

2023 Diocesan Day for Catechists



*The God who speaks today*

# Intentional Accompaniment in RCIA

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# What is Intentional Accompaniment?

- Intentionally walking alongside others on their journey towards conversion
- While seeking the Lord's direction through prophetic listening
- And remaining alongside them after conversion as they begin the lifelong journey of missionary discipleship

**Intentional Accompaniment: An apprenticeship for a new generation of builders, Michael Hall**



# Evangelii Gaudium

In our world, ordained ministers and other pastoral workers can make present the fragrance of Christ's closeness and his personal gaze. The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this “**art of accompaniment**” which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Exodus 3:5). The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life (169).

**Pastoral accompaniment in processes of growth: EG 169–173**



# Christus Vivit

“Many [have] pointed to the shortage of qualified people **devoted to accompaniment**. Belief in the theological and pastoral value of listening entails rethinking and renewing the ways that priestly ministry is ordinarily exercised, and reviewing its priorities. The Synod also recognized the need to train consecrated persons and laypeople, male and female, to accompany young people (244).

**Accompaniment by adults: CV 242–247**

If you are to accompany others on this path, you must be the first to follow it, day in and day out (298).

**Listening and Accompaniment: CV 291–298**

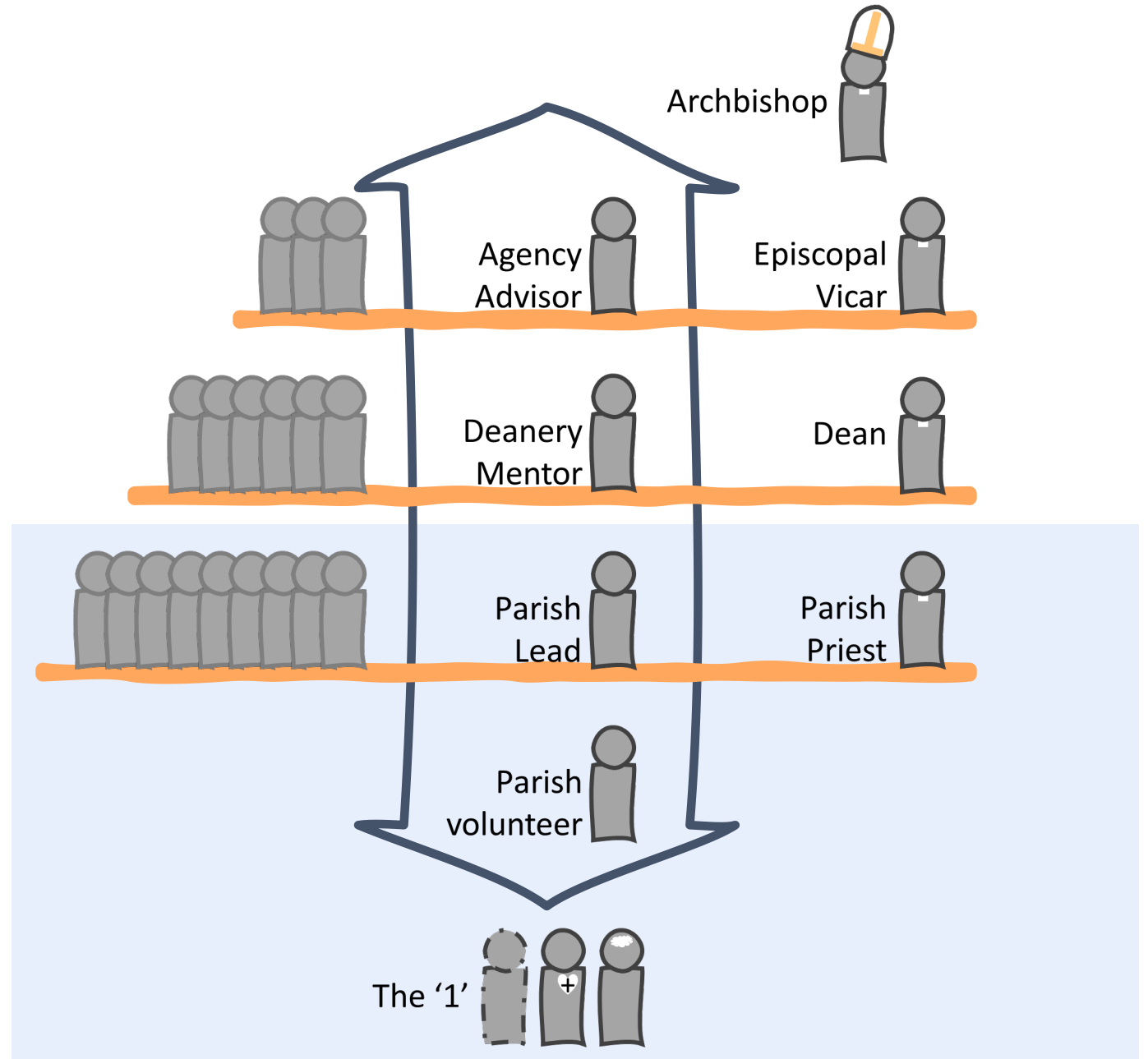


# What is intentional about our accompaniment?

As part of *Some Definite Service*,  
the diocesan-wide approach to parish growth supported  
through local people, plans and prayer,  
we are experiencing and offering **intentional  
accompaniment** as the norm.



# Some Definite Service network



# What is intentional about our accompaniment?

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- To do this effectively, we require:
  - Knowledge of the other
  - Knowledge of the desired outcome for the other
  - Skill in listening to the other AND the voice of the Lord
  - Time (cf. EG 222–223) & a willingness to put aside personal preferences
- Essentially, we require: **Direction, Docility and Detachment**



# The 3 Ds

## Direction

- What is the current situation?
- What is the destination?
- What might be the steps to take us there?





# The 3 Ds

## Docility

- How is the Lord speaking to us (in prayer before, during the conversation and in reflection on the interaction)?



# The 3 Ds

## Detachment

- How might I leave aside my preferences and preconceptions?

Direction  
Detachment  
Docility



# The hourglass: Intentional Accompaniment Model

The first task is to ascertain conversion to Jesus Christ and if not present, that is your direction.



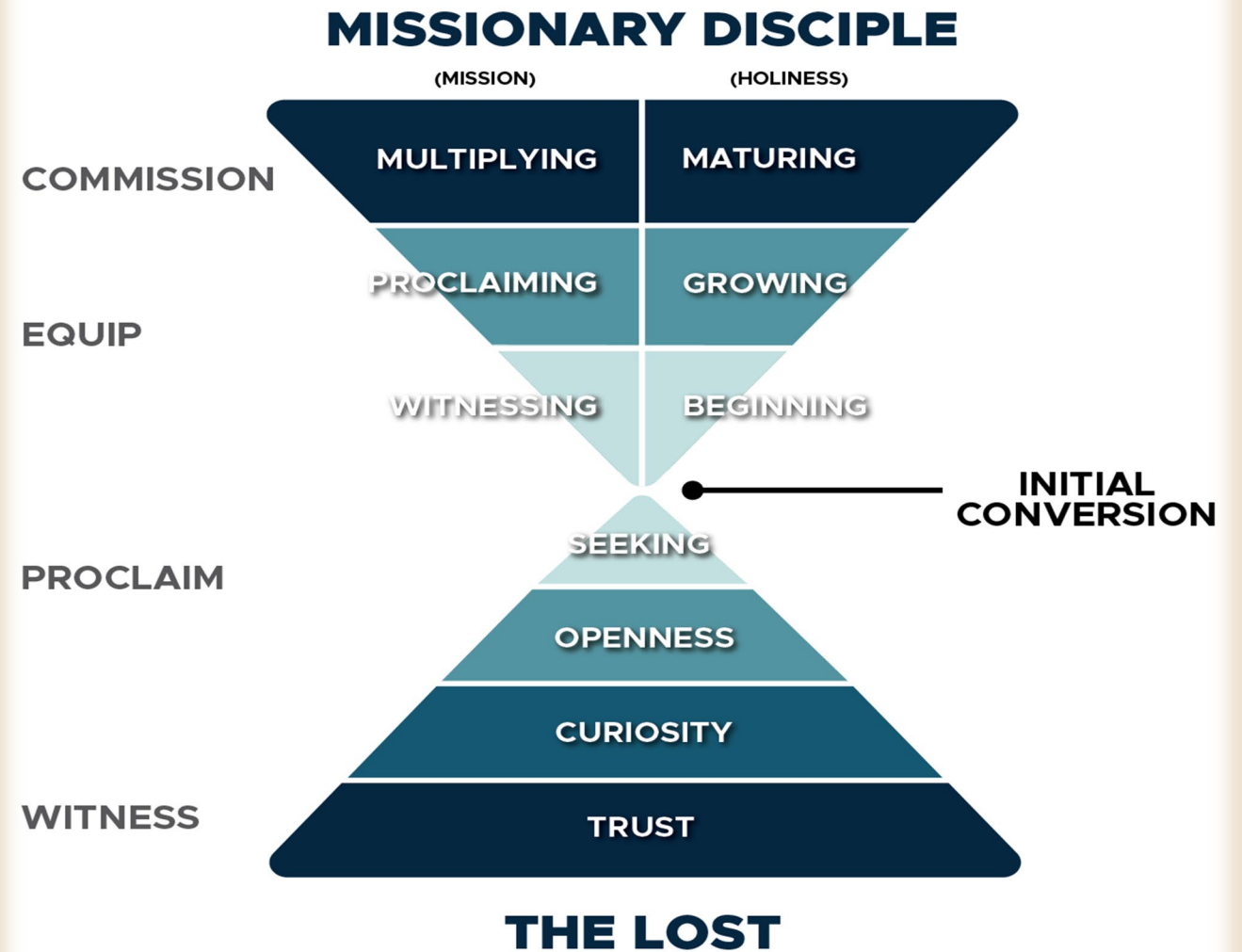
# The hourglass: Intentional Accompaniment Model

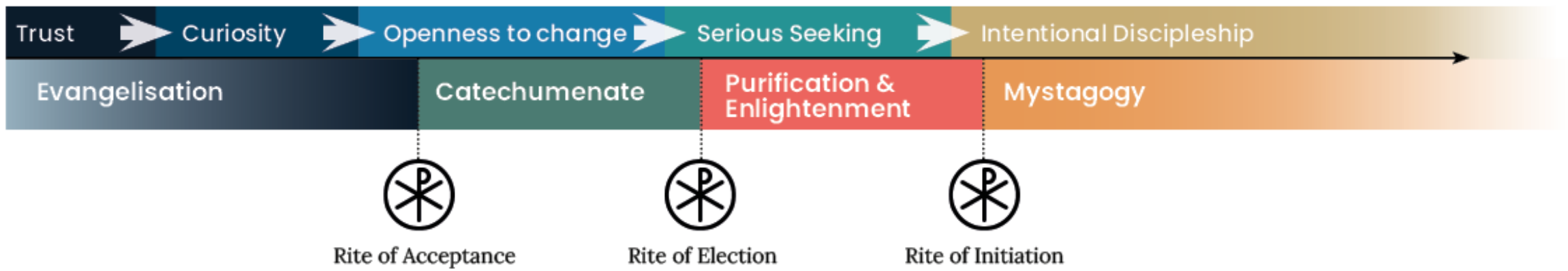
Thereafter, helping the other to deepen their faith

**holiness**

and appreciate their role in spreading the faith

**mission**





**Evangelisation:** Proclaim the Good News!

**Goal:** Give the inquirers a new worldview, to personally identify with the story of salvation and acknowledge the need for Jesus Christ.

**Content:** Man's problem of Original Sin, God's plan of salvation fully revealed in Christ and lived in the Church.

**Catechumenate:** Share the Deposit of Faith!

**Goal:** Strengthen the Catechumens in understanding the articles of Faith and in living the Christian life.

**Content:** The Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Principles of Moral Theology.

**Purification and Enlightenment:** Prepare the Heart!

**Goal:** Remove obstacles and attachments which prevent grace from being fully received.

**Content:** Moral Theology, virtues and sins, prayer and spiritual warfare.

**Mystagogy:** Live the Mystery!

**Goal:** Complete the process of baptismal identification with Christ and help the Neophytes use the sacramental graces they receive.

**Content:** Show how the symbols of the sacraments are embedded into salvation history. Teach the Neophytes to pray and live morally as baptised and confirmed Christians. Note: Stay close to the Neophytes during this time, since it is often a time of intense spiritual warfare.

# Intentional accompaniment in the RCIA process

The elements of the process are beautifully connected to this vision of intentional accompaniment:

- An identification of the person's faith life
- Opportunities over time to provide incremental assistance
- Heading to initial conversion (catechumenate and election)
- Heading from initial conversion (purification – holiness)
- Heading from initial conversion (mystagogy – mission)



# Reflecting on IA and the RCIA process

## Questions for reflection

- How does this reflect what you already experience?
- How can we individuate our approach to those in the process to offer intentional accompaniment?
- What skills do we require and need to develop?
- Who else needs to be involved in the RCIA process to ensure we make the most of the opportunity?



1. Who needs to be accompanied?
2. Who is it who needs initiation into the 'art of accompaniment'?
3. Who accompanies us?

