



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS  
- Initial Formation for Candidates -

Module 8: "What is Formation?"  
sheet 2

2. Steps in Formation

Hi. I've just moved into the area and picked up the leaflet about the Secular Franciscans. Time on my hands; good Catholic. Could be right for me...



Okay. Those interested in knowing more about the Order first come as **Visitors** to a local fraternity meeting. *Initial Formation* involves 'welcome' to the first stage as an **Enquirer**, and then the second 'Admission' as a **Candidate**—leading to **Profession** itself.

'Admission to the Order is gradually attained through a time of initiation, a period of formation of at least one year and profession of the rule. The entire community is engaged in this process of growth by its own manner of living...Profession by its nature is a permanent commitment...' [Rule, 23]



'A very good place to start' (as the song says!)

Yes, I know that all sounds rather daunting! But let me tell you a little more about what's involved...Let's start at the very beginning.

**1. PERIOD OF INITIATION**

Welcome: an Enquirer

Primary Objectives:

- To test validity of vocation
- To introduce St Francis, Franciscan Spirituality
- To determine Catholic Christian understanding

Material Content during this period of Enquiry might include:

- Methodology—dialogue; journeying together with Formator [Lk 24.13-35—good learning pattern for all formation]; use & value of a 'Portfolio'
- Meaning of 'Vocation'; how discerned—Holy Spirit as principle of formation
- What will happen; what is expected in formation
- Introduce Francis & Clare
- Introduce Franciscan prayer & apostolic activity
- Importance of Scripture in Franciscan life
- Promote use of Catechism; refer to Documents of Vat II
- Define 'secular' or 'lay' spirituality
- Introduce the 'Prayer of the Church' [esp Lauds & Vespers]
- Introduce Rule, Constitutions, Franciscan Family & history, organisation of OFS
- If available, encourage attendance at a retreat focused on Secular Franciscan life

## **2. PERIOD OF INITIATION**

Admission: a Candidate

Primary Objectives:

- To help spiritual growth into Secular Franciscan way of life
- Deepen understanding of significance of choice
- To prepare for Profession

Using the prescribed Modules, material might include:

- Pre-eminent = in depth study of the Rule [esp attention to signs of Rule taking root in life of Candidate]
- Study of Prologue [by Francis] describing blessings of 'penance' [i.e. conversion of life] & misery of ignoring it
- Emphasise Gospels & their place in daily life
- Look for participation in Church life, youth ministry etc
- Look for participation in apostolic life [presence in world, promoting environment, respect for worker]
- Suggest reading of writings of Francis & Clare
- Begin detailed study of Constitutions, National Statutes
- Foster desire for life-long growth in Franciscan spirituality
- Encourage attendance at retreat/day of prayer focused on commitment & penitential way of life
- Prepare for Rite of Profession by prayerful meditation on the solemnity of this public occasion & its perpetual commitment

## **3. RITE OF PROFESSION**

Clear Understanding of:

- Vocation
- Crucial Gospel teaching & how to live primacy of Christ
- Franciscan evangelical life
- Church teaching/adherence to it
- Secular life & mission of OFS

## **4. NEWLY PROFESSED**

Material Content for Newly Professed:

- Knowing & sharing in dialogue more important now—more mature faith, living Franciscan charism
- Primary reliance on Scripture in meditation, esp Gospels
- Continue studying/living /loving the Rule
- Provide appropriate examples of other Franciscan saints for discussion time
- Where possible, meeting with other fraternities/Professed

## **5. ONGOING FORMATION**

Primary Objectives:

- 'Begun by preceding stages, the formation of the brothers & sisters takes place in a permanent and continuous way. It should be understood as an aid in the conversion of each & everyone & in the fulfilment of their proper mission in the Church & in society.' [Constitutions, 44.1]
- To support & strengthen commitment; importance of regular attendance at the fraternity meeting, getting involved at regional & national levels; preparation for office within the OFS etc