

Sycamore Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

The Catholic Churches of Esher and Thames Ditton

Sycamore Overview:

In 2014, Fr Stephen Wang, alongside a group of young people at Newman House, began developing a way to make Christianity more accessible to university students. Their aim was to create a welcoming space where people with little or no knowledge of the faith could explore life's deeper questions and discover Christianity in an open and approachable way.

This vision led to the creation of the Sycamore course, an introduction to Christian faith that combined discussion, hospitality, and accessible teaching. Initially produced as a simple series of films, it quickly spread beyond university chaplaincies and was adopted by parishes and schools across the UK and internationally.

Following growing interest and feedback, the Sycamore team expanded its work in 2018, bringing together experts in catechesis, education, theology, ministry, and media. The course was redesigned with new films, a wider team, and a commitment to making the resources freely available. The updated Sycamore programme launched in 2019 and moved to an open-access model in 2020, allowing people around the world to explore questions of faith.

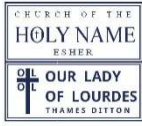
Fr Stephen Wang's key contribution was helping to initiate the project and shaping its founding vision: creating an accessible, welcoming, and thoughtful way for people—especially young adults—to encounter Christianity.

Sycamore RCIA – Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

Sycamore's RCIA programme is a 20-week course combining films, discussion, and YouCat-based catechesis. Session guides and videos are available online. Below is the recommended format for running these sessions.

- **Sycamore session:** Begin with a short film and open discussion introducing the topic.
- **YouCat study:** Each session includes recommended YouCat readings to provide a catechetical foundation for sacramental preparation.
- **Personal reflection:** Participants study the readings at home each week to deepen their understanding.
- **Group discussion:** The next session explores the YouCat reflections, allowing deeper discussion and questions with catechists.
- **Option 1 – Alternate weeks:** One week for the Sycamore film and discussion, the next for YouCat reflection and catechesis.
- **Option 2 – Combine sessions:** Start with a short YouCat discussion, then watch and discuss the next Sycamore film (with less time for each element).





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RCIA PART I, ENQUIRY GROUP (7 WEEKS)

A seven-week enquiry course for those exploring the Christian faith, which could then grow into a full RCIA course with the addition of the thirteen catechetical sessions in Part 2.

The individual modules that make up this course are listed below. You can work through them in the order suggested below or change the order if it suits your group better.

This enquiry course is for people in the early stages of exploring the Christian faith. At the end, those who wish to move into a more formal catechetical programme to prepare for the Sacraments of Initiation can start the RCIA Part II course.

1. THE SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS

- The impossibility of sitting still. What is happiness? How to press the pause button.

2. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

- Why bother thinking about religion? Five reasons not to believe in God. Arguments for the existence of God?

3. A GOD WHO SPEAKS?

- The hiddenness of God. When God broke the silence. Discovering the face of God.

4. WHO IS JESUS?

- He came to bring life to the world. The Saving Death of Jesus. The light of the Resurrection.

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

- How the Holy Spirit can change your life. No one gets into heaven alone. Why we need signs, symbols and sacraments.

6. THE BIBLE

- What is the bible? Can we trust the bible? How the bible can change your life.

7. THE GIFT OF FAITH

- What is faith? Are Christians just stupid or are there good reasons to believe? How to take a step of faith.

RCIA PART II, CATECHESIS (13 WEEKS)

A thirteen-week catechetical course for RCIA for those who have completed the RCIA Part I (Enquiry Course) beforehand ideally.

The individual modules that make up this course are listed below. You can work through them in the order suggested below, or change the order if it suits your group better.

These modules form the second half of a longer process of RCIA catechesis. This course should only be put on for those who have completed the [RCIA Part I \(Enquiry Course\)](#) beforehand. It takes for granted essential catechesis that has been presented in the seven modules of Part I.

1. THE POWER OF PRAYER



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- What is prayer? Does prayer make a difference? How to pray.

2. THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

- The Christian Creed. The Light of Christ. The Holy Trinity.

3. CREATION, FALL, SALVATION

- The goodness of creation. Suffering and sin. The gift of salvation.

4. THE COMMUNITY OF THE CHURCH

- Why do we need the Church? The special place of the Catholic Church. Being Catholic today.

5. FINDING TRUE FREEDOM

- Is there such a thing as right and wrong? Where can we find moral guidance? How do you discover your true identity?

6. THE MEANING OF LOVE

- What is love? How to love your neighbour. Knowing the love of God.

7. THE SACRAMENTS OF BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

- The power of the sacraments and the liturgy. How baptism can change your life. Confirmation and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

8. THE HOLY EUCHARIST

- The meaning of the Mass. The Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

9. FORGIVENESS, HEALING AND MISSION

- Forgiveness and the Sacrament of Confession. Healing and the Sacrament of the Sick. Christian mission and the call to share our faith.

10. THE CHRISTIAN VOCATIONS

- The meaning of vocation. Marriage and family life. Ordination and consecrated life.

11. THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

- The dignity of the human person and the right to life. Christian teaching about family and society. Speaking the truth and following conscience.

12. HOW TO PRAY

- The amazing adventure of prayer. Four basic ways of praying. Prayers and devotions to help you through the day.

13. MARY AND THE HOPE OF HEAVEN

- Death, judgment, and our longing for eternal life. Holiness, the saints, and our hope for heaven. What Catholics believe about the Blessed Virgin Mary.