

WELCOME HOME CATHOLICS



Frequently Asked Questions

What is *Welcome Home Catholics*? WHC is a six-week program to invite inactive Catholics back to Mass, receive the sacraments regularly and share in the joy of parish life.

Who is responsible for inviting inactive Catholics to WHC? You are! You are the key person in the WHC process. Inactive Catholics are all around you. They are your family members, friends, neighbors and co-workers. Our duty as Catholics is to welcome them home (*Luke 15.4-7*).

When does WHC meet? Three seasons each year: after Labor Day, Christmas and Easter. Each series meets one night a week for six consecutive weeks. The process is confidential, informal and free. There is never pressure to participate further. Yet, an investment of ninety minutes a week can reap eternal rewards.

Who hosts the sessions? WHC volunteers are lay people from various walks of life who answer Christ's call to reach out to those who are away from His love and mercy. Many WHC volunteers are returning Catholics themselves who can speak firsthand about why they left and why they returned.

What happens? We start by sharing our various journeys home to the Lord. Why did we leave? Why did we return? This brief discussion helps identify how to follow up since our individual stories are as unique as our fingerprints. Attendees are encouraged to share their journeys but are never required to do so. Next, we see how we are each called in our different ways to love and serve the Lord. Then we review the highpoints of our faith: why Jesus gave us the sacraments, the importance of learning more about our faith, especially Jesus's most sacred gifts: forgiveness for our sins and the Holy Eucharist to strengthen us.

Then what? "Graduates" are free to choose a parish. In addition to receiving the sacraments, many continue with more in-depth education such as Bible study. Some "pay forward" this gift of faith in various service ministries including WHC.

Who started this ministry? Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd (*John 10*).

There are similar ministries like *Catholics Come Home*. How is WHC different? Catholics Come Home produces very effective commercials yet is solely internet-based. WHC works with parishes directly where we receive forgiveness in Confession, are fed the Holy Eucharist and grow in knowledge, faith and love of the Lord.

Does WHC support OCIA? Of course! Both ministries share the same goal: bringing people to Christ. While *Welcome Home Catholics* is primarily for baptized inactive Catholics, the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* is primarily for people entering our faith for the first time. Since people from each group are often in the same families, WHC “graduates” can bring non-Catholic family members to OCIA and even attend OCIA with them to learn more about our faith in a more in-depth format.

Is it expensive for a parish to offer WHC? There is virtually no cost to the parishes. Volunteers coordinate the sessions and promotional material is provided at no charge. WHC carries its own insurance. So, large and small parishes can offer WHC as a natural companion to OCIA.

How can my parish offer WHC? With your pastor’s permission, there are opportunities to co-sponsor and/or host WHC. A good first step is to contact a parish WHC volunteer or John Robb at (251) 605-9710 for more information.