



## Phases of Formation

### **Highlights:**

- Visitor** – person who comes to a meeting/gathering and is interested in learning about the Secular Franciscan Order, **Comes and Sees!** > Make note of date
- Aspirant** – person enters into the **Orientation phase** of formation after the determination is made that he/she may have a vocation to our way of life  
> Should be noted in **OFS-USA database**

The Aspirant moves into the Inquiry phase after **Ceremony of Introduction and Welcoming**. (*Ritual*, pp. 9 – 10)  
[Receives a **short life of St. Francis**.]

**Inquirer** – person who has gone through the *Ceremony of Introduction and Welcoming*  
> **Sponsor** is chosen > Should be noted in **OFS-USA database** (acceptance date)

The Inquirer moves into the Candidacy phase after **Rite of Admission**. (*Ritual*, pp. 11 – 17)  
[Receives **Rule** and **Tau Cross**]

**Candidate** - person who has gone through the *Rite of Admission*  
> May choose to use the **initials O.F.S.** > Should be noted in **OFS-USA database** (admittance date)

**Profession:** *Rite of Profession* [Receives - **Holy Gospels** and **crucifix**; may receive a candle and a ring]  
> Should be noted in **OFS-USA database** (Permanent Profession date)

**Newly Professed:** **Special attention to the formation** of the newly professed

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### **Orientation (Aspirant):**

- > Not less than **3 months** (*National Statutes*, 19.1) > Make note of dates [I have made those consecutive months for our Fraternity unless the person lets me know the reason he/she will not be present. I believe this is a good indicator of the person's commitment to the formation process.]
- > Formation Director or Team member conducts oral interview (not an application!)
- > Should be noted in **OFS-USA database**

The Aspirant moves into the Inquiry phase after **Ceremony of Introduction and Welcoming**.  
(*Ritual*, pp. 9 – 10) [Receives a **short life of St. Francis**.]

**Inquiry (Inquirer):** person who has gone through the *Ceremony of Introduction and Welcoming*

- > Not less than 6 months (*National Statutes*, 19.2.a) [I would like to caution all of us not to allow a person to stay in the Inquiry phase for too long a period of time, like for a year! If the Fraternity and the person discern that he/she is being called to our "Way of Life," then let us celebrate the **Rite of Admission** with him/her so that he/she can enter into the **Candidacy phase** of formation!]
- > **Sponsor** is chosen
- > Should be noted in **OFS-USA database** (acceptance date)

[I am not advocating a "rush job" with Initial Formation (those who are Inquirers and Candidates), but I am saying that we all need to put forth the effort to offer the persons who first come to us as **Visitors** to experience a good Formation Program. Those in Initial Formation should be attending the monthly meeting/gathering of the Fraternity and at least an additional 2 hours per month specifically addressing Initial Formation topics such as those presented in the *FUN Manual* and other Franciscan texts which address the Initial Formation phases such as *The Franciscan Journey* by Fr. Lester Bach, O.F.M. Cap.]

## Prior to the Rite of Admission:

- > “To be admitted to the SFO in the United States, a person must be a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church (i.e., having received the Sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation/Confirmation and Holy Eucharist) in addition to being an actively practicing Catholic.” (*National Statutes*, 19.2.d)
- > A sample request letter may include the normative elements of the Rite of Admission. (*Ritual*, 3.22, p. 4)
- > “The request for admission to the Order is presented by the ~~aspirant~~[Inquirer] to the minister of a local or personal fraternity by a formal act, in writing if possible.” (*General Constitutions*, 39.1)
- > “The council of the fraternity decides collegially on the request, gives a formal answer to the ~~aspirant~~, [Inquirer], and communicates this to the fraternity.” (*General Constitutions*, 39.3)

The Inquirer moves into the Candidacy phase after **Rite of Admission**. (*Ritual*, pp. 11 – 17) [Receives the **Rule** (brown presentation copy) and the **TAU cross**.] “The act is to be registered and preserved in the records of the fraternity.” (*General Constitutions*, 39.4)

**Candidacy (Candidate):** person who has gone through the *Rite of Admission*

- > Not less than 18 months, not more than 36 months (*National Statutes*, 19.2.b)
- > Candidate has the option of choosing to use the **initials O.F.S.**
- > “It is the ‘period of probation.’” (*Elements of Formation*, p. 18)
- > Should be noted in **OFS-USA database** (admittance date)

**Prior to the Rite of Profession:** (c.f., *Handbook for Secular Franciscan Servant Leadership*, Leader Guide 5)

- > Minimum age of 21 (*National Statutes*, 19.3)
- > “. . . the candidate submits to the minister of the local fraternity a request to make his or her profession. Having heard the master of formation and the assistant, the fraternity council decides by secret ballot on the admission to profession, gives its reply to the candidate, and informs the fraternity.” (*General Constitutions*, 41.1)
- > A sample request letter may include the normative elements of the Rite of Profession. (*Ritual*, 3.32, pp. 5 – 6)

The Candidate moves into the Professed phase after **Rite of Profession or Permanent Commitment to the Gospel Life Within the Mass**. (*Ritual*, pp. 18 – 26) [Receives a **copy of the Holy Gospels, crucifix** (ideally the San Damiano cross), may receive a candle and a ring.] “The act of profession is registered and preserved in the records of the fraternity.” (*General Constitutions*, 42.5)

The **Candidate** becomes a **Professed Member of the O.F.S.** after the **Rite of Profession** is celebrated :)

## Profession:

- > Uses the initials O.F.S. if not chosen when the person became a Candidate
- > Should be noted in **OFS-USA database** (Permanent Profession date)

## Newly Professed:

- > “The Fraternity has the duty to give special attention to the formation of the newly professed and of the temporarily professed, to help them become fully mature in their vocation and develop a true sense of belonging.” (*General Constitutions*, 44.2) [Examples: *Essential Documents of the Secular Franciscan Order*, 2014; *What it takes to be an OFS Franciscan*, Lester Bach, O.F.M. Cap., 2013.]

**Completion of Formation (or not):** When we welcome Sister Death ☺

- > Should be noted in **OFS-USA database**

