

Good morning / evening. My name is _____ and I am the Director / Coordinator of RCIA for _____ parish. I suspect that most of you here today have an interest in God, in Jesus Christ, or in the Catholic faith. Although we have great music, inspiring homilies and a welcoming community, you can find great music, inspiring words and a good social atmosphere many other places. But here you encounter Jesus Christ, the Son of God and savior of the world, in the Catholic Church which he established. I am here today to invite you to take your encounter with Jesus Christ, and your relationship to the Catholic Church to the next level.

First of all, I would like to address anyone here today who has never been baptized. I want to offer you the opportunity to become a Disciple of Christ. What is a “disciple”? According to the dictionary a disciple is “a person who is a student or an adherent of the doctrines of another; a *follower*.” In this case, we are talking about a *follower* of Jesus Christ. Jesus himself told us what is required to be his disciple. In the gospel of Matthew, chapter 28, before he ascends to the Father, Jesus tells the Apostles: “Go therefore and make *disciples* of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” And in chapter 8 of John’s gospel Jesus says, “If you remain in my word, you will truly be my *disciples* and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (Jn 8:31-32).

So, I am offering to any person here who is not baptized, an opportunity to be baptized, to learn all that Jesus commanded us so you can observe it, and to know the truth of God’s word, so that you can remain in that word and be a disciple of Jesus Christ. I invite anyone here who is not

baptized *or* anyone who is baptized but *not* Catholic, to come and learn more about the Catholic Church and the Catholic faith and to *develop* a relationship or *deepen* your relationship with Jesus Christ through the Mass and the sacraments.

Now, this offer probably only applies to a few people in this church today. So what about the rest of you, who are *already* disciples? Well, once we become disciples, that is, *followers* of Christ, we are all called to take it to the next level and become “Apostles”. What’s the difference? Well an apostle, by definition is “one who is sent” or “one sent on a mission”. You see, once we become *followers* of Christ, we are called to go out and take His saving message to *others*. We are sent on a mission to proclaim the Gospel! The good news is too good to keep to ourselves. When Jesus said in Matthew 28 to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations” he didn’t intend this command *only* for the 11 original apostles to whom he was speaking at that moment. Otherwise, the Church would have died in one generation. No, he wants *every one of us* to go out and make new disciples for Him and for His Church. *Not* just the bishops, *not* just the priests and the pastors, and *not* just the RCIA Coordinator and the RCIA Team. Every one of us, every one of YOU is called to share the good news about what you *receive* every time you come to Mass – the Word of God and the Body and Blood of Christ.

So I challenge each one of you here today who is already a disciple: think of someone you know – a family member, a friend, a co-worker, an acquaintance, and invite them to know, love and follow Jesus Christ in His Church. Invite that person to inquire about the Catholic faith.

When I introduced myself, I said I am the Coordinator of RCIA. What's that? RCIA stands for Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. This is the process by which a person comes to learn about and build a relationship with Jesus Christ in the Catholic Church. The short-term goal of the RCIA process is for a person to become a member of the Catholic Church through the sacraments of initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Membership in the Church and participation in the sacraments help the person to build a life-long relationship with Jesus Christ, which leads them to the *ultimate* goal of eternal life with Him in heaven. God desires that each one of us spend eternity with Him in heaven. Will you accept that invitation and become a *disciple*? Will you be an *apostle* and help someone else get to heaven?

Customize with details for your parish evangelization weekend and open house or information session.

All who would like to know more about the Catholic faith are encouraged to come and learn more. If you are already Catholic, pick up some information and pass it on to someone you know and invite them to inquire about Catholicism. Or better yet, invite them to attend the open house / information session and if possible, accompany them.

I hope to get a chance to meet you – after Mass today, at the open house / information session, at Mass another Sunday, and in heaven forever!

Thank you and God Bless you!