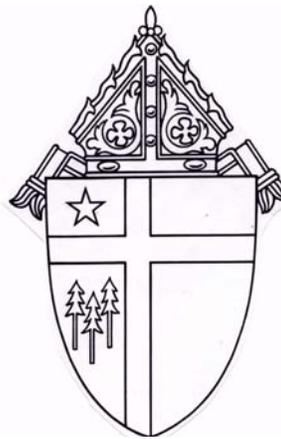




Handing on the Faith

Guidelines and Resources for Sacramental Catechesis



Diocese of Tyler
Office of Religious Education
Issued 1999
Revised – January, 2006

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Preface

- In the Diocese of Tyler today we are ministering to Catholics whose practice of the Catholic faith ranges from minimal to maximum. This is very different from our pre-Conciliar experience of parish life. In addition there are many seeking full communion with the Catholic Church for many reasons.
- This guide addresses the situation by providing parishes with a suggested catechesis, resources, and various models and approaches to use. It is understood that each pastor will have to apply them to his particular parish and to those who come forth seeking celebration of the sacraments.
- The Diocesan Pastoral Manual is the initial place to begin for information regarding sacramental preparation for age, catechesis, ceremony, and other concerns.
- The section on Baptism in this guide deals with catechesis for the parents of children being presented for the sacrament. Adults seeking baptism in the Catholic Church would follow the guidelines for the process of Christian Initiation in the Pastoral Manual.
- The Diocesan Resource Library has current materials for use with candidates, households of faith, catechists, and clergy.
- Since the parents are the primary educators of the faith within the family, the aim of all catechesis of children should be towards the ideal of incorporating whole households of faith into the Church. Therefore, sessions for faith formation should include age appropriate sessions as an essential component of every program for sacramental formation.

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Policy

Diocesan Curriculum Guide for Ages 4-18
Issued July, 2001

“**Fifteen Goals** have been ordered in a progression of systematic study of theology based on the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. There are rationales listed for each goal which constitute the validity for that goal. The rationales and concepts are excerpted from two resources: *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) and *Dominus Jesus* (DJ). It is essential that the rationales and the key concepts listed under each goal are understood by the catechist and taught in order for the successful transmission of the faith.” (Curriculum Guide for Ages 4-18)

Goal number 7 deals primarily with the Sacraments. It would be helpful to consult the Curriculum Guide in your parish for objectives, activities, and learning opportunities for children at these ages. Assistance and materials may be obtained through the Office of Faith Formation for developing these lesson plans for this age group.

Goal #7: Demonstrate the importance of sacraments, with an emphasis on the centrality of the Eucharist, in the life of Catholics.

Rationales:

CCC 1129: The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation.

CCC 1324: The Eucharist is the “source and summit” of the Christian life.

Diocesan Resource Manual for Christian Initiation
Issued June 1, 2002

The initiation of adults into the Catholic Church is a process of formation and education. The fifteen goals which have been set for the Curriculum Guide for Ages 4-18 will serve as the foundation for the curriculum for initiating new Catholics into the faith or returning Catholics. The following objectives have been developed to cover with adults for faith formation in the systematic study of the sacraments. These objectives may be useful in faith enrichment for Catholics who are already fully initiated and catechized to further grow and deepen their understanding of the sacraments.

Goal # 7 Demonstrate the importance of sacraments, with an emphasis on the centrality of the Eucharist, in the life of Catholics

1. To give an understanding that Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life and that Confirmation is the completion of baptismal grace.
2. To teach that the Eucharist within Catholicism is the heart and the summit of the Church's life, for in it Christ associates his Church and all her members with his sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.
3. To give an understanding of both the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the meaning behind each of their separate sections.
4. To present the Catholic teaching on the two sacraments of healing: Penance or Reconciliation, and The Anointing of the Sick.
5. To present the vocation of marital love as expressed in the teaching of the Catholic Church on the sacrament of Matrimony and the sixth and ninth commandments.
6. To present Holy Orders as a sacrament in the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles and directed towards the salvation of the People of God.

Sacrament of Baptism

Sacrament Of Baptism

Catechesis for the Sacrament of Baptism



Since catechesis for this sacrament is for parents, it requires a good process of adult faith formation. Such a process would include a comprehensive presentation on the meaning of the sacrament with the opportunity for participants to reflect and discuss. The curriculum for catechesis (below) is divided into three parts, accompanied by sample questions. You are invited to develop other questions.. The doctrinal elements are referenced to the Catechism of the Catholic Church; the paragraph numbers are noted in parentheses.

The Meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism

- A. Baptism as the first of the three Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist)
Content:
1. The meaning of sacrament; God's communication of life and grace (1113-34)
 2. Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist as the way a person becomes a full member of the Body of Christ, the Christian community (1212)
 3. The Sacraments of Initiation originally celebrated in one Rite at Easter Vigil for adults (1229-33); today separated with infant Baptism (1250-52)
 4. The Sacraments of Initiation are the foundations of the Christian life, a sharing in divine nature through grace, which enable us to grow in Christian love (1212)
 5. Baptism as the door and gateway to Christian life in the Spirit (1213)
 6. Baptism is received only once and seals the Child with an indelible spiritual mark (1272-74)

- B. Baptism as the beginning of initiation into individual faith
Content:
1. Liberation from Original Sin (405, 977-78, 1250, 1265) and personal sin (for adults, 1262-63, 2520)
 2. Rebirth as a child of God (683, 1265)
 3. The beginning of our faith relationship with the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (1266)
 4. Rebirth and new life through grace; metanoia, continuing conversion (1262)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- When have you made a significant "change" or turnaround in your life? Who or what empowered you?
- Have any family members made notable or drastic changes in their lives?
- How did you respond?
- How did others respond?
- Has your continuing conversion exposed or redeemed any character flaw?
- How has your continuing conversion affected your marriage?
- How does "new life" (divine life) differ from ordinary human life?

- C. Baptism as the beginning of initiation into communal faith (1253-55)
Content: The beginning of our faith relationship with and incorporation into the Church through
1. The family as the "domestic church" (Pope Pius VI)
 2. The parish and diocese as the Body of Christ, People and Family of God (1267-70)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What was your first memory of God?
- Growing up in your home, what was your image of God? Loving? Judgment? Friendly? Punishing?
- What does it mean to be a domestic church?
- How is your Christianity reflected in relationships at home?
- What signs, symbols, rituals, practices, and traditions will be based on this Christian relationship?

- D. If the couple is not registered in the parish they are invited to register at this time.

Explanation of the Rite of Baptism Part I

A. Reception and Name of the Child

Content: (2156-2159, 2165)

1. Reason for choosing a Christian name
2. The Sign of the Cross, marking the child with the "imprint of Christ"

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- How did you choose your child's name?
- What hopes and expectations does it symbolize?
- How do you connect this name with our Christian tradition?

B. Request for Baptism and Promise of Parents

Content: The faith of child depends on the faith and responsibility of parents and godparents and also of the community (1253-55)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What are you asking of God's Church for your child?
- What is Baptism to you?
- What responsibilities are you assuming in asking your child to be baptized?
- Are you ready and willing to take them on?
- What resources in family and parish will assist you in this undertaking?

C. Blessing of Water

Content:

1. Water and its role in Salvation History (1217-22)
2. Baptismal water is consecrated by the power of the Holy Spirit (694, 1238-39)

D. Renewal of Vows of Baptism by Parents

Content: The Profession of Faith (1251, 1253-55, 2340)

1. During Baptism it is parents who renew their Baptismal Vows
2. The role and responsibility of parents/guardians and godparents that comes with the Baptism of a child

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What does your Baptism mean to you?
- What constitutes "your constant care to bring your child up in the practice of the faith"? In your marriage/family relationships?
- In your household?
- In your community and parish?
- What is the difference between a "source of faith" and a "resource for faith"?
- What is the inter-relationship among parents, godparents, family, and parish community in forming a child in faith?

Content: Discipleship as connected with Baptism (425, 618, 1816)

- With Baptism we become disciples of Jesus with the task of:
 - Modeling our life on Jesus
 - Proclaiming the message of Jesus through word and action
 - Taking up our cross and following Jesus

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- Is there a difference between membership and discipleship?
- What basic beliefs guide your life?
- What values, beliefs and skills will your child need to be disciples?
- How will you pass these on to your child?

E. Celebration of God's Word

Content: The Word of God (1236)

1. Enlightens us

2. Reveals the truth
3. Is the source of faith

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What does your favorite Scripture teach you and how will it help you raise your child?
- How does your family story of faith affect you now?. Positively? Negatively?
- From your memory who emerges as the strongest person of enduring faith?

F. Intercessory Prayer

Content:

1. The meaning of prayer (2558-65)
2. Prayer as an essential part of the Christian life (2744-45)
3. Intercessory prayer is praying in petition as Jesus did (2634-36)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- Do you pray? Frequently?. Sometimes? Not at all?
- Do you and your spouse pray together? Frequently? Sometimes? Not at all?
- What is your prayer for your child?

Explanation of the Rite of Baptism: Part II

A. Baptism with Water

Content: Your child will be baptized into a God of Trinitarian relationship of (1276)

1. Father
2. Son
3. Holy Spirit

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- How is that mystery which we call God your Father?
- Jesus your brother? The Holy Spirit your advocate?
- How will you help your child grow in this relationship?

B. Anointing with Chrism

Content:

1. Anointing signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit
2. Through the anointing the child is incorporated into Christ as priest, prophet, king which orients one towards worship of God, proclaiming the Gospel message, and serving one's brothers and sisters (1241-42)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- How are you living the priesthood of Christ?
- How are you living the prophetic ministry of Christ?
- How are you living the kingly ministry of Christ?
- How will you teach your child to live as "priest, prophet, and king" and to take on the mission of Jesus and the Church?

C. Clothing with White Garment

Content: The white garment symbolizes that the child has

1. Been clothed with Christ, so one can live as Christ keeping the garment white throughout our life (1243)
2. Died with Christ, so one can rise with Christ (1220)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What are the visible results of 'invisible grace (the putting on of Christ at Baptism)?
- How will you help your child to "put on Christ" and his values?
- What is the connection between the white garment We are clothed with at Baptism and the white pall used at funerals?

D. Lighted Candle

Content: The candle (1243)

1. Is lit from the Easter candle

2. Signifies that Christ has enlightened the child
3. Is a sign that the child is to be the "light of the world"

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- Why is it necessary to bring the Easter' Candle into the darkness of the church?
- How will you be the "light of Christ" for your child?
- How will you help your child keep the "light of Christ" burning in his or her life?

E. Lord's Prayer

Content (2759-2865)

1. A summary of the whole Gospel (2761)
2. In Baptism signifies new birth into divine life (2769)
3. Contains seven petitions reflecting our dependence on God (2803-06)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What is the "will" of God, which we ask to come to pass?
- In what ways will your child depend on you for daily bread?
- On whom do you depend for yours?
- How is the remembrance of our forgiveness by God connected with the command to forgive others?

F. Blessing of Parents

Content: Prayer for parents as they take On their role as (1231)

1. Mother and father to the child
2. Teachers and witnesses of the faith to their child

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What changes has/will your child bring into your lives?
- What adjustments have you made so far and will have to make in the future?
- How might God be a part of these changes and adjustments?

G. After Baptism, in your home and in our parish - an introduction to the liturgical, formational, social and service life of the parish, its organizations and ministries.

Resources used in Baptismal Preparation For Small Children (Ages 3-6)

About the Sacrament of Baptism (Channing L. Bete)

The World God Made: The Story of Creation (ARCH Books)

Joan Lowery Nixon. *Before You Were Born* (Our Sunday Visitor)

Francine M. O'Connor. *The ABC's of the Sacraments...for children* (Liguori Publications)

Joan Ensor Plum. *I Am Special, Kindergarten Third Edition* teacher guide (Our Sunday Visitor)

Joan Ensor Plum. *I Am Special Fun Book* (Our Sunday Visitor)

Sharon Lee Roberts. *Somebody Lives Inside: The Holy Spirit* (Concordia Publishing House)

Janet Wittenback.. *God Makes Me His Child In Baptism* (Concordia Publishing House)

Additional Resources

Walking by Faith (Brown-Roe)

Kindergarten Textbook Chapter 22- "God Created Water"

Faith First (Resources for Christian Living)

First Grade Textbook Chapter 11 - "The Church's Celebrations"

Coming to God's World (Sadlier)

Kindergarten Textbook Chapter 22 –"We Belong to God's Family"

Discovering God's Love (Sadlier)

Five Year Old Program Lesson 25 -"Loving God"

Discovering God's Love (Sadlier)

Four Year Old Program lesson 25 -" Belonging to God's Special Family"

Our Catholic Faith (Sadlier)

A Summary of Basic Beliefs Chapter 7 -"Becoming Catholic"

This Is Our Faith (Silver Burdett & Ginn)

Heritage Program I - Baptism - Page 72-75

Resources for Parents/Guardians

About the Sacrament of Baptism (Channing L. Bete)

Sandra DeGidio, O.S.M. "The Sacrament of Baptism - Celebrating the Embrace of God" Catholic Update (St. Anthony Messenger Press)

Sacrament of Confirmation

Sacrament Of Confirmation



A Catechesis

Keeping in mind that all catechesis should lead a person to a conscious, living, and active faith, each parish should provide a process of immediate preparation to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation. This process should be designed according to the developmental needs of the ages of persons involved and should take into consideration the cultural, economic, and social needs of the candidates.

Catechesis provided for a candidate should:

- take place in the parish in which he/she worship
- be a process separate from the regular classes held in the school or CCD program
- be offered in a model that is formational, with the opportunity for prayer, scripture, reflection, community building, and personal sharing

The catechesis should include the study of:

- A. The relationship of the initiation sacraments - Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation.
- B. The meaning of the Sacrament of Confirmation
- C. The signs and symbols related to the Sacrament of Confirmation
- D. The Holy Spirit in our lives.
- E. The role of the persons involved in the catechesis and celebration, i.e. Bishop, Episcopal Vicar, pastor, FFL, Coordinator of Youth Ministry, Catechists, parents, sponsors, parish community
- F. The Rite of Confirmation
- G. The responsibilities of the confirmed Catholic to be an active witness to Christ and involved in the mission of the Church.

A Model for Confirmation Catechesis for Adolescents

The following model offers monthly sessions that would be 1 ½ - 2 hours in length. The sessions should be formational and include a well planned prayer experience each time. Opportunities for service, an evening of prayer, and a retreat are included. The total amount of time spent would be approximately 32 hours divided throughout a year. Service project would add another 8-10 hours, depending on the parish. The candidates would attend these monthly sessions while still attending catechesis in the school or parish program.

Learning environment: Prayerful, open, conducive to questioning and further searching.

Text: **Emmaus Road**, published by Our Lady Visitor, was used for this model but several other texts would fit into such a model, as well.

Goal: Our young people, following confirmation, will be able to conclude that they are gifted by God, realizing that Christianity means continued conversion throughout life. They will be willing to serve and participate in all of the sacraments with greater understanding. They will have a deeper relationship with God and a commitment to continue as Christian witnesses in the journey of faith

Month 1 Informational meeting and registration for potential candidates and parents.

Individual interviews of potential candidates with a confirmation team member.

Month 2 Catechetical Session #1 “The Journey”

Objective: At the end of the session, the candidate will be able to identify the Christian, as part of the Church and moving toward the fullness of the Kingdom of God.

Evening for Parents

Objective: At the end of the evening, parents should be able to describe the parish confirmation process and to participate in the program with greater understanding.

Month 3 Catechetical Session #2: “Baptism”

Objective: At the end of the session, the candidate will be able to explain baptism as a passage from death to life, to describe their experience of freedom and slavery and to conclude that responsibility comes with function.

Month 4 Catechetical Session #3 “The Call to Serve”

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Objective: At the end of the session, the candidate will be able to conclude that the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation calls a Christian to share in the ministry of the church.

Evening for Sponsors

Objective: At the end of the evening, sponsors should be able to describe their role in the confirmation process.

Month 5 Service Workshop

A presentation given by three persons in the parish who are deeply committed to service telling of their experiences. Candidates can be given an opportunity to select areas in which they would be willing to serve.

Month 6 Evening of Prayer for Candidates and Sponsors

“From Suffering to New Life”

Objective: At the end of the session, the candidate should be able to conclude that “new life” often comes from painful experiences, to discuss their understanding of pleasure and suffering and to illustrate ways that they can learn and move forward from their bad times.

Month 7 Retreat: “The Gifts of the Holy Spirit”

Objective: At the close of the retreat, candidates should be able to identify the Spirit working in their lives, allowing themselves to become more conscious of the Spirit’s movement in their lives.

Month 8 Catechetical Session 4: “The Church, Institution and Community”

Objective: At the end of the session, the candidate should be able to summarize that the Church is both a structured institution and a community of love and compassion aimed toward the Kingdom of God.

Month 9 Catechetical Session 5 “The Rite of Confirmation”

Objective: At the end of the session, the candidate should be able to identify the signs and symbols of the rite in order to come to a fuller understanding of the sacrament.

Month 10 Catechetical Session 5 “Reflection on the Sacraments”

Objective: At the end of the session, the newly confirmed should be able to identify and explain the events that made up the celebration of Confirmation and to select a ministry to continue to live out the Christian mission.

HIS SPIRIT REMAINS IN YOU

Retreats

Retreats are an important part of every Confirmation process because they are a highly effective way for the candidates to experience the church as a community in a non-academic, open environment. While “retreat” is defined as “to move away from something or someone, “ in a religious sense there is a “moving toward” God and others.

Ideally, retreat can take place over a weekend in a place outside the parish. Before setting a date, the school calendar should be checked. Candidates should not be forced to choose between the retreat and other important events like homecoming, proms, band contests or significant sports’ events.

Planning is the key to a successful retreat. A well coordinated retreat team can help to divide the responsibilities: finding a facility, deciding on meals, preparing the schedule, developing the presentation and planning prayer experiences.

- Group prayers and closing
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Gifts of the Spirit talk
Scripture study activity sheet, small group sharing and prayer
- 2:30 Discipleship Talk
Small group sharing
Peter monologue
“Get Going Activity” scripture search through events in Peter’s life, identifying with his feelings and reactions to Jesus’ call - done individually and then shared in small groups.
Private recollection on more personal questions related to scriptures regarding Peter’s call can be begun if time permits.
- 4:30 Break and snack (free time/ organized games)
- 6:30 Dinner
- 7:30 Commitment Talk
Small group activity and sharing
Slide show
- 9:00 Community Talk
Sharing about prayer support/reading letters written to the group/distribution of letters from parents/sponsors/etc.
- 10:30 Outpouring of the Holy Spirit / praying for individuals
12:00 Celebration
- 1:30 Lights Out!

Sunday

- 7:00 Staff wake-up
- 8:00 Morning prayer, breakfast, packing/cleaning out rooms
- 9:00 Music and singing
Transformation Talk
Cross experience - taking sealed envelopes from cross and replacing them with daisies, offering burnt letters with incense

Small group sharing and prayer - exchanging "My Christ" gifts and giving dove pins out

10:30 Set up for Eucharist/load equipment/clean-up

11:30 Closing liturgy

Confirmation Ritual - Laying on of Hands

Bishop:

My dear friends: in baptism God our Father gave the new birth of eternal life to be his chosen sons and daughters. Let us pray to our Father that he will pour out the Holy Spirit to strengthen his sons and daughters with his gifts and anoint them to be more like Christ the Son of God.

Mis queridos amigos, oremos a Dios nuestro Padre, para que derrame al Espíritu Santo sobre los que acaban de ser bautizados y los fortalezca con sus dones y los unja para que sea más conformes a Cristo, el Hijo de Dios.

(All pray in silence for a short time)

(Bishop and concelebrants will lay hands on each candidate.)

Bishop:

All powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them a new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their Helper and Guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Dios todopoderoso, Padre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, por el agua y el Espíritu Santo libráste a estos tu hijos e hijas del pecado y les diste nueva vida.

Envía sobre ellos a tu Espíritu Santo para que sea su ayuda y guía. Dale el espíritu de sabiduría y de inteligencia, el espíritu de consejo y de fortaleza, el espíritu de ciencia y de piedad. Cómalos del espíritu de tu santo temor y de reverencia en tu presencia.

Te lo pedimos por Cristo nuestro Señor.

All: Amen

Intercessions

Bishop:

My dear friends, let us be one in prayer to God our Father as we are one in the faith, hope, and love his Spirit gives.

Deacon:

For these sons and daughters of God, confirmed by the gift of the Spirit, that they give witness to Christ by lives built on faith and love, let us pray to the Lord:

For the newly confirmed, who have received the fullness of God's Spirit, that standing at the altar of the Lord they may share the banquet of Christ's sacrifice, calling God their Father in the midst of the Church, let us pray to the Lord.

Por sus familias, para que no poniéndoles ningún impedimento, los ayuden a seguir la inspiración del Espíritu Santo, roguemos al Señor:

Por sus catequistas, para que siempre muestren la belleza de la palabra Dios a aquellos que la buscan, roguemos al Señor .

For the holy Church of God, in union with Benedict XVI, our Pope, our bishop, Alvaro Corrada, and all the bishops that God who gathers us together by the Holy Spirit, may help us to grow in unity of faith and love until his Son returns in glory, let us pray to the Lord.

Bishop:

God our Father, you sent the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, and through them and their successors you give the Spirit to your people. May his work begun at Pentecost continue to grow in the hearts of all who believe. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Post Confirmation

The post-Confirmation period must be as well structured and planned as the pre-Confirmation preparation period.

In order to help them deepen their participation in the life of the Church, the newly confirmed should be given representation on parish committees and significant roles during liturgical celebrations, as well as continuing catechesis. They should be invited into peer ministry with those younger than themselves and given the opportunity to help in retreat work and in the ministry of service.

I. Parish Outreach to Newly Confirmed

Since Confirmation reflects the final step of initiation as full members of the adult faith community, this should be regarded as more than symbolic. The parish membership must be encouraged to reach out to join them in their fellowship and service. Therefore:

- A. This fact should be explained annually at some meeting of each parish organization and ministry group.
- B. Each organization should be encouraged to take steps toward explaining the nature and purpose of the organization to the youth.

Each youth should receive a personal invitation to join or otherwise participate in the group's activities or ministries.
- C. Newly confirmed youth should automatically be enrolled on all the mailing and phone lists used by the parish in communicating to its adult membership.
- D. Though still living with parents, newly confirmed youth should be enrolled as individuals or "units" in terms of the envelope or tithing system used in the parish.
- E. Newly confirmed should be informed of all the elected positions open within the parish's system of administration and told of their eligibility for such positions.
- F. Whenever volunteers are sought, the newly confirmed should automatically be included with other adults in such invitations to serve.
- G. The parish's social events (dances, bazaars, parties, etc.) should be open to the newly confirmed and they should be invited to attend and to work on committees which put on these events.

In short, it should be visibly demonstrated to the newly confirmed that they are regarded and welcomed as adult members within the parish's community and its life. This demands that the community reach out in personal ways to them.

II. Special Programs

Because the needs and interests of youth don't fully coincide with those of older adults, it is recommended that some educational and social events be provided the newly confirmed during the year (s) following their Confirmation. Youth can be asked to help in setting up such a program and in carrying it out.

Note: If the parish already has an active young adult or singles organization the newly confirmed could simply be enrolled in that group and invited to participate in its scheduled activities. Such activities include the following: Education Program, short courses, lectures, or study groups that deal with immediate concerns of the young adult. Youth can be asked to help identify suitable topics of interest and formats for pursuing the topics.

a. **Spiritual Programs**

Days of recollection, overnight retreats, an occasional special liturgy - meal - social evening and /or the formation of prayer groups can be sponsored by the parish in behalf of the young adults.

b. **Social Activities**

Actual events will depend on the interests of the young adults and can range from ski trips to dart ball leagues. The primary concern is to help youth recognize the parish as a resource for wholesome social activity with their peers and older adults.

c. **Service Projects**

The young adults as a group can be asked to undertake specific projects in behalf of the parish community and to sponsor fund raising activities related to a specific need of the parish.

A Five Session Catechesis for Adults for Confirmation

Meeting 1 Faith / Creed

Catecheses:

Introduction. Faith as a life-long journey. What do I believe? Overview of the Creed focusing on the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Belief in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

- A. Desire for God
- B. God reveals Himself to us
- C. Our response to God
 - Faith is a gift
 - Grace
 - Faith and Understanding
- D. Overview of the Creed (Apostle's Creed and/or Nicene Creed)
What we believe Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit



Questions for Reflection:

1. What do we believe as followers of Christ?
2. What are the core beliefs of the Church?
3. Faith is a gift means...
4. How does the relationship of Father, Son and Spirit call us to deepen our relationship with God and others?

Resources:

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraphs #26 - 1065

Concluding Prayer:

*Let us pray
Almighty Father,
the love you offer always exceeds the furthest expression of our human longing,
for you are greater than the human heart.
Direct each thought, each effort of our life,
so that the limits of our faults and weaknesses may not obscure the vision of your
glory or keep us from the peace you have promised
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

Meeting 2 Jesus / Prayer

Catechesis:

Jesus: Who do you say that I am? Jesus of the Gospels. Overview of the Sacred Scriptures. Call to discipleship. The importance of daily prayer. The viable ways we continue to minister as Jesus did.

Jesus of Sacred Scripture

- A. Jesus in the context of the Old and New Testaments
- B. Jesus: Who do you say that I am?
- C. Jesus' miracles, preaching.
- D. Ways we witness to Jesus' message in our everyday lives.
 - 1. Meaning of discipleship living.
 - 2. Agape love
- E. The importance of an ongoing prayer life.
 - 1. What is prayer?
 - 2. Praying the scriptures
 - 3. Prayer of the Church
 - a. Sacraments
 - b. Liturgy
 - c. Liturgy of the Hours
 - 4. Guides to prayer
 - 5. Expressions of prayer
 - a. Formal and informal prayer
 - b. Meditation/Contemplation
 - 6. Obstacles to prayer



Questions for Reflection:

- 1. Jesus: who do you say that I am?
- 2. Jesus calls us to agape love. What does this mean?
- 3. How can we be disciples of Jesus?
- 4. What is prayer? In what ways do we pray?
- 5. Does my prayer effect and/or help others?

Resources: Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraphs #101 - 141, Christian Prayer, Par #2558-2865

Concluding Prayer and Blessing:

(Please respond "Amen" at the end of each of the three intercessions.)

The father of mercies has given us an example of unselfish love in the sufferings of his only son. Through our service of God and neighbor may we receive his countless blessings. Amen

We believe that by his dying Christ destroyed death forever. May he give us everlasting life.

Amen

Christ humbled himself for our sakes. May we follow his example and share in his resurrection. Amen.

Meeting 3 Church / Christian Initiation

Catechesis:

The ministry of Jesus continues in the community of the Church. Ecclesiology. The meaning of sacrament. Jesus as the Sacrament of God, the Father. The Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist. The meaning of the paschal mystery and discipleship.

Ministry of Jesus continues in the Church

- A. Jesus is the Sacrament of God, the Father
- B. Church as the Body of Christ, People of God, Community of Disciples
- C. Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist
 - Theology of these sacraments
 - Context within the Church
 - Meaning of the celebration and ritual
- D. Paschal Mystery
 - Mystery of Redemption
 - Understanding Jesus' life, death and resurrection
 - Conversion
 - Discipleship, living in the everyday



Questions for Reflection:

1. Sacrament means...
2. The Church is defined in many ways, People of god, Community of Disciples, body of Christ. What one word or phrase describes your image of Church? Why?
3. What is the meaning of the Paschal Mystery? How am I called to live the life, death and Resurrection experience of Jesus?
4. How will living a sacramental life effect me in the way I see or act towards others?
5. How will I witness to the faith received through my Baptism and Confirmation?

Resources:

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part Three, The Celebration of the Christian Mystery, Paragraphs # 1066 - 1690; Sacraments of Initiation, Paragraphs # 1210 - 1419.

Concluding Prayer ***Almighty and eternal God,***
in Christ your Son you have shown your glory to the world.
Guide the work of your church:
help it to proclaim your name,
to persevere in faith,
and to bring your salvation to people everywhere.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Meeting 4 Confirmation / Gifts of the Spirit

Catechesis:

Character of Confirmation. Gifts of the Holy Spirit. What does the ritual say to us as fully initiated Catholic Christians. Witness of individual's commitment to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Discussion about conversion. Confirmation sponsor as companion in the life-long journey of faith. Role and requirements of a Confirmation sponsor.

Sacrament of Confirmation

- A. Theology of Confirmation
- B. Character of Confirmation
- C. Pentecost Experience
- D. Gifts of the Holy Spirit/Fruits of the Holy Spirit
- E. Ritual - what does it say about being fully initiated?
- F. Witness to Gospel living
- G. Role of Confirmation sponsor
 - Companion in the life-long journey of faith.
 - Requirements of a Confirmation sponsor
 - a. Person of faith
 - b. Free to practice in the faith
 - c. Sixteen years of age or older
 - d. Received the Sacraments of Initiation

SEND YOUR SPIRIT



Questions for Reflection:

1. Receiving the sacrament of Confirmation at this time in my life means...
2. Does the Pentecost experience have relevancy in my life today? How?
3. In what ways do the gifts of the Holy Spirit call me to gospel living?
4. Why did I chose my sponsor as a companion of the life-long journey of faith?
5. What qualities of Christian witness do I see in my sponsor?
6. Name some of the challenges you face each day living as a disciple of Jesus.
7. How will I be a true witness of Christ?

Resources:

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Sacrament of Confirmation, Paragraphs # 1285 - 1321.

Concluding Prayer and Blessing:

Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing:

The Father of light has enlightened the minds of the disciples by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. May he bless us and give us the gifts of the Spirit forever. Amen.

May the fire which hovered over the disciples as tongues of flame burn out all evil from our hearts and make them glow with pure light. Amen.

God inspired speech in different tongues to proclaim one faith. May he strengthen our faith and fulfill our hope to see him face to face. Amen.

Meeting 5 Moral life / Beatitudes / Sacraments of Reconciliation

Catechesis:

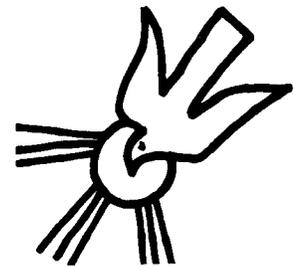
The moral life of the Christian flows from conversion to Jesus. Meaning of good and evil in one's life. Moral decision-making and conscience formation. Living the Christian virtues of faith, hope and love.

Beatitude:

Mission, outreach, social justice, service to the community.

- I. Living a moral life in the Church
 - A. Beatitudes and Commandments
 - B. Dignity of the human person
 - C. Theological and cardinal virtues
 - D. Moral law
 - E. Grace and justification

- II Sacrament of Penance
 - A. Theology of the sacrament
 - B. Understanding of sin, reconciliation, forgiveness, healing
 - C. Formation of conscience
 - 1. Understanding of freedom, responsibility
 - 2. Understanding of responsibility
 - 3. Guide candidates in an examination of conscience
 - D. Model the Rite of Penance



Questions for Reflection:

1. Describe what the dignity of the human person means.
2. How can I live the beatitudes/commandments in my every day life?
3. Sin is... The effects of sin on my life are...
4. What is the Catholic understanding of freedom and conscience?
5. Why do you desire to receive the Sacrament of Penance?

Resources:

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part Three, Life in Christ,
Paragraphs #1691 - 2550



Concluding Prayer: God our Father,
*you sent your Son into the world to be its true light.
Send workers into your great harvest that the gospel may be preached to every
creature and your people, gather together by the word of life and strengthened by the
power of the sacraments, may advance in the way of salvation and love. We ask this
through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen*

Who Can Be A Sponsor?

One of the tasks of being confirmed is to choose a sponsor. Some people pick their best friend, others a relative and still others want to choose the right person. For the latter, the task of choosing a sponsor may be quite challenging. Who do I choose? How do I ask them? Why do I have even need a sponsor? Thankfully, the church has provided the answers to all of these questions. A list of resources has been provided on the bottom of this page.

Do I really need a sponsor?

Yes. Everyone needs help living the Christian life. Sponsors, along with parents, have the duty of helping you to follow Jesus Christ.

Who can be a sponsor?

The first criterion is that the person who is asked to be a sponsor must be willing and able to help you live your life as a Christian. Do they love Jesus like you want to love Jesus? Do they love others like you want to love others? Ideally, this person would be the same person who acted as your godparent at baptism. If you had two godparents, you can even ask them both.

Specifically, the church requires that sponsors:

- must be sixteen years old
- may not be the natural or adoptive parents of the confirmand
- must be fully initiated into the Catholic Faith (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist)
- must be leading a life in harmony with the Catholic Faith
- must be free of any canonical impediment

From this list, you can see that some times a best friend or favorite relative is not the right choice for being a sponsor. Not everyone can be a sponsor. Be sure to ask your parish priest if the person you choose would be a good sponsor.

How do I ask someone to be my sponsor?

Just ask. Let them know why you are asking them. If they say, yes, then put them in contact with your parish priest, (so he can make sure that everything on the list above is in order).

Once your sponsor has been approved, invite them to be involved with your preparation. Go to Mass together; invite them to class, pray with and for one another, attend the retreat, etc.

For more information: *Rite of Christian Initiation*, Introduction, 5-6; *Code of Canon Law*, 872-874, 892-893; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1311; and the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, Introduction, 10.2.

Choosing A Confirmation Name

One of the favorite aspects of preparing for Confirmation is the choosing of a Confirmation name.

In this custom, the one preparing for Confirmation takes the name of a person who has officially been declared a saint, blessed, or venerable or who is one of the faithful from the Bible. One may also chose to be confirmed under his or her own name given at Baptism. In Confirmation, the bishop uses this name, saying, “N., be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.” As parents, you will need to assist your child in choosing a Confirmation name.

1. Life-time saint friends.

Help your child to understand that they are not simply choosing a name they like, but they are asking a saint to be their friend for the rest of their lives. We call these life-time saint friends “patrons.” Patrons help us live as Christians both through their praying for us (intercession) and their good example (witness) (cf. CCC 2156, 956).

2. Read stories about the saints.

More than likely, your child will not know too many saints. Take time read the lives of the saints. There are many different books on saints. The internet also has many different websites on the saints. One place to start is <http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/indexsnt.htm>. This site provides a list by topic (everything you can imagine) and list by name AND <http://www.catholic.org/saints/calendar> provides a list by date.

You might start your reading with a saint that has similar interests or with one of the saints from the curriculum. Sometimes, patrons are chosen because of the day their feast day falls on, e.g. if your child’s birthday is on September 4, they might chose St. Rose of Viterbo. Sometimes, patrons might be chosen because of family ties, e.g. the child’s grandpa’s name is Mark, grandpa is a great, so the child chooses St. Mark. You might even start with your own baptismal name. There are many different starting points for choosing a particular saint. Ultimately, the patron chosen should be someone that your child wants to imitate in their love for Christ and others.

3. Choose a saint.

After researching, pick a saint.

4. Ask the saint.

The child should ask the saint to be their friend (patron). As parents, you might encourage them to write a letter to the saint. You might also encourage them to be friends with the saint. Teach your child to ask for the saint’s intercession, get them a picture or statue of the saint, read more about the saint, etc.

5. Practice telling the saint’s story.

Your child will be asked why they chose the particular patron. They should be able to explain who the saint is, how they were a faithful disciple and witness of Jesus Christ, and what they hope to imitate in their own lives as a disciple and witness.

Additional Resources for Preparation for Those Who Will Be Forming Candidates for Confirmation

I. Church Documents

Parents, caregivers, catechists and other persons designated to form candidates for Confirmation must know and observe the teachings of the Church. To prepare themselves, these adults should be encouraged to read and study the following key documents with regards to Confirmation:

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) passages on Christian Initiation 1212, 1229, 1275, 1533, 1680; Confirmation 1285-1321; the Holy Spirit 687-747 and those paragraphs listed in the index. (checklist on pages 12-14)
2. Scripture passages pertaining to Confirmation, specifically the Holy Spirit and anointing. (detailed checklist included)
3. *Code of Canon Law*, CIC, can. 840-848 and can. 879-896
4. *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults* (RCIA), Introduction
5. Rites Book
 - Rite of Confirmation, Introduction
 - Rite of Confirmation Within Mass
 - Confirmation of a Person in Danger of Death
 - Texts for the Celebration of Confirmation
6. *Gifts of the Holy Spirit* Papal Sunday Addresses, April 9 through June 11, 1989
7. *Confirmation Perfects Baptismal Grace*, Papal General Audience, September 30, 1998

II. Signs, Curriculum, Prayers and Saints

Parents, catechists and other persons designated to prepare children for Confirmation should also know the signs of conversion or evidence of growth in faith for children. This knowledge is necessary to assess the child's readiness for reception of the sacrament.

Parents, catechists and other persons designated to prepare children for Confirmation should also be familiar with the curriculum and should help children to know their prayers and to be familiar with the stories of the saints especially as they relate to the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist.

Detailed Checklist - Scripture Passages On Confirmation

Parents, catechists and other persons designated to prepare children for Confirmation must know and observe the teachings of the Church. To prepare themselves, these adults should be encouraged to read and study the following Scripture passages with regards to the Confirmation:

Readings from the Gospels

Mt 5:1-12	Theirs is the kingdom of heaven
Mt 16:24-27	If anyone wishes to follow me, let him deny himself.
Mt 25:14-30	You have been faithful in small matters, come into my joy.
Mk 1:9-11	He saw the Spirit descending and remaining on him.
Lk 4:16-22	The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.
Lk 8:4-15	Parable of the Sower
Lk 10:21-24	I bless you, Father, for revealing these things to children
Jn 7:37-39	From the heart of the Lord shall flow fountains of living water.
Jn 14:15-17	The Spirit of truth will be with you for ever.
Jn 15:18-27	The Spirit of truth will be my witness.
Jn 16:5-13	The Spirit of truth will lead you to the complete truth.

Readings from the New Testament

Acts 1:3-8	You will receive the power of the Holy Spirit and be my witnesses.
Acts 2:1-33	Pentecost
Acts 8:1-17	They laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit
Acts 10:1-44	The Holy Spirit came down on all those listening to the Word of God.
Acts 19:1-6	Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?
Rom 5:1-8	The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.
Rom 8:14-17	The Spirit and our spirit bear witness that we are children of God.
Rom 8:26-27	The Spirit himself will express our plea.
1 Cor 12:4-13	There is one and the same Spirit giving to each as he wills.
Gal 5:16-25	If we live in the Spirit, let us be directed by the Spirit.
Eph 1:3-19	You have been signed with the seal of the Holy Spirit.
Eph 4:1-6	There is one Body, one Spirit and one baptism.
Heb 2:23, 3:1-3	I will pour out my Spirit on all.

Readings from the Old Testament

Is 11:1-4	On him the Spirit of the Lord rests.
Is 42:1-3	I have endowed my servant with my Spirit.
Is 61:1-9	Anointed by the Lord God.
Ez 36:24-28	I will place a new Spirit in your midst.
Joel 2:23-30	I will pour out my Spirit on all.

Parent / Caregiver Sessions for Confirmation (optional)

The initiation of children into the sacramental life of the Church is primarily the responsibility and concern of parents (CIC, can. 890, RC 3). In other words, parents are the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith. In Baptism, parents accept the responsibility of training their children in the practice of the Faith and to make it “their constant care.” As stated in the Rite of Baptism (120), parents are to see that “the divine life which God gives them [their children] is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in their hearts.” Although the child has reached the age of reason at the time of preparation for Confirmation, they have not yet been fully initiated. They lack the strength to be an official witness and disciple of Jesus Christ. Parents / adult caregivers must assist the child in the life of holiness.

Unfortunately, many parents / caregivers do not know this is their role and/or do not feel qualified to teach the Faith and/or are indeed uncatechized themselves. For these reasons, and others, pastors, Faith Formation Leaders, and catechists need to assist parents/ caregivers. This may be accomplished with sessions for these adults.

The objective of these sessions is to enable the parents to be the primary catechist of their child.

Every Catholic home should have a Bible, CCC, crucifix, holy water and sacred images. Many homes do not have these items. If possible, parishes should make these available for every home.

The next two pages present the outlines of the first two sessions. Each session is two hours in length. They may be modified as needed.

Confirmation

Parent / Caregiver Session One - Outline

- 7:00pm Gather. Nametags (only if necessary). / Welcome and Introductions.
- 7:15pm Opening Liturgy of the Word. Use readings that fit the evening. No homily.
- 7:25pm Presentation: Who Is the Holy Spirit? Explain that the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity (CCC 685). the Lord and Giver of Life. Explain that a relationship with the Holy Spirit is necessary for all believers (CCC 683); He is “the interior Master of Christian prayer” (CCC 2672).
- 7:45pm Writing and Silence. Each person should write their thoughts, feelings, observations and questions with regards to the talk in a notebook. There should not be any discussion at this time. Instrumental music playing in the background may be helpful in maintaining silence.
- 8:00pm Discussion Between Spouses. Spouses exchange notebooks and read in silence. Spouses then discuss what they have written with one another. They will more than likely not have enough time to finish their discussions and should be encouraged to continue the conversations at home.
- 8:10pm Presentation: The Holy Spirit in Your Family Life – Living the Gifts, Seeing the Fruits. Need for holiness in personal life and family life. Mention weekly Sunday Mass and regular Reconciliation as a start, but more is needed. Every Catholic home should have a Bible, CCC, crucifix, holy water and sacred images. Need to live a life of charity. Need to pray as a couple. Need to pray as a family and teach children to pray on their own. The Holy Spirit will provide what is needed at every level. Present gifts with definitions and concrete examples of how these affect our lives, especially family life. The work of the Holy Spirit is manifested by the fruits.
- 8:30pm Writing and Silence. Like before.
- 8:40pm
- Ask parents to have their discussion at home about gifts and fruits.
 - Encourage parents and families to pray together.
 - Distribute parent handbooks on Confirmation. Ask parents to read the handbooks and note their questions before the next meeting.
 - Ask parents to read the CCC passages on Confirmation 1285-1321. If possible, also read the passages on the Holy Spirit 687-747. These will be discussed next session. Announce the next meeting time. Let them know you will be available for Q&A
- 8:55pm Blessing of Parents (Book of Blessings, paragraph 132-134).

Confirmation Parent Session Two - Outline

This is the second session. The first session is outlined on the previous page.

- 7:00pm Gather. Nametags (only if necessary).
- 7:05pm Welcome and Introductions. Mention that you hope they had an opportunity to have their discussions at home and to pray together both as a couple and a family.
- 7:15pm Opening Liturgy of the Word. Use readings that fit the evening. No homily.
- 7:25pm Presentation: What is the Sacrament of Confirmation?
In very simple terms, explain what a sacrament is. Use the sections in the Catechism on Confirmation and the Holy Spirit. Help parents understand what they read. Definitely explain : 1) Confirmation perfects and strengthens Baptism so to more fully prepare one to receive the Eucharist; 2) what the seal is; 3) the obligation to be confirmed; 4) what spiritual maturity is; and the 5) effects of Confirmation.
- 8:05pm Questions.
- 8:15pm Handbook and Expectations. Questions.
Parents should have read the handbooks and noted their questions. Walk parents through the handbooks. Tell parents your expectations. Show parents the curriculum. Remind parents that they are the primary catechist. The parish assists them in this task. Inform parents that there are many other resources as well, e.g. CIC, the Rite itself, other church documents, children's books and videos, online resources, etc. Parents should know that they could find the answers to their questions. Take questions as you present the material.
- 8:50pm Closing Remarks.
Ask parents who would like to continue meeting, to stay afterward in order to set up a time that will work.
- 8:55pm Blessing of Parents (Book of Blessings, paragraph 132-134).

Confirmation Retreat

What?

Three to five hour retreat for children preparing to receive Confirmation. Parents and sponsors are to attend with their children. Siblings might also be invited.

Why?

The retreat should:

1. prepare parents, children and sponsors to receive the sacrament
2. provide a time to study the Church's teachings on Confirmation in language suited to the children's age level
3. be a time of prayer

Who?

Invite parents, sponsors and children preparing for Confirmation. Siblings might also be invited.

When?

OPTION 1: The retreat might serve as a review and thus should be scheduled near the end of preparation for Confirmation.

OPTION 2: The retreat might serve BOTH as an introduction and a review. Children need repetition. For this reason, the retreat may be scheduled twice: 1) as early as possible and 2) as close to Confirmation as possible.

Where?

At the parish hall or at someone's home, but you will need access to the church. You will need space for meeting. You will more than likely need food.

Set-Up

The arrangement of the facility will depend on the type of retreat you decide to host. You might have participants move from one classroom to the next. You might arrange one large room. You more than likely will need the church. Be sure that it is available. You will probably need food and so will need a space for this activity. You might consider having background music. You might decorate the room. You want participants to be comfortable.

Sample Schedule One: Confirmation Households of Faith Learning Stations

This retreat model provides a structure for parents, sponsors and their children to work through various stations pertaining to the Sacrament of Confirmation and an opportunity for receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Parents and sponsors are assisted by pastors and catechists as needed. Stations will need to be prepared prior to the retreat. Below is a list of possible stations and their content. The methodology or activity to deliver the content is left to the parish's creativity. Activities may include: storytelling, reading, discussions, prayer, short contests, puppets, crafts, board games, songs, and worksheets. There should be at least one station per family. For larger parishes, you may need to replicate the same station several times. The stations should be set up so that each family and sponsor can work as their own group at their own station.

- 2:00pm Gather. Nametags (only if necessary).
- 2:10pm Welcome. Opening Liturgy of the Word. Use readings from rite.
- 2:30pm Explanation of stations to be completed. Each family starts with a different station. Each station should take 15 minutes to complete or approximately 2 hours. Pick a time to gather for the final preparation. This is not a race. Introduction of assistants. Food available. Take breaks as needed.

- STATION: Story of Jesus' Baptism, noting the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Him.
- STATION: Story of Jesus' Temptation in the Desert, noting how He had the strength of the Holy Spirit.
- STATION: Story of Pentecost. What were the apostles doing before? What happened? What happened after the descent of the Holy Spirit?
- STATION: Explanation of the Sacrament of Confirmation. What is it? Who gave us it? Why?
- STATION: Who is the Holy Spirit? Why do we need the Holy Spirit?
- STATION: What are the Gifts of the Holy Spirit? How can I use them? How often?
- STATION: What are the Fruits of the Holy Spirit?
- STATION: What are the Symbols of the Holy Spirit?
- STATION: The effects of Confirmation.
- STATION: What does it mean to be a disciple and witness of Jesus Christ?
- STATION: Sacrament of Reconciliation.
Station providing an opportunity to receive the actual sacrament of Reconciliation.
- STATION: Practicing the Rite of Confirmation.

- 4:30pm Closing Prayer. Include a time to write a letter of gratitude to God.
- 5:00pm Potluck Dinner.

Sample Schedule Two: Confirmation Large Group and Family Discussion

This retreat model provides a structure for large group talks and parents, sponsors and their children to work together. Parents and sponsors are assisted by pastors and catechists as needed. Below is a list of possible large group talks and their content. The methodology or activity to deliver the content is left to the parish's creativity. Parishes might also provide an opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Readings, discussion questions and activities should be prepared ahead of time and given to parents when they arrive.

- 1:00pm Gather. Nametags (only if necessary).
- 1:10pm Welcome. Explanation of the day. Introduction of assistants.
- 1:20pm Welcome. Opening Liturgy of the Word. Use readings from rite.
- 1:35pm Parents, sponsors and children discuss the readings as they relate to Confirmation. Give parents sheets with the readings and discussion questions. Families and the sponsors can meet together by simply turning their chairs towards one another.
- 1:45pm Large Group Presentation – Who is the Holy Spirit? What is Confirmation?
- 2:05pm Large Group Activity
- 2:25pm Break
- 2:40pm Large Group Presentation – The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit
- 3:00pm Parents, sponsors, and children should discuss the Gifts and Fruits and apply to their lives
- 3:15pm Large Group Presentation – The Effects of Confirmation
- 3:25pm Parents, sponsors and children should discuss the effects of Confirmation and apply to their lives
- 3:45pm Large Group Presentation – Preparing for Confirmation
- 4:15pm Large Group Activity
- 4:30pm Closing Prayer.
- 5:00pm Potluck Dinner.

Sacrament of Eucharist

Additional Resources for Preparation for Those Who Will Be Forming Individuals for First Eucharist

Church Documents

Parents, catechists and other persons designated to prepare children for First Eucharist must know and observe the teachings of the Church. To prepare themselves, these “catechists” should be encouraged to read and study the following key documents with regards to Eucharist:

1. Catechism of the Catholic Church or CCC passages on Christian Initiation 1212, 1229, 1275, 1533, 1680; the Eucharist 1322-1419; and those paragraphs listed in the index.

2. Scripture passages pertaining to the Eucharist, specifically the image of bread and Jesus as the bread of life.

3. Canon Law, CIC, can. 840-848 and can. 899-958.

4. Pope John Paul II’s Encyclical Letter *On the Eucharist In Its Relationship to the Church (Ecclesiae de Eucharistia)*, 2003

5. General Instruction on the Roman Missal, specifically the following chapters
- Ch 1: Importance and Dignity of the Eucharistic Celebration
- Ch 2: The Structure of the Mass, Its Elements and Its Parts
- Ch 3: The Duties and Ministries in the Mass

6. Rites Book, Holy Communion & Eucharistic Worship Outside of Mass, namely,
- Holy Communion Outside of Mass, Introduction
- Communion to the Sick, Introduction
- Viaticum, Introduction
- Explanation of Exposition of the Holy Eucharist
- Eucharistic Processions
- Eucharistic Congresses

7. *On Children’s First Confession Prior to First Communion (In quibusdam ecclesiae partibus)*, promulgated March 31, 1977.

8. Guidelines for the Reception of Communion, National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), 1996

9. On Communion for Divorced and Remarried Persons, Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts, 2000

Detailed Checklist - Scripture Passages On the Eucharist

Readings from the Gospels

Mt 14:15-21	Miracle of the loaves.
Mt 15:32-39	Second miracle of the loaves.
Mt 16:5-21	From the bread to Messiah.
Mk 14:12-26	This is my body. This is my blood.
Mk 15:16-20	They dressed Jesus up in purple and put a crown of thorns on Him.
Lk 9:11-17	All the people ate and were satisfied.
Lk 22:39-44	His sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.
Lk 24:13-35	They recognized him at the breaking of the bread.
Jn 6:1-15	They gave the people all the food they wanted.
Jn 6:24-35	If you come to me, you will never be hungry.
Jn 6:41-51	I am the living bread from heaven.
Jn 6:51-58	My flesh and blood are true food and drink.
Jn 19:31-37	When they pierced His side with a spear, blood and water flowed out.
Jn 21:1-14	Jesus took the bread and gave it to them.

Readings from the Old Testament

Gn 14:18-20	Melchizedech brought bread and wine
Ex 12:21-27	When the Lord sees the blood on the door; he will pass over.
Ex 16:2-15	I will rain bread from heaven upon you.
Ex 24:3-8	This is the blood of the covenant of the Lord God.
Dt 8:2-16	He gave you food which you and your fathers did not know.
1 Kg 19:4-8	Strengthened by the food, he walked to the mountain of the Lord
Prov 9:1-6	Come and eat my bread, drink the wine I have prepared.

Readings from the New Testament

Acts 2:42-47	They continued in fellowship and in the breaking of the bread.
Acts 10:34-43	After he was raised from the dead, we ate and drank with him.
1 Cor 10:16-17	Though we are many, we are one bread and one body.
1 Cor 11:23-26	Eat this bread and drink this cup.
Heb 9:11-15	The blood of Christ purifies our hearts from sin.
Heb 12:18-24	Jesus brings you to the Father by shedding his blood for you.
1 Pt 1:17-21	You have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.
1 Jn 5:4-8	The Spirit, the water, and the blood give witness.
Rev 1:5-8	Because He loves us; He has saved us from sin with His blood.
Rev 7:9-14	They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.

Parent / Caregiver Sessions for First Eucharist (optional)

The initiation of children into the sacramental life of the Church is primarily the responsibility and concern of parents (CIC, can. 890, RC 3). In other words, parents are the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith. In Baptism, parents accept the responsibility of training their children in the practice of the Faith and to make it “their constant care.” As stated in the Rite of Baptism (120), parents are to see that “the divine life which God gives them [their children] is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in their hearts.” Although the child has reached the age of reason at the time of preparation for First Eucharist, they have not yet been fully initiated. They lack the strength to be an official witness and disciple of Jesus Christ. Parents must assist their child in the life of holiness.

Unfortunately, many parents do not know this is their role and/or do not feel qualified to teach the Faith and/or are indeed uncatechized themselves. For these reasons, and others, pastors, Faith Formation Leaders, and catechists need to assist parents.. This assistance may begin with two – two hour parent sessions. Additional sessions could be planned for parents who need additional catechesis and/or assistance.

The objective of these sessions is to enable the parents to be the primary catechist of their child.

Every Catholic home should have a Bible, CCC, crucifix, holy water and sacred images. Many homes do not have these items. If possible, parishes should make these available for every home.

The next two pages present the outlines of the first two sessions. Each session is two hours in length. They may be modified as needed.

If the candidates are minors, parents or caregivers are expected to have already attended two 2-hour sessions on the sacrament of Reconciliation and two 2-hour sessions on the sacrament of Confirmation, prior to attending the two 2-hour sessions on the sacrament of the Eucharist.

First Eucharist Parent Session One - Outline

Read the previous page before using this outline.

- 7:00pm Gather. Nametags (only if necessary). Welcome and Introductions.
- 7:15pm Opening Liturgy of the Word. Use readings that fit the evening. No homily.
- 7:25pm Presentation: Where Did the Eucharist Come From? (CCC 1335-1344, 2176)
Present the institution of the Eucharist by Jesus and how the Eucharist was prefigured in the Old Testament. Refer back to the readings for the evening.
- 7:45pm Writing and Silence. Each person should write their thoughts, feelings, observations and questions with regards to the talk in a notebook. There should not be any discussion at this time. Instrumental music playing in the background may be helpful in maintaining silence.
- 7:55pm Discussion Between Spouses. Spouses exchange notebooks and read in silence. Spouses then discuss what they have written with one another. They will more than likely not have enough time to finish their discussions and should be encouraged to continue the conversations at home.
- 8:10pm Presentation: What is the Eucharist? What is the Real Presence? Why is the Eucharist the Source and Summit? (CCC 1328-1332, 1356-1390, 1412-1413, 1324-1327) Explain the various names given to the Eucharist: memorial, sacrifice, meal and thanksgiving. Explain the Real Presence. Define the term “transubstantiation”. Define “source and summit.” Conclude with an application to one’s personal life and family life, that is, answer the question, “What difference does this truth make in my life and my family’s life?” Refer back to readings. Mention weekly Sunday Mass and regular Reconciliation and life of charity at home. Every Catholic home should have a Bible, CCC, crucifix, holy water and sacred images.
- 8:40pm Writing and Silence. Like before.
- 8:50pm
- Assign the parents to have their discussion at home and to pray together.
 - Distribute parent handbooks on First Eucharist. Ask parents to read the handbooks and note their questions before the next meeting.
 - Ask parents to read the CCC passages on Eucharist 1322-1419. Show them where the passages are located. These will be discussed next session.
 - Announce the next meeting time. Let them know you will be available for Q&A.
- 8:55pm Blessing of Parents (Book of Blessings, paragraph 132-134).

First Eucharist Parent / Caregiver Session Two - Outline

This is the second session. The first session is outlined on the previous page.

- 7:00pm Gather. Nametags (only if necessary).
- 7:05pm Welcome and Introductions. Mention that you hope they had an opportunity to have their discussions at home and to pray together both as a couple and a family.
- 7:10pm Opening Liturgy of the Word. Use readings that fit the evening. No homily.
- 7:20pm Presentation: What are the Fruits or Effects of Eucharist? (CCC 1391-1401, cf. index) Explain the effects of the Eucharist including: 1) unites us with Christ and His sacrifice; 2) cleanses and separates us from sin; 3) increase of baptismal graces and growth in the Christian life, our spiritual food; 3) establishes the community of believers, the Church; 4) commits us to the poor and the unity of all Christians; and 5) foretaste and pledge of heaven. Consult the CCC Index for a complete list with references.
- 7:50pm Questions.
- 8:00pm Presentation: Why Do We Need To Go to Mass on Sunday?
Answer question based on the effects of the Eucharist supported by the Commandments and the precepts of the Church.
- 8:15pm Presentation: How do Baptism and Confirmation prepare one for the Eucharist?
Answer the question based on the effects of Baptism and Confirmation, focusing on the fact that it is through Confirmation that we are strengthened as disciples and witnesses of Jesus Christ.
- 8:25pm Handbook and Expectations. Questions.
Parents should have read the handbooks and noted their questions. Walk parents through the handbooks. Tell parents your expectations. Show parents the curriculum. Remind parents that they are the primary catechist. The parish assists them in this task. Inform parents that there are many other resources as well, e.g. CIC, the Rite itself, other church documents, children's books and videos, online resources, etc. Parents should know that they could find the answers to their questions. Take questions as you present the material.
- 8:50pm Closing Remarks.
- 8:55pm Blessing of Parents (Book of Blessings, paragraph 132-134).

First Eucharist Retreat (Sample)

What?

A three to five hour retreat for children preparing to receive First Eucharist. Parents and sponsors are to attend with the children. Siblings might also be invited.

Why?

The retreat should:

1. prepare parents, children and godparents to receive Jesus in the sacrament
2. provide a time to study the Church's teachings on Eucharist in language suited to the children's age level
3. be a time of prayer and practice for their first celebration

Who?

Invite parents, sponsors and children preparing for First Eucharist. Siblings so be invited.

When?

OPTION 1: The retreat might serve as a review and thus should be scheduled near the end of preparation for First Eucharist.

OPTION 2: The retreat might serve BOTH as an introduction and a review. Children need repetition. For this reason, the retreat may be scheduled twice: 1) as early as possible and 2) as close to First Eucharist as possible.

Where?

At the parish hall or at someone's home, but you will need access to the church. You will need space for meeting. You will more than likely need food.

Set-Up

The arrangement of the facility will depend on the type of retreat you decide to host. You might have participants move from one classroom to the next. You might arrange one large room. You more than likely will need the church. Be sure that it is available. You will probably need food and so will need a space for this activity. You might consider having background music. You might decorate the room. You want participants to be comfortable.

Sample Schedule One: First Eucharist Family Learning Stations

This retreat model provides a structure for parents and their children and sponsors to work through various stations pertaining to the Sacrament of Eucharist. Parents and sponsors are assisted by pastors and catechists as needed. Stations will need to be prepared prior to the retreat. Below is a list of possible stations and their content. The methodology or activity to deliver the content is left to the parish's creativity. Activities may include: storytelling, reading, discussions, prayer, short contests, puppets, crafts, board games, songs, and worksheets. There should be at least one station per family. For larger parishes, you may need to duplicate the same station several times. The stations should be set up so that each family (and sponsors) can work as their own group at their own station.

- 2:00pm Gather. Nametags (only if necessary).
- 2:10pm Welcome. Opening Liturgy of the Word. Use readings pertaining to the Eucharist.
- 2:30pm Explanation of stations to be completed. Each family starts with a different station. Each station should take 15 minutes to complete or approximately 2 hours. Pick a time to gather for the final preparation. This is not a race. Introduction of assistants. Food available. Take breaks as needed.

STATION: Story of the Miracle of the Loaves.

STATION: Jesus' Teaching that He is the Bread of Life.

STATION: The Last Supper and the Institution of the Holy Eucharist.

STATION: Explanation of the Sacrament of Eucharist. What is it?

STATION: Explanation of the various names for the Eucharist and why?

STATION: Explanation of the Mass. What is it? Who gave us it? Why?

STATION: Practicing the gestures and responses at Mass.

STATION: Practicing what to do to prepare for, receive, and after receiving the Eucharist.

STATION: Why do we need to go to Mass on Sunday?

STATION: Eucharistic Adoration.

4:30pm Closing Prayer

5:00pm Potluck Dinner.

Sample Schedule Two: First Eucharist Large Group and Family Discussion

This retreat model provides a structure for large group talks and parents and their children and sponsors to work together. Parents and sponsors are assisted by pastors and catechists as needed. Stations will need to be prepared prior to the retreat. Below is a list of possible large group talks and their content. The methodology or activity to deliver the content is left to the parish's creativity. Readings, discussion questions and activities should be prepared ahead of time and given to parents when they arrive.

- 1:00pm Gather. Nametags (only if necessary).
- 1:10pm Welcome. Explanation of the day. Introduction of assistants.
- 1:20pm Welcome. Opening Liturgy of the Word. Use readings from rite.
- 1:35pm Parents (and sponsors) with children discuss the readings as they relate to the sacrament. Give parents sheets with the readings and discussion questions. Families can meet together by simply turning their chairs towards one another.
- 1:45pm Large Group Presentation – Jesus Gives Us Himself in the Eucharist
- 2:05pm Large Group Activity
- 2:25pm Break
- 2:40pm Large Group Presentation – The Eucharist: Memorial, Sacrifice, Meal and Thanksgiving
- 3:00pm Parents (and sponsors) with children should practice identifying the Eucharist, Jesus, as memorial, sacrifice, meal and thanksgiving.
- 3:15pm Large Group Presentation – Preparing, Celebrating, Eucharist, and Afterwards
- 3:25pm Parents / Caregivers/ Sponsors with children should practice receiving communion
- 3:45pm Large Group Presentation – Life After First Eucharist: Weekly/Daily Mass, Living
- 4:00pm Large Group Activity
- 4:15pm Parents (and sponsors) with children discuss the presentation.
- 5:00pm Potluck Dinner.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Additional Resources for Preparation for Those Who Will Be Forming Candidates for First Reconciliation

I. Church Documents

1. Catechism of the Catholic Church or CCC passages on reconciliation 1211, 1420-1498, the nature of sin, 1846-1876 and conscience 1776-1802. Catechists would also benefit from reviewing the section on the moral life, 1699-1876, and the commandments, 2052-2557.
3. Canon Law, CIC, can. 840-848 and can. 960-997.
4. Rites Book
 - Rite for Reconciliation, Introduction
 - Rite for Reconciliation of Individual Penitents.
5. Pope John Paul II's Encyclical Letter *On the Mercy of God (Dives in misericordia)*, 1980
6. Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *On Certain Aspects of the Celebration the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Misericordia Dei)* issued motu proprio April 07, 2002.
7. On Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church Today (*Reconciliatio et poenitentia*), Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul I December 02, 1984.
8. *On Children's First Confession Prior to First Communion (In quibusdam ecclesiae partibus)*, promulgated March 31, 1977.
10. *On Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of the Priest (Ecclesiae de mysterio)*, promulgated August 15, 1997.

II. Scripture Passages From the Rite for Reconciliation

Scripture, especially the following passages which are within the rite:

___ Deuteronomy 5:1-21, 6:4-9	___ Baruch 1:15-22	___ Ezekial 11:14-21, 33:11
___ Isaiah 1:1-18	___ Psalm 24:6-7	___ Psalm 50:4-5
___ Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 18-19	___ Psalm 136:1-9, 13-14, 25-26	___ Matthew 5:1-12
___ Matthew 6:14-15	___ Matthew 11:28	___ Matthew 22:34-40
___ Mark 1:14-15	___ Luke 5:32, 15:18, 18:13	___ Romans 5:8-9
___ Ephesians 4:23-32	___ Ephesians 5:1-14	___ Ephesians 6:10-18
___ 1 John 1:1-10	___ 1 John 2:1-11	

Catechists might also review the following provided as alternative Scripture readings for the rite:

___ Genesis 3:1-19	___ Genesis 4:1-15	___ Genesis 18:17-33
___ Exodus 17:1-7	___ Exodus 20:1-21	___ Deuteronomy 9:7-19
___ Deuteronomy 30:15-20	___ 2 Samuel 12:1-9	___ Nehemiah 9:1-20
___ Sirach 28:1-7	___ Isaiah 5:1ff	___ Isaiah 43:22-28
___ Isaiah 53:1-12	___ Isaiah 55:1-11	___ Isaiah 58:1-11
___ Isaiah 59:1-15	___ Jeremiah 2:1-13	___ Jeremiah 7:21-26
___ Ezekial 18:20-32	___ Ezekial 36:23-28	___ Hosea 2:16-25
___ Hosea 11:1-11	___ Hosea 14:2-10	___ Joel 2:12-19
___ Micah 6:1-8	___ Micah 7:2-7, 18-20	___ Zechariah 1:1-6
___ Psalm 13:2-6	___ Psalm 25:2-23	___ Psalm 31:2-6
___ Psalm 32:1-11	___ Psalm 36:2-13	___ Psalm 50:7-23
___ Psalm 51:3-21	___ Psalm 73:1-28	___ Psalm 90:1-17
___ Psalm 95:1-11	___ Psalm 119:1-16	___ Psalm 123:1-4
___ Psalm 130:1-8	___ Psalm 139:1-24	___ Psalm 143:1-11
___ Matthew 3:1-12	___ Matthew 4:12-17	___ Matthew 5:1-12
___ Matthew 5:13-16	___ Matthew 5:17-47	___ Matthew 9:1-8
___ Matthew 9:9-13	___ Matthew 18:15-20	___ Matthew 18:21-35
___ Matthew 25:31-46	___ Matthew 26:69-75	___ Mark 12:28-34
___ Luke 7:35-50	___ Luke 13:1-5	___ Luke 15:1-10
___ Luke 15:11-32	___ Luke 17:1-4	___ Luke 18:9-14
___ Luke 19:1-10	___ Luke 23:39-43	___ John 8:1-11
___ John 8:31-36	___ John 15:1-8	___ John 15:9-14
___ John 19:13-37	___ John 20:19-23	___ Romans 3:22-26
___ Romans 5:6-11	___ Romans 6:2b-23	___ Romans 7:14-25
___ Romans 12:1-19	___ Romans 13:8-14	___ 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
___ Galatians 5:15-24	___ Ephesians 2:1-20	___ Ephesians 4:1-3
___ Ephesians 4:17-32	___ Colossians 3:1-10	___ Colossians 3:12-17
___ Hebrews 12:1-5	___ James 1:22-27	___ James 2:14-26
___ James 3:1-12	___ 1 Peter 1:13-23	___ 2 Peter 1:3-11
___ 1 John 3:1-24	___ 1 John 4:16-21	___ Revelations 2:1-5
___ Revelations 3:14-22	___ Revelations 20:11-15	___ Revelations 21:1-8

Parent / Caregiver Sessions for First Reconciliation (optional)

The initiation of children into the sacramental life of the Church is primarily the responsibility and concern of parents (CIC, can. 890, RC 3). In other words, parents / caregivers are the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith. In Baptism, parents/caregivers accept the responsibility of training their children in the practice of the Faith and to make it “their constant care.” As stated in the Rite of Baptism (n. 120), parents are to see that “the divine life which God gives them [their children] is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in their hearts.” Although the child has reached the age of reason at the time of preparation for First Reconciliation, they have not yet been fully initiated. They lack the strength to be an official witness and disciple of Jesus Christ. Adults must assist the child in the life of holiness.

Unfortunately, many adults do not know this is their role and/or do not feel qualified to teach the Faith and/or are indeed uncatechized themselves. For these reasons, and others, pastors, Faith Formation Leaders, and catechists need to assist parents and caregivers. This assistance could be two – two hour parent sessions. Additional sessions could be planned for parents / caregivers who need additional catechesis and/or assistance.

The objective of these sessions is to enable the adults to be the primary catechist for their child.

Every Catholic home should have a Bible, CCC, crucifix, holy water and sacred images. Many homes do not have these items. If possible, parishes should make these available for every home.

The next two pages present the outlines of the first two sessions. Each session is two hours in length. They may be modified as needed.

First Reconciliation Parent Session One - Outline

Read the previous page before using this outline.

- 7:00pm Gather. Nametags (only if necessary).
- 7:05pm Welcome and Introductions.
- 7:15pm Opening Liturgy of the Word. Use readings that fit the evening. No homily.
- 7:25pm Presentation: What Did You Promise In Baptism?
Review meaning of baptismal promises and what the parents committed to doing when their child was baptized. Every Catholic home should have a Bible, CCC, crucifix, holy water and sacred images. Refer back to the readings.
- 7:45pm Writing and Silence. Each person should write their thoughts, feelings, observations and questions with regards to the talk in a notebook. There should not be any discussion at this time. Instrumental music playing in the background may be helpful in maintaining silence.
- 7:55pm Discussion Between Spouses. Spouses exchange notebooks and read in silence. Spouses then discuss what they have written with one another. They will more than likely not have enough time to finish their discussions and should be encouraged to continue the conversations at home.
- 8:10pm Presentation: Personal/Spousal/Family Holiness.
Need for holiness in personal life. Need to pray as a couple. Need to pray as a family and teach children to pray on their own. Give concrete ideas. Mention weekly Sunday Mass, regular Reconciliation and life of charity at home.
- 8:30pm Writing and Silence. Like before.
- 8:40pm Closing.
- Ask parents to have their discussion on holiness at home.
- Distribute parent handbooks on Reconciliation. Ask parents to read the handbooks and note their questions before the next meeting.
- Ask parents to read the CCC passages on reconciliation, 1210-1211, 1420-1498, and the nature of sin, 1846-1876. Show them where the passages are located. These will be discussed next session. Announce the next meeting time. Let them know you will be available for Q&A.
- 8:55pm Blessing of Parents (Book of Blessings, paragraph 132-134).

First Reconciliation Parent Session Two - Outline

This is the second session. The first session is outlined on the previous page.

- 7:00pm Gather. Nametags (only if necessary).
- 7:05pm Welcome and Introductions. Mention that you hope they had an opportunity to have their discussions at home and to pray together both as a couple and a family.
- 7:15pm Opening Liturgy of the Word. Use readings that fit the evening. No homily.
- 7:25pm Presentation: What is the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
In very simple terms, explain what a sacrament is. Use the sections in the Catechism on Reconciliation and sin. Help parents understand what they read. Definitely explain our need for Reconciliation, the effects of Reconciliation, how Reconciliation is key to holiness, and why we need to go to a priest.
- 8:05pm Questions.
- 8:15pm Handbook and Expectations. Questions.
Parents should have read the handbooks and noted their questions. Walk parents through the handbooks. Tell parents your expectations. Show parents the curriculum. Remind parents that they are the primary catechist. The parish assists them in this task. Inform parents that there are many other resources as well, e.g. CIC, the Rite itself, other church documents, children's books and videos, online resources, etc. Parents should know that they could find the answers to their questions. Take questions as you present the material.
- 8:50pm Closing Remarks.
Ask parents who would like to continue meeting, to stay afterward in order to set up a time that will work.
- 8:55pm Blessing of Parents (Book of Blessings, paragraph 132-134).

Reconciliation Retreat

What?

The retreat should:

1. prepare parents and children to receive God's mercy in the sacrament
2. provide a time to study the Church's teachings on Reconciliation in language suited to the children's age level
3. be a time of prayer and practice for their first celebration

Who?

Invite parents and children preparing for First Reconciliation. Siblings and the children's godparents might also be invited.

When?

OPTION 1: The retreat might serve as a review and thus should be scheduled near the end of preparation for First Reconciliation.

OPTION 2: The retreat might serve BOTH as an introduction and a review. Children need repetition. For this reason, the retreat may be scheduled twice: 1) as early as possible and 2) as close to First Reconciliation as possible.

Where?

At the parish hall or at someone's home, but you will need access to the church. You will need space for meeting. You will more than likely need food.

Set-Up

The arrangement of the facility will depend on the type of retreat you decide to host. You might have participants move from one classroom to the next. You might arrange one large room. You more than likely will need the church. Be sure that it is available. You will probably need food and so will need a space for this activity. You might consider having background music. You might decorate the room. You want participants to be comfortable.

Sample Schedule One: Reconciliation Family Learning Stations

This retreat model provides a structure for parents and their children to work through various stations pertaining to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Parents are assisted by pastors and catechists as needed. Stations will need to be prepared prior to the retreat. Below is a list of possible stations and their content. The methodology or activity to deliver the content is left to the parish's creativity. Activities may include: storytelling, reading, discussions, prayer, short contests, puppets, crafts, board games, songs, and worksheets. There should be at least one station per family. For larger parishes, you may need to duplicate the same station several times. The stations should be set up so that each family (and godparent) can work as their own group at their own station.

- 2:00pm Gather. Nametags (only if necessary).
- 2:10pm Welcome. Opening Liturgy of the Word. Use readings from rite.
- 2:30pm Explanation of stations to be completed. Each family starts with a different station. Each station should take 15 minutes to complete or approximately 2 hours. Pick a time to gather for the final preparation. This is not a race. Introduction of assistants. Food available. Take breaks as needed.

STATION: Parable of the Prodigal Son and Parable of the Lost Sheep.

STATION: Explanation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. What is it? Who? Why?

STATION: What Is Sin? Think of examples. Work through situations.

STATION: Why Should I Go To Confession? Why Should I Go To A Priest? How Often?

STATION: Preparation for Reconciliation. Prayer to the Holy Spirit and Act of Contrition.

STATION: Preparation for Reconciliation. Meditation on the Passion.

This might be done in several ways – someone from the parish might lead a meditation, time might be spent in silence looking at the crucifix, a family member might read a meditation.

STATION: Preparation for Reconciliation: Examination of Conscience.

Work through the examination of conscience. Make commitment to be like Jesus everyday.

STATION: Steps to A Good Confession. Practice, including practicing what to do in the confessional and looking at the confessional, if they have not already seen inside.

STATION: Words of Absolution and Their Meaning.

STATION: Penance

4:30pm Closing Prayer.

5:00pm Potluck Dinner

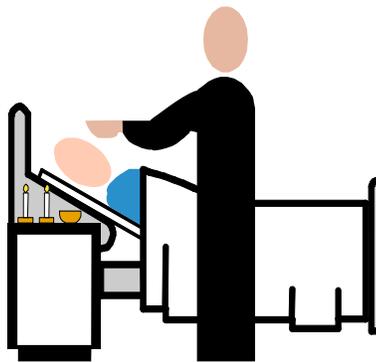
Sample Schedule Two: Reconciliation Large Group and Family Discussion

This retreat model provides a structure for large group talks and parents and their children to work together. Parents are assisted by pastors and catechists as needed. Stations will need to be prepared prior to the retreat. Below is a list of possible large group talks and their content. The methodology or activity to deliver the content is left to the parish's creativity. Readings, discussion questions and activities should be prepared ahead of time and given to parents when they arrive.

- 1:00pm Gather. Nametags (only if necessary).
- 1:10pm Welcome. Explanation of the day. Introduction of assistants.
- 1:20pm Welcome. Opening Liturgy of the Word. Use readings from rite.
- 1:35pm Parents with children discuss the readings as they relate to reconciliation.
Give parents sheets with the readings and discussion questions. Families can meet together by simply turning their chairs towards one another.
- 1:45pm Large Group Presentation – God's Great Love For Us
- 2:05pm Large Group Activity
- 2:25pm Break
- 2:40pm Large Group Presentation - Preparing for Reconciliation
- 3:00pm Parents with children should practice preparing for Reconciliation
- 3:15pm Large Group Presentation - Steps for Making a Good Reconciliation
- 3:25pm Parents with children should practice steps
- 3:45pm Large Group Presentation – Life After Reconciliation, Making Holy Choices
- 4:00pm Large Group Activity
- 4:15pm Parents with children discuss the presentation.
- 4:30pm Closing Prayer.
- 5:00pm Potluck Dinner.

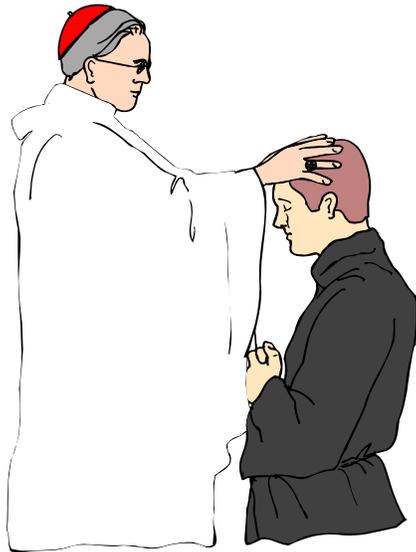
Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

- ❖ Excellent lessons from this resource: *Making Disciples: A Comprehensive Catechesis for the RCIA Catechmenate*
- Lessons for children of varying age levels should be developed. Consult the *Diocesan Curriculum Guide for Ages 4-18*.
- The Rites of the Catholic Church Volume I and II, revised by Vatican Council II should be also reviewed when planning catechetical sessions on the sacraments.
- ✓ Additionally, consult the Diocesan Pastoral Manual on Anointing of Sick .



Sacrament of Holy Orders

- Excellent lessons for this sacrament in: *Making Disciples: A Comprehensive Catechesis for the RCIA Catechmenate*
- Lessons for children of varying age levels should be developed. Consult the *Diocesan Curriculum Guide for Ages 4-18*.
- The Rites of the Catholic Church Volume I and II, revised by Vatican Council II should be also studied when planning catechetical sessions on the sacraments.



Sacrament of Matrimony

- The following sample lesson plan for adults is from a text entitled: *Making Disciples: A Comprehensive Catechesis for the RCIA Catechmenate*
- Lessons for children of varying age levels should be developed. Consult the *Diocesan Curriculum Guide for Ages 4-18*.
- The Rites of the Catholic Church Volume I and II, revised by Vatican Council II should be also studied when planning catechetical sessions on the sacrament
- Additionally, the section on Matrimony of the Diocesan Pastoral Manual should be consulted.



Miscellaneous Resources

Post Sacrament Catechesis: After the Celebration of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, OR Eucharist

As we prepare individuals for initiation into the Catholic Church we should be mindful that we are integrating them into the life of the community. The sacraments are not classes with the celebration becoming the graduation from the class. The General Directory for Catechesis, 1997 for the entire Church states in paragraph 91 that “the baptismal catechumenate should be considered as a source of inspiration for post-baptismal catechesis.” This means that our sacramental processes for preparing children and adults for Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist should follow that model.

Enclosed is a sheet entitled *Learning Objectives for the Christian Initiation of Children of Primary, Intermediate, and Upper Level Ages*, taken from the Diocesan Resource Manual for Christian Initiation, 2002. These objectives should be the source for your preparation for moving children into full initiation into the Catholic Church, depending on which stage they are in the process. Objectives and lessons for adults in this process can be found in the same manual.

Post sacrament catechesis sessions will provide the individual with a practice of lifelong faith formation as a part of his/her development and also provide opportunities for integration into the community through shared reflection sessions with other groups of common interest.

Also enclosed is a sample session or sessions which can be used following the celebration of the sacrament for the child to reflect, study, discuss, and understand more fully what was celebrated. The catechist session is included. The student workbook is not included. If you are interested in additional materials you may contact the Office of Religious Education at 903-534-1077, Ext. 32 or 39.



Your Child's More Intense Prayer

For many people, children included, prayer begins with the reciting of prayer formulas, such as the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be and bedtime prayers. Others might also include spontaneous petitions like "God bless mommy, God bless daddy, and God help me be good." These beginning prayers serve as a foundation of prayer for one's entire life. The life of prayer must not be reduced to reciting a certain number of prayers. Prayer is nothing other than a raising one's heart and mind to God. Prayer is simply spending time with the One who created us, redeemed us, sanctified us, loves us and desires for us to be with Him forever.

"To receive Confirmation...a more intense prayer should prepare one to receive the strength and graces of the Holy Spirit with docility and readiness to act" (CCC 1310). As a parent, your witness of prayer will be key to your child's developing a more intense prayer, not only to receive the sacrament, but for their entire life as a Christian. God's design is for parents to teach their children to pray.

How do I teach my child to pray?

First, by your example of a life of prayer, not only going to Mass on Sunday and regular Reconciliation, but also taking time to pray each day. Second, by helping your child memorize the prayers from the curriculum.

What do I do if I do not know how to pray?

Begin by looking at Jesus. Jesus prays and Jesus teaches us how to pray.

Where can I read about Jesus' prayer life?

The four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, record Jesus' life of prayer and what Jesus taught about prayer. The following passages will get you started. Read and discuss them with your children.

Luke 11:1 Jesus is praying.

Luke 11:1-4 Jesus teaches the Our Father.

Luke 11:5-13 Jesus tells the parable of the late night, persistent friend.

Luke 18:1-8 Jesus tells the parable of the widow and the judge

Luke 18:9-14 Jesus tells the parable of the Pharisee and the humble tax collector

Luke 22:39-46 Jesus prays and seeks the Father's will even at the coming of His death.

Luke 23:46 Jesus' last words are a prayer of trust in God.

You can also read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC). Section four is about the life of prayer. Paragraphs 2598-2616 specifically recount Jesus' prayer life. The footnotes show where to look for these accounts in the Bible.

What if I cannot teach my child to pray?

There is no doubt that you will be able to teach them to pray. God comes to us and tirelessly calls each one of us. Through the Holy Spirit, God even helps us know what to pray. Furthermore, as parents, through the sacrament of Matrimony, the Holy Spirit will assist you in teaching your children to pray.

***Learning Objectives for Christian Initiation
of Children of Primary, Intermediate, Upper Level
Ages 4-18***

Inquiry

Learning Objectives

- to identify our unique qualities
- to identify good qualities in others
- to learn qualities of Jesus
- to choose good qualities to develop in ourselves

Catechumenate

Learning Objectives

- to express an understanding of how we show love
- to realize that God chooses us to be God's children and loves unconditionally
- to name the gifts of God in our life
- to understand how rules help us live together happily
- to learn that the cross identifies us with Jesus
- to learn the Beatitudes
- to learn how to live the Beatitudes in every day life
- to name ways we are changing by learning new things
- to appreciate how our godparents help us learn about God
- to learn how Zacchaeus changed because of Jesus
- to express our desire to change to become more loving and kind
- to express our desire to be initiated into the Church



Mystagogy

Learning Objectives

- to identify the symbols and rituals of our daily life
- to understand the meaning of sacraments
- to learn the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church
- to understand the rituals of initiation
- to understand that initiation means commitment
- to perceive that "Church" is a belonging to God and to each other
- to realize that to receive the Sacraments of Initiation is to make the commitment to the Christian community
- to understand the responsibility of participation in worship and in activities of the Church
- to recognize and appreciate the role of parents, guardians, godparents, and the faith community

Office of Faith Formation Resource Material For Sacramental Formation

The following resources are available at the Office of Faith Formation for check out or previewing prior to deciding on what a parish or group may want to use for catechesis for formation for candidates for celebrating the sacraments.

Resources for Catechesis for Confirmation

**Confirmation/ Eucharist

Ages 8-9/ 10-11

Journey of Faith for Children

- *Inquiry* - Faith, What do Catholics believe, What is the Meaning of the Mass, Bible, Saints, Mary, Places in the Church, Who=s Who in the Church, Catholic prayer, Catholic practice,
- *Catechumenate* - People of God, Who is Jesus?, Early Church, History of the Church, Christian Moral Living, Social Justice, Life: Greatest Gift, Dignity of Life
- *Lent* - What is Lent, Creed, Way of the Cross, Lord=s Prayer, Holy Week,
- *Mystagogy* - Lifelong Process, The Laity: Called to Build the Kingdom, Your Special Gifts, Family Life, Prayer Life, Discernment, Holiness, Evangelization

***Together in Jesus, by Plaum c. 2001, Confirmation / First Eucharist Preparation*

1. Catechist./Parent Handbook
2. Director=s Manual
3. Eight Lessons

Ages 12-13

Giver of Life by Good Ground Press (Six sessions with leader manual, sponsor/mentor manual, journal,

- Topics include:
1. Choices/ Human person
 2. Scripture
 3. Spirituality
 4. Sacraments
 5. Service
 6. Confirmation

Cost: \$4.00 set of six lessons for each candidate

\$8.95 - leader=s manual

\$3.25 - Candidate journal

\$2.00 - sponsor /mentor handbook

Jesus Teaches us to Forgive
Jesus Teaches us to Share

Unite Three - Sharing New Life in Jesus
The Meaning of the Cross
The Forgiveness of Sin in Baptism
The Promise of New Life Forever

Unite Four - Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist - Path to Christian Initiation
The Link between Baptism and Confirmation
The Link between Baptism and Eucharist
Initiation is Forever

Unit Five - The Sacraments of Initiation
Understanding the Symbols and Rituals of Initiation
Initiation, Easter, New Life
The Role of Parents, Guardians, Godparents, and the Community

Our Sacramental Life, Living and Worshiping in Christ, Ave Maria Press, c.2003 (teenagers)

1. Student Text
2. Catechist's Manual

Celebrating The Lectionary - 2004/2005 (Office of Faith Formation)

Children=s Catechumenate - Ages 7-11

Ages 14-17

Catechetical Resource for Youth and Adults

Children=s Liturgy of the Word

Components for each season and week:

1. Readings
2. Focus
3. Children=s liturgy of the word
4. Nursery
5. Beginner
6. Primary
7. Intermediate
8. Junior
9. Youth
10. Adult

