

Further Information on **PREPARATION FOR INITIATION**

Background Information

The Elect are to be advised that on the day of the Sacraments of Initiation, especially if it is Holy Saturday, they should refrain from their usual activities, spend their time in prayer and reflection and, as much as they can, observe a fast.

Refer to RCIA 285 for the structure of the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation for children who have reached catechetical age. The structure of the Easter Vigil is below:

- The Mass begins in total darkness with the parish community assembling outside for the blessing of the fire. Each member of the assembly holds an unlit candle, except for the Elect who will be given their candle during the Liturgy of Baptism.
- As the celebrant processes inside proclaiming the Light of Christ, a member of the community lights a taper from the Easter candle and gradually the candles of each member of the assembly are lit.
- The Liturgy of the Word, including the homily, takes place.
- The Liturgy of Baptism begins with calling forth those to be baptised.
- The whole assembly renews their baptismal promises and the celebrant sprinkles all with newly blessed baptismal water.
- Candidates are called to profess their belief in the Creed.
- The Rite of Confirmation is celebrated with the laying on of hands and anointing with Chrism.
- The Eucharist is celebrated and the newly baptised, along with the candidates, share at the table for the first time.

Rituals

The Ephphetha Rite and the Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens can be celebrated on the Easter Saturday in preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation or on a retreat day before the Sacraments of Initiation.

Ephphetha Rite

Ephphetha means “to be opened”.

The Ephphetha Rite can be found at RCIA 184.

“ RCIA 184

By the power of its symbolism the ephphetha rite, or rite of opening the ears and mouth, impresses on the Elect their need of grace in order that they may hear the word of God and profess it for their salvation.

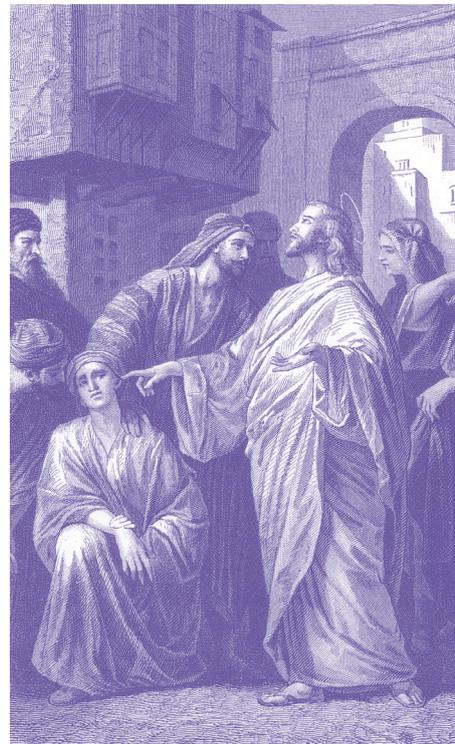
Read the story of Jesus curing the man who could not hear or speak.



Mark 7:31-37

Jesus Cures a Deaf Man

Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphetha,” that is, “Be opened.” And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, “He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”



The Elect come before the celebrant. A suitable song may be sung as the celebrant touches the right and left ear and the closed lips of each of the Elect with his thumb and says the following:

“ RCIA 186

Ephphetha: that is, be opened, that you may profess the faith you hear, to the praise and glory of God.

Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens

The anointing with oil symbolises the need for God's help and strength so that, despite the difficulties of the past and the challenges to come in the future, the Catechumens will confidently profess their faith and hold fast to it throughout their lives.

Preparation for the Sacraments

It is a good idea to practice some of the key parts of the liturgy for the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation.

These include:

- Profession of Faith

At your Baptism, you will be asked if you believe in statements of faith that are contained in the Creed. Listen carefully and think about the questions you will be asked.

- You will be asked if you reject Satan, all his works and his empty promises.
- You will be asked if you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
- You will be asked if you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father.
- You will be asked if you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

To each of the questions, the response is 'I do'.

Celebration of Confirmation

During the anointing with Chrism, the godparent or sponsor places their right hand on the shoulder of the child.

The celebrant makes the sign of the cross on the child's forehead and says: N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

The response is: ***Amen.***

The celebrant adds: Peace be with you.

The response is: ***And with your spirit.***

Receiving Communion

It is also a good idea to practice how to receive Communion – both the bread and the wine.

Prayer

Adapted from RCIA 228



*All powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by water and the Holy Spirit
you will free your sons and daughters from sin
and give us new life.*

*Send your Holy Spirit upon us
to be our helper and guide.*

*Give us the spirit of Wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of right judgement and courage,
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.*

Fill us with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.