



PREPARATION FOR AND CELEBRATION OF FIRST EUCHARIST

THE OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION AND LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTRY RECOMMENDS:

1. Normally children baptized as infants are to celebrate First Eucharist after two years of catechesis or when it is determined they are ready, after the age of reason.
2. The parish shall provide for children, beginning in the earliest grades, opportunities for understanding the nature of Eucharist.
3. Since parents/guardians, together with parish catechetical leaders, are primarily responsible for this early catechesis, a process is to be provided for parents/guardians of children preparing to celebrate First Eucharist.
4. Children are to be prepared to celebrate the Sacrament of Eucharist for the first time at least three months after they celebrate First Reconciliation.
5. Texts and resources approved by the Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry are to be used in the catechesis for First Eucharist.

GUIDELINES

Catechesis for children preparing to celebrate Eucharist for the first time should include the following:

- An explanation of the Eucharist adapted to the children's ability to understand
- Concrete experiences of eating, conversing, celebrating, sharing, thanking, etc. that make real the abstract Eucharistic concepts of unity and belonging
- Stories about the main events in the life of Jesus
- An appreciation for the presence of Christ in the word, in the Eucharist, and in the assembly gathered for liturgy
- An explanation of the Eucharistic bread and wine as different from table bread and wine

During the immediate preparation period the parish shall provide 3-6 hours of formation to deepen the parent / guardian's understanding and appreciation of Eucharist and to assist them preparing their children. This process should contain elements appropriate to all catechetical processes including message, community, service, and prayer and should follow the principles of adult faith formation. Catechetical leaders should refer to the diocesan Curriculum for Catechesis for the objectives that pertain to the immediate preparation for the first celebration of Eucharist. The following topics should be considered within these sessions:

- The sacraments of initiation
- The history and theology of the Eucharist
- The parent / guardian's role in sacramental preparation and celebration
- The importance of continued participation in liturgy and celebration of Eucharist
- An explanation of the parish catechetical program with regard to First Eucharist.

Session designs are available to provide Family Centered Catechesis.

For more information and sample parent sacramental programs, please contact the Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry.

The parent / guardian program for First Eucharist is to be conducted separately from the program for First Reconciliation. Sensitive to parish needs and the variety of family situations, individual parishes are responsible for determining structure and length of program. Options should be extended to those who have attended this sacramental program within three years.

The celebration of First Eucharist should be in the parish church where the family experiences Sunday worship. Family participation in this liturgy should be encouraged and welcomed.