www.NGCI.org) for more information. If you have any questions about the NGCI or would like to talk about more RCIA training opportunities in your area, please give me a call at 773-579-4900, ext. 3531, or email me at [training@ltp.org](mailto:training@ltp.org).

Sincerely,



**Michael Ruzicki**

Training and Events Manager

Liturgy Training Publications



# What Is the National Gathering on Christian Initiation?

The **National Gathering on Christian Initiation** is an annual two-day conference for parish Christian initiation ministers and diocesan leaders of catechesis, liturgy, and evangelization. Steeped in the vision of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, the National Gathering on Christian Initiation seeks to promote the vision of the Church as constantly evangelizing, catechizing, and initiating disciples. Throughout the conference, participants will explore the theoretical and practical aspects of initiation ministry, learn from interactive multimedia presentations, engage in prayerful reflection on the liturgies of the RCIA, and share their knowledge and experience with initiation ministers from around the country.



*[The Christian initiation of children] requires both a conversion that is personal and somewhat developed, in proportion to their age, and the assistance of the education they need. The process of initiation thus must be adapted both to their spiritual progress, that is, to the children's growth in faith, and to the catechetical instruction they receive.*

—*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, 253



The National Gathering on Christian Initiation will have three tracks. **Parish and Diocesan Leaders** (in English), **Initiation Catechists** (in English), and **Catequistas de iniciación** (in Spanish). At this event, participants will gain practical skills, discuss common challenges, and share best practices to enrich their work. An optional pre-gathering forum will be available on July 1, 2020, and will explore “Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: Insights for RCIA Adapted for Children.” This forum is free for participants but has a limited number of seats—register today!

# Theme: The RCIA Adapted for Children

Children of varying ages and levels of faith development come to us seeking Christian initiation. How do we minister to these children and their families? What is the best way to offer each child appropriate catechesis and formation in Christian life? How do we receive children who have been baptized in other Christian traditions into the full communion of the Catholic Church? Join us at the 2020 National Gathering on Christian Initiation to find the answers to these and many other questions and to discover parish-tested practices for dealing with diverse pastoral situations.



Photo © Karen Callaway



Photo © LTP

## Goals of the 2020 Gathering

- Participants will deepen their understanding of the Church's vision of the baptismal catechumenate as outlined in Part II.1 of the RCIA ritual text (RCIA adapted for children of catechetical age).
- Participants will examine the roles of the parish community, the family, companions, and sponsors in order to discern best practices for forming and engaging each group throughout the initiation process.
- Participants will explore various models of implementing an RCIA process adapted for children and will develop an initial implementation plan.
- Participants will learn models for effective catechesis and formation of children in the initiation process.



# Schedule



The schedule for the National Gathering on Christian Initiation has been intentionally designed to offer an engaging balance of presentations, prayer, fellowship, discussion, and skills training. At various times throughout the day, we will break into smaller groups—**Parish and Diocesan Leaders** and **Initiation Catechists**—for an in-depth focus on the needs and challenges of our specific ministries. The optional opening reception on July 1 will offer the opportunity for networking and fellowship with initiation ministers from around the country.

## Pre-Gathering Forum & Reception July 1, 2020

### 2:30 PM – 6:30 PM • Registration

Early check-in will be provided in the lobby of the Hampton Inn.

### 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM • Optional Pre-Gathering Forum

#### **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: Insights for RCIA Adapted for Children**

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an approach to the religious formation of children, in the Bible, the liturgy of the church, and the educational principles of Maria Montessori. Participants will explore how these principles can be applied to the ministry of the RCIA adapted for children of catechetical age. **Free. Registration is limited.**

### 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM • Opening Reception

Join us for a special opening reception in the Palm Court rooftop atrium in the historic Mundelein Center, overlooking Lake Michigan, with an open bar. **Tickets are \$35.**

## Day One July 2, 2020

### 8:00 AM – 8:50 AM • Registration

### 9:00 AM – 9:30 AM • Welcome, Morning Prayer, and Introductions

### 9:30 AM – 10:15 AM • General Session

#### **Where Are We Now? Evaluating the US Landscape and Assessing the Needs of Your Community**

While some dioceses in the United States are experiencing a growth in the Catholic population, others are closing parishes. Are families with children filling the pews in your parish, or do

older adults make up the majority of parishioners? Is your parish more likely to need a parish nurse or people to help with children's catechesis? Are varied cultures a part of the parish or mainly one culture? Since you began in ministry, how has the parish shifted its approach to catechesis and the sacraments? What have you learned about the best way to catechize adults? Teens? Children? Is your parish's story one of new buildings being erected or one of parishes merging? What are the needs of your parish? Are they being met?

### 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM • General Session

#### **Christian Initiation of Children: A Vision for Catechetical Ministry**

Participants will be guided to consider how their parish's catechesis of adults and children can take on the vision of the baptismal catechumenate. Such catechesis would have a "catechumenal style" that would seek to help people arrive at a mature faith so that they might become evangelizers. The catechesis would be integral formation and not just provide information (see *General Directory for Catechesis*, 29, 58, and 59). Through such catechesis, parishioners would be formed in the community model Acts 2:42 portrays: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

### 11:30 AM – 12:15 PM • General Session

#### **Forming Parents as Primary Catechists**

When presented with child catechumens, we often face the reality that the parents (or guardians) are also in need of faith formation. The spiritual journey of children can inspire the adults in their lives to explore their relationship with Christ and the Church and learn more about their faith. *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*, 40, states that "the witness of adults actively continuing their own formation shows children and youth that growth in faith is lifelong and does not end upon reaching adulthood." This session explores practical ways to form parents so they may gain confidence in their duties of raising their children in the faith.

### 12:15 PM – 1:15 PM • Lunch included in registration

### 1:15 PM – 2:30 PM • Breakout Session

#### **Parish and Diocesan Leaders: Models of Implementation**

In this session, participants will examine five models of implementation that can be used in a parish setting. The pros and cons for each model will be considered.



### **Initiation Catechists: The Role of the Catechist (Part 1):** *Providing Suitable Catechesis*

Participants will explore the catechist's role in preparing and offering catechesis that is "gradual and complete [and] accommodated to the liturgical year" (RCIA 75.1).

2:30 PM – 3:00 PM • Coffee Break

3:00 PM – 4:15 PM • Breakout Session

### **Parish and Diocesan Leaders: Structuring a Parish Approach or "Program"**

There will always be questions: How am I supposed to do this? What are my policies and guidelines? How do I form a team? What skills do team members need? Who will support me? With whom can I collaborate? How long is it? When should discernment occur?

### **Initiation Catechists: The Role of the Catechist (Part 2):** *Incorporating the Christian Way of Life, Suitable Liturgical Rites, and Apostolic Witness*

Continuing from the previous session, participants will work together to brainstorm ways that children are formed "to turn more readily to God in prayer," formed through liturgical rites, and formed to take part in apostolic works (RCIA, 75.2–4).

4:30 PM – 5:15 PM • Breakout Session

### **Parish and Diocesan Leaders: Your Role in the Liturgical Rites of the RCIA**

Parish and diocesan leaders will examine how the preparation of the rites ought to be a collaborative process involving the presider, initiation ministers, liturgist, and musician.

### **Initiation Catechists: Your Role in the Liturgical Rites of the RCIA**

Catechists will learn more about their role in spiritually preparing children (and parents) for ritual celebrations and afterwards, opening up the signs, symbols, and texts of those celebrations. Participants will discover how to deepen the children's appreciation of the mysteries of our faith by reflecting on ritual elements. This mystagogical reflection is a liturgical catechesis that opens the minds and hearts of the believer.

5:30 PM – 6:00 PM • Ritual Celebration

All gather for a Celebration of the Word of God in Loyola's Madonna della Strada Chapel. This celebration will be based on a rite that can be used with child catechumens and their baptized companions.

6:00 PM • End of Day (dinner and evening on your own)

## **Day Two** **July 3, 2020**

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM • Optional Morning Session

### **Q&A Panel with NGCI Team**

*Option 1: General Questions*

*Option 2: Unpacking Our Ritual Celebration and the Rites of the RCIA*

While enjoying your morning cup of coffee (or tea), join us for an informal question-and-answer session with NGCI team members.

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM • Morning Prayer and Announcements

9:30 AM – 10:30 AM • General Session

### **Involving Companions and Sponsors in the Initiation Process**

Baptized children who act as companions, parish sponsors, and godparents all have a part in the formation of children in the catechumenate. This session will present the roles of each of these figures and ways to integrate them into the spiritual journey of the children.

10:30 AM – 11:00 AM • Coffee Break

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM • Training Exercise

### **Planning for Whole Family Catechesis**

Participants in this training exercise will show ways to involve children in parish life that provide catechesis accommodated to the liturgical year, help them become familiar with the Christian way of life, pray in community, and participate in apostolic works (See RCIA, 75).

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM • Lunch included in registration

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM • General Session

### **Initiation of Children in Multicultural Communities**

Bringing participants in the Spanish and English tracks together, this session will address the realities that parish communities face. Obstacles will be addressed, best practices will be affirmed, and multicultural differences will be celebrated.

3:00 PM – 3:30 PM • Closing and Prayer

# The 2020 NGCI Team

Each year, a different team of presenters work together with an LTP representative to plan the major presentations and breakout sessions of the event. Team members have been invited not only because of their understanding of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* and the Church's mission of evangelization, but also because of their vast parish and diocesan experience. As a true collaboration, the individual gifts and ministerial experience of each team member will shape the NGCI experience.



**Rita Burns Senseman** is a catechist who specializes in the Christian initiation of young people. She currently serves as the pastoral associate and director of religious education at St. Benedict Parish in Terre Haute, Indiana. Prior to this position, she served as a team member for the North American Forum on the Catechumenate and as the associate director of the Office of Catechetics/Religious Education in the Archdiocese of Detroit. She holds a Master of Arts degree in theology from the University of Notre Dame. She is the author of *Guide to Adapting the RCIA for Children* (LTP, 2017), *Guía para adaptar el RICA para niños* (LTP, 2019), and several other books and resources.



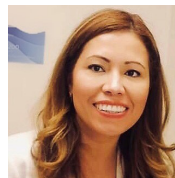
**Fr. James Burkart** was ordained to the presbyterate of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston on May 22, 1993. He serves as the pastor of Christ the Good Shepherd Catholic Community in Spring, Texas. He was assigned as chairperson of the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission in 2005. He also serves on the board of directors of the Southwest Liturgical Conference ([swlc.org](http://swlc.org)) and has served as president of the board for several years. He received a bachelor of arts in drama from the University of Houston in 1988, a master of divinity from the University of St. Thomas in Houston in 1993, a master of arts in theological studies (systematic theology) from the University of St. Thomas in Houston in 1995, and a master of arts in theological studies (liturgy) from the University of Notre Dame du Lac in 2004.

*Fr. James is a presenter for both the English and Spanish tracks of NGCI.*



**Sr. Sandra DeMasi, SSJ**, is a Sister of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill-Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She serves as pastoral associate for liturgy at Saint Rose of Lima Parish, Short Hills, New Jersey, is a consultant/presenter for RCL Benziger Book Company, and a

member of the North American Academy of Liturgy. Sr. Sandy served for thirteen years as the director of the Office of Divine Worship in the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey and over twenty years as a member of the board of directors of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions. During this time, she served as a consultant for the ICEL subcommittee on the Christian Initiation of Older Children. Sister has a bachelor of science in education from Chestnut Hill College and a master of arts in liturgical studies from the University of Notre Dame. Her doctor of ministry degree is from the Catholic University of America, and her treatise was titled *The Faith and Formation of Adults Who Bring Children for Baptism: A Plan of Liturgy and Catechesis*.



**Lia Salinas** currently serves as director for Hispanic ministry in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. She has previously served as coordinator of Hispanic catechesis for the Archdiocese of Washington and as director of religious education at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in the Diocese of Arlington and at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in the Archdiocese of Miami. Lia is a native of El Salvador and has worked in Catholic ministry for the last twenty years. She has received certification as director of religious education from Steubenville University and a bachelor's degree of theological studies from Saint Joseph's College in Maine, and she is currently finishing a master's degree in pastoral theology.

*Lia is a presenter for the Spanish track of NGCI.*





**Feliciano Tapia** is a liturgical training consultant with Liturgy Training Publications (LTP), serving Hispanic ministry. He has worked on the diocesan and regional levels in the Church as well as with national organizations, both pastoral and academic. He comes

with extensive pastoral experience in multicultural parish ministries. Faith formation, leadership training, and teaching-learning processes are his passion. He has a solid formation in philosophy, practical theology, and pedagogy, and is author of *Manual de Proclamadores* and *Palabra de Dios* with LTP. Feliciano has his bachelor of arts in philosophy and human letters from Universidad del Valle de Atemajac, a certificate in education from Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, and a master of divinity from Universidad Pontificia de México.

*Feliciano is a presenter for the Spanish track of NGCI.*



**Michael Ruzicki** is the training and events manager at Liturgy Training Publications and the director of music for St. John Berchmans Parish. Before arriving at LTP seven years ago, he served as a team member of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate, as

parish pastoral associate for liturgy for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, as coordinator of adult and sacramental formation, and as director of the archdiocesan music ministry. He is the author of *Guide for Training Initiation Ministers: An Introduction to the RCIA* (LTP, 2018). He is a graduate of the Catholic University of America and the Washington Theological Union.



# Travel & Accommodations

## Location

The 2020 **National Gathering on Christian Initiation** will take place at the Loyola University Chicago Lake Shore Campus. Located in the Rogers Park neighborhood, along the shores of Lake Michigan, Loyola's Lake Shore Campus is seven miles north of downtown Chicago and within steps of public transportation. The address for the campus is 1032 W. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60660. The main sessions will take place on the second floor of the Damen Student Center in the Sr. Jean Dolores Schmidt, BVM Ballroom.

## Hotel Information

A limited number of hotel rooms are available at the Hampton Inn Chicago—North Loyola Station for a specially discounted rate of **\$149.00** per night. This rate is available for those who book before May 27, 2020, for the evenings of July 1–July 3.

### Hampton Inn Chicago—North Loyola Station

13 West Albion Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60626  
Check in: 3:00 PM  
Check out: 12:00 PM

To reserve a room at the Hampton Inn Chicago—North Loyola Station, please call 800-426-7866 and mention NGCI-20, or visit <http://group.hamptoninn.com/NGCI2020>.

## Campus and Group Housing Information

There are two types of lodging options available on the campus of Loyola University. These rooms are available on the evenings of July 1 and 2 only. Please note that campus housing amenities are much more limited than typical hotel accommodations. For detailed information, visit <https://www.ngci.org/travel#hotel>.

**Apartment Suites** are available in the Santa Clara Hall, located at 1000 W. Loyola Ave, Chicago, IL 60626. These suites have two bedrooms and can accommodate up to four people. Each unit has a kitchen and two bathrooms. Each apartment needs to be under one reservation and paid by that person. If several people share a room, you will need to split the cost between yourselves. We are sorry that campus housing cannot do this for you. The rate is **\$229** per night (plus 17.4% lodging tax).

**Residence Hall (dormitory) Rooms** are available in Regis Hall located at 6340 N. Winthrop Ave, Chicago, IL 60660. These rooms have two twin beds and a private restroom with shower. The rate for each room is **\$100** (plus 17.4% lodging tax).

## Directions

### To / From O'Hare International Airport

Taxi Service	\$50–\$55
UberX	\$30–\$40
Lyft	\$30–\$40

#### Blue Line Train:

24-hour service; cost is \$2.50 one-way per person (from O'Hare a \$5.00 premium fare applies); travel time to Rogers Park is 1 hour 30 minutes; take Blue Line Forest Park train to the Washington stop; Walk to Red Line (through Block 37); take Red Line Howard train; exit Red Line train at **Loyola** station. The Hampton Inn is approximately a five-minute walk on Sheridan Road to Albion Avenue. Santa Clara Hall is approximately 5 minutes via Sheridan Road to 1000 W. Loyola Ave. Fare cards or daily passes can be purchased at the station. For more information visit: <http://www.transitchicago.com>.

### To / From Midway Airport

Taxi Service	\$50–\$60
UberX	\$34–\$40
Lyft	\$34–\$40

#### Orange Line Train:

Hours are 5:15 AM to 11:30 PM; cost is \$2.50 one-way per person; travel time to Rogers Park is 1 hour 26 minutes; take Orange Line Loop Train to Roosevelt; at Roosevelt take Red Line Howard train; exit train at **Loyola** station. The Hampton Inn is approximately a five-minute walk on Sheridan Road to Albion Avenue. Santa Clara Hall is approximately 5 minutes via Sheridan Road to 1000 W. Loyola Ave. Fare cards or daily passes can be purchased at the station. For more information visit: <http://www.transitchicago.com>

*All prices are approximate and subject to change without notice.*

Bus and railway options are also available. The Greyhound bus station, Megabus stop, Union Station, and Ogilvie Transportation Center are all located within 10 to 11 miles of the hotel and are easily reachable by taxi. For more details, information about parking, and driving directions, visit [www.NGCI.org/travel](http://www.NGCI.org/travel).



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A Conference for Catechumenal Ministers  
and Pastoral Leaders

The RCIA Adapted for Children  
2020

July 2–3,  
2020  
Chicago, IL

**Register by May 8, 2020, to guarantee your spot!**

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Parish

Phone     Circle: Home / Cell / Work

Email Address

- ☐ **\$250** Individual Registration, by May 8, 2020.  
*Includes lunch for July 2nd & 3rd.*
- ☐ **\$25 savings** Group Registration, for four or more participants  
*Please contact Liturgy Training Publications directly.*
- ☐ **\$35** July 1st Opening Reception. *Optional. Includes an open bar.*
- ☐ **Free** Optional Pre-Gathering Forum

Please Indicate:

- ☐ Parish and Diocesan Leaders     ☐ Initiation Catechists     ☐ Catechists (Spanish Track)

**To reserve a room** at the Hampton Inn Chicago–North Loyola Station, call 800-426-7866 and mention NGCI, or visit <http://group.hamptoninn.com/NGCI2020>.

**To register**, please complete and return this form with a check payable to:

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Attn: NGCI  
3949 South Racine Avenue, Chicago, IL 60609

**To register online**, visit: [www.NGCI.org](http://www.NGCI.org). Contact us at [ngci@ltp.org](mailto:ngci@ltp.org) or 773-579-4900, ext. 3514 with any questions.