

# Seeking the Living God

## Introductory Notes

### Introduction

*Seeking the Living God* is a series of resources prepared by the RCIA Network [<http://www.rcia.org.uk/>] for use by RCIA teams. It is intended to deepen groups' understanding of the Rite and to develop good practice. The wide range of material in preparation can be used for individual sessions or in groups to provide more in-depth formation.

These notes are intended to give background information and to offer guidance about common elements.

### Background

*Seeking the Living God* [<http://www.rcia.org.uk/Resources/Seeking.html>] grew out of the desire of the RCIA Network to develop 'home-grown' resources that would assist parish teams. The format of material is based on a tried and tested method which has been used for projects such as *A Gift destined to Grow* and *With Hearts and Minds*. This follows a simple process which begins with reflecting on scripture and relating that to the experience of the group and then considering Church documents and seeing how they inform practice. After identifying action point the session closes with prayer.

### Resources

Each session is available separately and comes in three editions:

- **Participant** — this is for members of the team and contains the materials used in the session as well space for them to write their own reflections and ideas.
- **Leader** — this contains all the material in the participant's edition. In the margins are notes for the leader to help them run the session. As part of this there suggested answers to the questions; this is not intended to

provide the 'correct' answers but rather to indicate the intention of the question and sometimes demonstrate that you may get good answers that may differ from your expectations. There are also suggested supplementary questions to assist the discussion.

- **Prior reading** — For each session there is 1 or 2 pages of short passages that can be given out as prior reading. This material is also included in the leader's and participant's editions. For some groups this might be used as follow up material to help further reflection.

An overview of the scope of the project is included at the end of this document. This is very much a work in progress and new sessions will be added over time.

### Who is it for?

The primary focus for this material is the RCIA team. However it is noted in many sessions that it might be useful to share the session with others. For example, the session on preparing for the Rite of Acceptance could be shared with those responsible for preparing the liturgy in the parish.

For this reason in the notes on Welcome for the leader it often notes that it can be helpful to check that everyone knows each other.

### How long is a session?

Each session is designed to take about 90 minutes. In the side margins of the Leader's edition there is indication of how long each section should last.

### The Role of the Leader

It is expected that whoever leads the session is used to working with groups: making sure that everyone can contribute and that no one person

dominates, keeping the session on time and on task.

### **Preparation**

As well as deciding whether to use the Prior Reading material with the group it is important that the leader has gone through the session for themselves, reflecting on the passages and answering the questions.

For every session there is a 'learning outcome' which summarises the aim of the session. The purpose is not so that people can be 'quizzed' at the end but so there is a clear focus on the task of the group. The learning can be found on the front cover.

### **Making Connections**

For many of the sessions there is indication of other sessions which might be helpful. These may be ones that provide a foundation for the current session or they may indicate of next steps if you wish to pursue an aspect of the Rite. They are also intended to help the leader if they wish to access more background information to help them lead a session with confidence.

## **The Structure of each Session**

Each session follows the same basic structure

A. Welcome	10 minutes
B. Scripture Our Experience	30 minutes
C. Read & Reflect For Discussion	30 minutes
D. Act	15 minutes
E. Prayer	10 minutes

### **Welcome**

Be aware of people in the group, those you know and those you do not know. Ask people to introduce themselves (be careful to include anyone new to the group this session) and you may wish to invite them to express a hope for the evening (Prior Reading aims to stimulate

these 'hopes').

Following the introductions, check that everyone is settled and then give an outline of the session, including the length of it and the learning outcomes.

You may wish to begin with a brief prayer.

### **Scripture & Our Experience**

A suggested scripture passage is given for each session. Some groups who are used to using the Lectionary as the foundation for their catechesis may wish to use one of the Sunday readings.

Scripture readings are, as a rule, taken from the NRSV — this is in part due to the accessibility of the text online [<http://bible.oremus.org/>]. Some groups may wish to use the *Jerusalem Bible* translation.

The text can be proclaimed as follows:

1. Have the text read through twice with a different reader from the group for each reading (deciding on the readers before beginning)
2. Allow a significant silence between each reading (about 3 minutes)
3. Invite the other members of the group to listen without reading the text for themselves.
4. After the second reading, invite each person to share what has struck them from the reading: a word, a phrase, a sentence; perhaps an image, perhaps a question. Maybe not everyone will say anything, but allow time for people to mull over what they hear, before moving on.

In *Our Experience* sometimes the questions asked in this section will link quite directly to the scripture reading. At other times they will not. However they will always be opening up the things that will be explored in the *Read & Reflect* section.

Allow time for people write their own thoughts on the booklet before opening

the discussion. In the Leader's booklet there are suggestions for follow-up questions.

### ***Read and Reflect & For Discussion***

The texts are drawn from Church documents such as the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* and the *General Directory for Catechesis*.

It will help to have the texts read aloud and to allow time for people's individual responses before sharing ideas and reflections.

### ***Act***

The purpose of these session is for RCIA teams to reflect and develop their practice, therefore this section is important. In the text there are ideas and questions which may help but there will also be ideas that have come from the group's discussion. Some points of action might be put into practice straight away, others may need more thought and research.

It is important that the leader makes sure there is enough time allowed for this section.

### ***Prayer***

In the Participant's booklet there is generally a prayer text or piece of scripture that can be used in the time of prayer to conclude the session.

In the Leader's booklet there are further suggestion about the time of prayer. These are arranged in the common structure of:

- Gather
- Listen
- Respond
- Sending Forth

The individual elements can be very simple: the Sign of the Cross after a time of silent prayer may be all that is needed to gather.

There is plenty of opportunity to include your own ideas.

## **Supplementary Material**

### ***Further Reading & Resources***

For some sessions there is a short guide to further reading and websites that members of the team might be interested in.

There is also a general Resources List for RCIA which can be found on the website.

### ***Top Tips***

The format of the sessions encourages the group to recognise that through reflection and discussion they have many of resources necessary to address the particular issue. In the preparation of the material it was recognised that it would be helpful to share ideas about good practice or pointers to help understand the rite or an issue — these are listed as Top Tips which can be found in many of the sessions.

### **Feedback**

This project is a work in progress. Like any materials designed for groups it will benefit from groups who have used the material: what worked well, what was unclear, what could be improved.

If you have any comments please send them to: [Convenor@rcia.org.uk](mailto:Convenor@rcia.org.uk)

## Session Overview

### A. General

1. What is RCIA? Overview
2. Differences between periods
3. Purpose of Catechesis Δ
4. The place of Catechesis in RCIA
5. The place of Liturgy in RCIA
6. The place of Scripture in RCIA
7. The place of Prayer in RCIA
8. Discernment in RCIA

### B. Pre-Catechumenate and Evangelisation

1. Prior to Pre-Catechumenate — Evangelisation or where do people come from?
2. Pre-Catechumenate and Evangelisation
3. Initial Discernment
4. Discernment: prior to Rite of Acceptance
5. Rite of Acceptance

### C. Catechumenate

1. Catechumenate: Overview
2. Catechumenate:
  - a. RCIA 75 (1) — Catechesis
  - b. RCIA 75(2) — Community
  - c. RCIA 75(3) — Liturgy
  - d. RCIA 75 (4) — Apostolic Activity/Social Justice Δ
3. Catechumenate and the Liturgical Year
4. Liturgical Catechesis
5. Prayer in the Catechumenate Δ
6. Catechesis using the Lectionary readings
7. Liturgies within the Catechumenate
8. Evaluating & using resources
9. Discernment (1): midpoint evaluation
10. Discernment (2) — prior to Election
11. Accompanying the journey with candidates and catechumens
12. Dismissal Catechesis
13. Rite of Election Δ

### D. Period of Purification and Enlightenment

1. Period of Purification and Enlightenment – Overview
2. Scrutinies
3. Presentations
4. Preparing for the Triduum

### E. Sacraments of Initiation

1. Celebrating Sacraments of Initiation

### F. Mystagogy

1. Mystagogy: reflecting on the post-baptismal experience
2. Mystagogy: extension & follow up
3. Mystagogy: being reflective people

### G. Roles in RCIA

1. The role of the Community Δ
2. The Liturgical Assembly
3. The role of the Team
4. The Ministry of Sponsor

### H. Adaptation of RCIA

1. Christian Initiation of Children of Catechetical Age (CICCA)
2. Reception of the Baptised

Δ *available on website in initial group*

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Website: <http://www.rcia.org.uk/Resources/Seeking.html>

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