ACROSS NEW ZEALAND

God is Drawing People

1,055 people preparing for initiation into the Catholic Church

577 Catechumens | 478 Candidates

National Faith Journey Survey, October 2026. Approximately 91% response rate.



Thresholds of Conversion



1

Trust

Do they trust you, the Church, God?



2

Curiosity

Are they asking questions about Jesus or His Church?



3

Openness

Are they open to the possibility of change?



4

Seeking

Are they actively pursuing God and truth?



5

Follower

Have they said yes to following Jesus?

THE BRIDGE INTO OCIA

Initial Conversion Becomes the Bridge into OCIA

Before we teach someone everything about the Catholic faith, we want to help them encounter the One at the heart of it.



KNOWING THE TERMS

Catechumen vs Candidate

Catechumens

Not yet baptised. Preparing for Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

Candidates

Already baptised. Preparing for full communion or completion of initiation.



THE ECCLESIAL JOURNEY

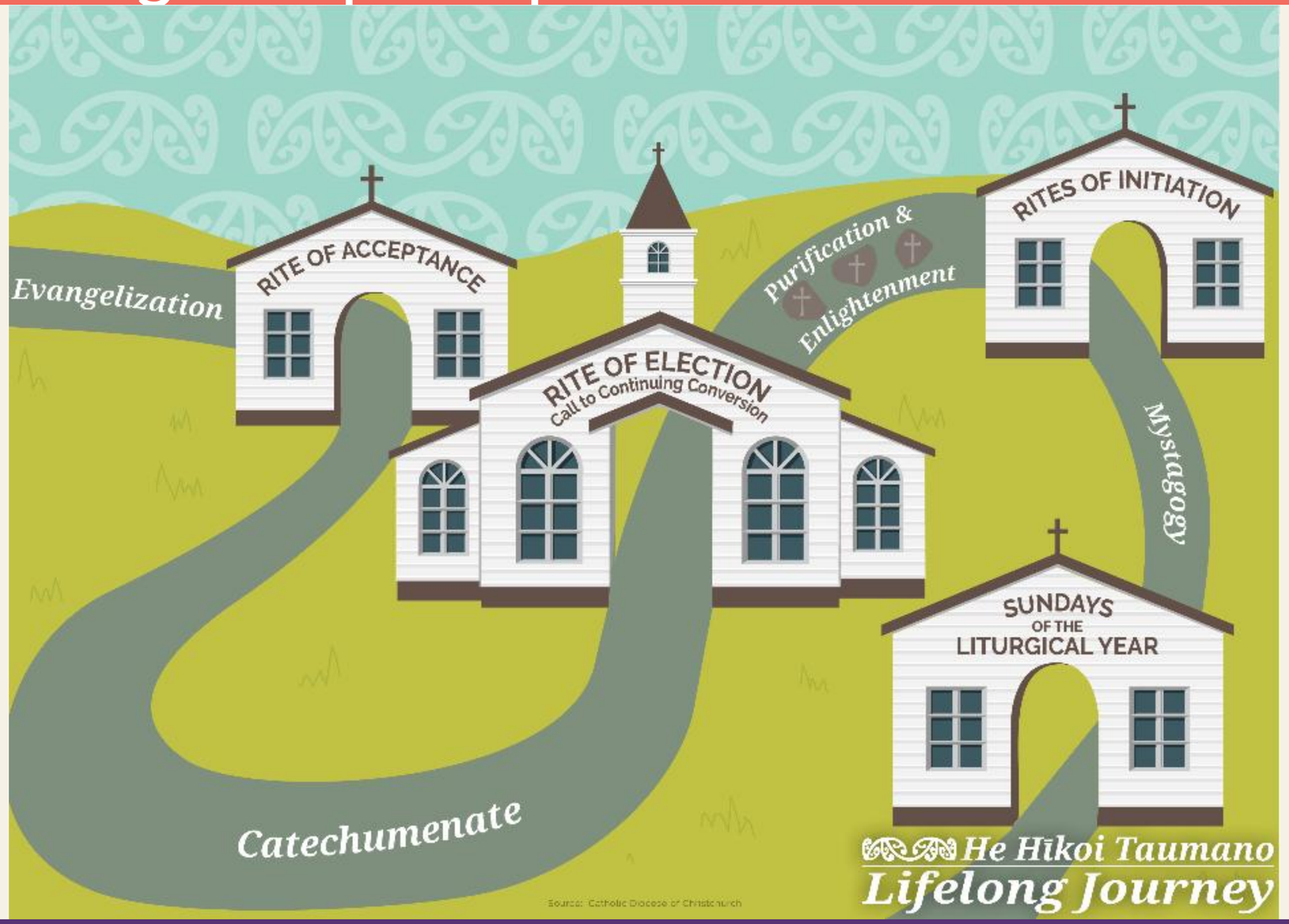
From Enquiry to Lifelong Discipleship

01 Evangelisation

02 Catechumenate

03 Purification & Enlightenment

04 Mystagogy



WHAT IS THE PERSON EXPERIENCING?

Four Periods of the Journey

Enquiry

“Can I explore this without pressure?”

Catechumenate

“I’m learning what it means to live as a Christian.”

Purification

“I’m preparing for my life to change.”

Mystagogy

“I live this faith every day.”



WALKING ALONGSIDE

Sponsors and Godparents

Sponsors

Accompany preparation

Listen, encourage, pray, support discernment and participation in parish life.

Godparents

Ongoing spiritual commitment

Witness to Christian living, pray, encourage and support lifelong discipleship.

Both help the person grow in Christ and find their place in the Church.

THE WHOLE PARISH COMMUNITY

The Primary Minister



The New Zealand National Liturgy Office explicitly identifies

the whole parish community

as the primary minister in Christian initiation, not just the OCIA team.

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Conversation Starters

1. **“What first sparked your interest in the Catholic faith?”**
2. **“What has your experience been like so far?”**
3. **“What questions are you wrestling with?”**
4. **“Where have you noticed God at work in your life?”**



THREE DIMENSIONS OF ACCOMPANIMENT

Accompanying the Whole Person



Intellect (Head)

Growing in understanding of the Gospel



Emotions (Heart)

Experiencing God's personal, unconditional love



Will

Choosing to surrender and follow Jesus

PERSEVERANCE AFTER BAPTISM

Be One of the Eight

“In my experience, people who develop meaningful relationships with at least eight people in their parish are more likely to persevere after baptism.”



A pastoral observation shared by Fr Antoine, Toulouse

GROUP CONVERSATION

Breakout Discussion

1. What stood out to you from tonight's presentation?

2. How can we help people exploring the Catholic faith feel welcomed, supported and part of our parish community?

3. What's one simple thing you could do to accompany someone on their journey of faith?