



Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry
Directory for Catechesis

PREPARATION FOR AND CELEBRATION OF FIRST RECONCILIATION

THE OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION AND LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTRY RECOMMENDS:

1. Normally children baptized as infants are to celebrate First reconciliation after two years of catechesis or when it is determined they are ready.
2. The parish shall provide for children, beginning in the earliest grades, opportunities for understanding the nature of reconciliation.
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 Reconciliation.
4. Children are to be prepared to celebrate the Sacrament of First Reconciliation for the first time at least three months before they celebrate First Eucharist.
5. Texts and resources approved by the Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry are to be used in the catechesis for First Reconciliation.

GUIDELINES

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

- An understanding of God's constant love and forgiveness
- An understanding of the human experience of reconciliation
- An understanding of faith within the limits of their age
- A realization of the responsibility to do good and the need for forgiveness when they fail
- A beginning understanding of the difference between sin, accidents, and mistakes.

During the immediate preparation period the parish shall provide 3 – 6 hours of formation to deepen the parent/guardians' understanding and appreciation of reconciliation and to assist them in 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 Reconciliation. The following topics should be considered within these sessions:

- Theology of reconciliation
- Conscience formation and moral decision making
- The rite of reconciliation
- The parent/guardian's role in sacramental preparation and celebration.
- The importance of continued celebration of the sacrament by children and adults (refer to Office guidelines on the Continuing Catechesis for Reconciliation)
- An explanation of the parish program with regard to reconciliation

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 Reconciliation is to be conducted separately from the program for First Eucharist. Sensitive to parish needs, and the variety of family situations, individual parishes are responsible of 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 Reconciliation should be in the parish church where the family experiences Sunday worship. Family participation should be encouraged and welcomed.