* **Stages of Salesian Formation**

There are different stages of formation for candidates to the Salesian life:

* **The Valdocco Experience**

This is a one full year of vocational guidance to ‘see and experience’ Salesian life and Salesian work with the young. This gives the interested youth the possibility to know better the Salesians, their spirituality and style of life. It is also an opportune moment to upgrade one’s Grade 12, Form 7 or Grade 13 results to meet the basic academic requirement. In Papua New Guinea the Valdocco experience takes place in *Vunabosco*, Kokopo, East New Britain. In Solomon Islands this takes place in *Don Bosco Henderson*, Honiara.

* **Aspirantate**

The Aspirantate is the time for the young person who aspires to be a Salesian to discern if his initial attraction is indeed a call from God to be a Salesian and whether he has the requirements of suitability for Salesian life. During the aspirantate tertiary studies are undertaken in view of obtaining a tertiary diploma or degree. For one who has already done tertiary studies the aspirantate may last at least 1 year. Ordinarily it lasts 3-4 years in the *Savio Haus Aspiranate*, at Bomana, PNG. During this stage the accompaniment of a spiritual guide is important.

* **Pre-Novitiate**

The prenovitiate is the first stage of formation of a Salesian. It is a full year of special preparation immediately before the novitiate to deepen the candidate’s vocational choice and verify his suitability for beginning the novitiate. This preparation is made through an experience of Salesian community and apostolic life. This first stage of formation of the Salesian takes place at the *Don Bosco International Prenovitiate*, Lawaan, Philippines.

* **Novitiate**

The novitiate stage offers the candidate the possibility of beginning the Salesian religious experience. With the help of the Novice Director the novice examines carefully the motives of his choice, makes certain his suitability for the Salesian life, and prepares himself to give his all to God for the service of the young in the spirit of Don Bosco. This takes place in the international *Salesian novitiate* in Lawaan, Philippines. The whole formative process of the novitiate concludes with the first religious profession where the novice makes the vow to God to be obedient, poor and chaste according to the way of the Gospel traced out by St. John Bosco.

* **Post novitiate**

The postnovitiate stage has the purpose of deepening of the young Salesian’s life of faith and of the charism of Don Bosco, disposing him to a progressive integration of faith, culture and life, as well as preparation for practical training stage. During this stage, which normally lasts at least two years, the study of philosophy is undertaken. This takes place in the international *Salesian postnovitiate* in Canlubang, Philippines.

* **Practical Training**

The practical training stage provides opportunity for a deeper living experience of Salesian educative and pastoral activity. During this stage, which last at least 2 years, the young Salesian gets to practice Don Bosco’s Preventive System of education, particularly the animating presence among the young. This takes place in one of the 9 Salesian presences of the Vice-Province.

* **Theological formation**

After the practical training stage the Salesian Brother proceeds to their two years of theological formation and deepening of the knowledge of the spiritual heritage of Don Bosco. This takes place in the *Sándor Brothers’ International Formation Community* in Parañaque, Philippines. This stage concludes with the perpetual profession.

For the candidate for the priestly ministry he proceeds to his four years of theological formation in view of preparing him to be a priest who is genuinely a Salesian pastor and educator. This takes place in any of the international *Salesian Theologates* of the Congregation. This stage concludes with the priestly ordination.

* **Perpetual Profession**

The perpetual profession ordinarily takes place after six years after the first profession. It is the solemn and definitive consecration in a laving encounter between the Lord who calls and the Salesian who responds by giving himself totally to God and to his brothers and sisters.