

D. MYSTAGOGY - LIFELONG FAITH FORMATION

Mystagogy (study of the mystery), lasting from Easter to Pentecost, should be a time of celebration, sacramental instruction and reflection in which neophytes (newly baptized or newly entered the Church) embrace a deepened understanding of the mysteries of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the Eucharist and doing works of charity. (See *RCIA* #244-251, 330 and the National Statutes #22-24.)

Following the format in the adult rite, post-baptismal catechesis offers children a time to share what they have come to understand about Jesus and their own initiation with peers and family. Reflecting on the sacramental experience occurs at the weekly Sunday assembly for the Eucharist. The addition of weekly time for reflection and sharing until Pentecost helps the neophyte unpack the meaning of the sacred Christian mysteries.

The National Statutes (#22-24) encourage neophytes to continue to meet monthly after Pentecost for sharing, support and instruction for at least a year after initiation. This should happen for newly baptized children of catechetical age in addition to religious education sessions with their peers. The support and nurturing of the community of faith can be very helpful at this time of transition to regular parish life and catechesis. Mystagogy is part of a child's on-going conversion to live the life of a true disciple.

All that was mentioned in the first paragraph, embracing a deepening understanding of the sacraments through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the Eucharist and doing works of charity, is basically a description of the parish's life. It is what the parish should be doing each year, all year long. It is a lifelong faith formation process to which all the initiated are called. The completion of the initiation process is not an end. It is only the beginning!

