



Diocese of Portland
Office of Lifelong Faith Formation

Parent Handbook
For Year 1
Sacramental Preparation



Parish Information

Parish Name:

Churches within the parish:

Parish Phone number:

Pastor:

Parochial Vicar:

Parish Catechetical Leader:

Phone number:

Mass Schedule:

Table of Contents

Parish Information	2
Table of Contents	3
Letter to Parents	4
Parent Responsibilities	5
Understanding Your Child	6
Praying as a Family	8
Family Resources	10
Glossary of Terms for Parents	16
Why Confirmation before First Eucharist?	22
Prayers for Young Children	24

Dear Parents,

These next two years are a special time for your child. They will be preparing to receive three sacraments: reconciliation, confirmation and first Eucharist.

Reconciliation is the sacrament of God's mercy. Confirmation is a deeper knowledge of God's love through the Holy Spirit, and through the Holy Eucharist, your child will grow in grace and holiness as he/she enters into a loving union with Him. Because Jesus desires a greater intimacy with us, He invites us to return to Him by receiving Eucharist as often as possible.

As parents, you have the right and privilege to be the primary educators of your children in the faith. This gift of faith is what you asked for your child when you brought him/her to the sacrament of baptism and promised to raise your child in the faith. Your participation and example is especially important as your child prepares to receive reconciliation, confirmation and first Eucharist.

The reception of these three sacraments is not the end of your child's formation in the faith but, rather, the beginning of his/her walk of faith.

This handbook is provided to assist you during this first year as we work together to prepare your child to receive these sacraments. In it, you will find some background, key prayers, and tips to help your child prepare for these sacraments during this first year.

It is our hope that you and your child will come to know Jesus in a more personal way as you walk through this preparation together and that He will touch your lives in a deeper, more intimate way.

The Role of Parents/Guardians in Sacrament Preparation

“How precious is the family as the privileged place for transmitting the faith!”
Pope Francis

The Diocese of Portland calls upon parents/guardians to help prepare their children for reception of the sacraments. The home is where faith is developed and lived out. As a parent/guardian, you model for your child what the life of faith looks like. The following practices will help you:

- Participate in Sunday Mass and help your child learn responses.
- Participate in a family conversation with pastor, clergy, pastoral staff, catechetical leader, or catechist.
- Teach your child prayers by praying them often at home and explaining their meaning.
- Teach and encourage your child to use his/her own words to pray. (see pages 8-9)
- Pray with your child at meals and bedtime.
- Read Bible stories with your child.
- Bring your child to weekly faith formation sessions and complete home activities with your child to foster love and understanding of the faith.
- Participate in the special sessions planned for parents/guardians to attend together with your child each year.
- Place and use a Bible and other religious articles such as a crucifix, holy water, and sacred images in your home.

“Parents/Guardians are the first and best teachers of their children in the ways of faith, and we depend on their faith as the primary models and motivators of their children.” CCC #1212

Understanding Your Child

Characteristics of a 6-7 year-old child

Children of this age:

- Are growing away from egocentric social behavior toward an awareness of other people.
- Are entering into peer-group activities with zest.
- Need guidance in learning to handle playtime conflicts and to exercise the social skills needed to establish and maintain friendships.

Their skills include:

- Learning to give and take and to share responsibility with peers.
- Learning appropriate gender-sex identification.
- Learning to read and to write, and other related intellectual skills.
- Understanding a story and retelling it from beginning to end.
- Some are even capable at this stage of finding hidden meaning or discovering the moral in a story.

Note: The children's sense of self-worth is quite fragile at this stage. It is imperative that the catechist be sensitive to this fragility. When a child fails, it is the behavior rather than the child that needs to be corrected. This correction should be handled in such a way that the child's emerging self-image is not damaged or hurt.

Faith Development Needs

Six/seven year-old children, in order to develop holistically (spiritually, emotionally, physically, intellectually, socially)

- Need to be loved so as to love. Faith has its roots in love.
- Need to be recognized, appreciated, and praised for the unique person each one is, created in the image and likeness of God. They need the resulting sense of security and belonging which is essential to their growth.
- Need to see and experience how to share.
- Need models from real life, from Scripture and the lives of the saints and, especially, from the most familiar adults in their lives. Through them, they begin to see that faith lives.
- Need to appreciate others as special persons who are good and loved by God, regardless of social strata, race, physical disabilities, etc.
- Learn to value children different from themselves.
- Need to experience a climate, an atmosphere in which self-discipline can be fostered by giving them real responsibilities, and gradually to learn that all actions have consequences, either positive or negative.

- Need to be involved in group prayer and related religious activities.
- Should continue to experience brief moments of silence in which to communicate with God, to wonder, to reflect, to imagine. e.g., the story of Samuel.

Implications

Because children relate readily to the language of symbols and gestures and begin to acquire the spiritual attitudes which the gestures express, families should provide frequent opportunities for them to engage in ritual: processions, offerings, praising and thanking God in prayer and song.

To help the children move from a moral stage known as self-interest, families should endeavor to awaken in them an awareness of the needs and feelings of others, inviting them to reach out to others in love and concern. Even at this early age, children can tell others about Jesus and His Family.

One way six/seven-year-old children acquire their image of God is from the stories they hear. These images later become more mature concepts and feelings about God. Therefore, Scripture stories which emphasize the love and providence of God and God's faithfulness should be used.

Because the little child tends to imitate, the parent must be an exemplar, one who is conscious of God's presence in the world and in her or his life, one who is joyful, and one who is striving to follow Christ more closely.

Some children know at an early age what God calls them to be. Contact with a priest or religious as a role model may encourage these vocations.

To become wholly oneself requires the development of both the natural and the supernatural virtues. The parent is to be aware that genuine love always respects the other person in his/her integrity and should, therefore, recognize in the child the right to be himself/herself as called by God.

Should parents need assistance in any way, they should not hesitate to contact the Faith Formation staff. We are here to serve you.

SOURCE: Office for Catechetics, Diocese of Sioux Falls

Praying as a Family



Thank you, sorry, please - Teaspoon Prayers

Perhaps the most simple way of structuring a prayer is to use the words thank you, sorry, please. Have a short time of chat and discussion focusing on what the family might want to say to God using these words. Finally, have a short time of open prayer, or mom or dad could weave together all the topics mentioned in a closing prayer. TSP, the first letters of Thank you, Sorry, Please, remind us of the recipe book abbreviation for teaspoon. It can be helpful to give younger children a plastic teaspoon to remind them of these three basic categories for prayer.

Flame Prayers

Cut simple flame shapes from yellow, orange and red paper. Give each person a flame shape and explain to them that when God's Holy Spirit first came, it was as if tongues of fire were reaching out and touching all the people. It wasn't the kind of flame that burned people but more like a flame that filled people with the warmth and love of God, a flame which fired up their hearts with courage and enthusiasm. God sent His Holy Spirit to help people live as Christians. Today, the Holy Spirit can help people pray and praise. He can help people tell others about Jesus. God sent us His Holy Spirit to dwell in us and to be our special helper. Encourage everyone to use their flame shapes to write a prayer thanking God for His wonderful gift. Stick the finished prayers onto a dark background to look like one big flame. Explain that as the Holy Spirit helps us, more and more people can be fired up with the love of God. This can also be done by inviting everyone to draw around their hand on yellow, orange or red paper, cutting them out and writing a short prayer on the hand. Stick the finished prayers onto a dark background to look like one big flame. Read the prayers before or after dinner. Stick the poster to the refrigerator or to the family bulletin board.



Happy and Sad Times



You will need a large face that looks happy one way up and sad the other way up. Show the happy face first and ask what events have made people happy during the last week and make a list of them. Pray about the list or say a one-line thank you prayer for each one. Then, turn the face upside down and ask if anything sad or worrying has happened in the past week, and make a list of them, too. Perhaps there are family members or neighbors who are ill who need praying for. Pray for

this list. Finish by thanking God that He always knows how we feel, whether we are happy or sad, and thank Him for being just as close to us in the good times as in the bad.

Light Triumphs



You will need candles that relight themselves (joke candles). Light the candle. Explain that Jesus was the light of the world and when He died, the devil thought that he had put out the light. Blow the candle out. As it relights, explain that Jesus' power was greater than the darkness, and He came back to life.

"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overpowered it." (John 1)

Prayer Candles

You will need a candle and cardboard circle for everyone. Invite family members to write or draw, on their circle things, what they want to pray for. You might need to suggest events or someone who is ill etc. Invite them to write something they want to ask God about for themselves. Then, insert the candle in its cardboard circle holder. The candles can be lit and a general prayer said. These prayer candles might be used regularly at home each evening, at dinner, or every Sunday.



Prayer Tree

This is a great visual prayer for all family members. For the family tree, you will need a large branch or a few branches arranged in a big vase. Give each family member a leaf shape and ask them to write or draw their prayer. It can be personal, or they can write or draw something in God's creation for which they would like to say thank you. Pierce a hole with a hole puncher and, using wool or thread, or with a spot of glue on one end of each leaf, stick them to the branches of the tree. Some of the prayers (leaves) can be read out loud to help the children to focus.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Without me you can do nothing. If you love me and follow my teachings, you can ask for anything and it will be given to you. Remain in my love. (John 15)

Bubble Prayers

Materials: bubble solution and wands

"I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father." Jesus promises to hear our prayers and act on them. As we call on Jesus, we can be sure that Jesus hears our prayer.



illustrations of.com #1154430

Think of a child you know who needs your prayers (Ex. James who is teased because he has difficulty learning; Katie whose mom is in the hospital; Shondra who is going on vacation). Blow a bubble and say: “Jesus, be with (name).” Watch as the bubbles rise, just like our prayers rise to God.

Family Resources



Draw and Tell Sacraments

From Our Sunday Visitor

With only a large sheet of paper (or a dry-erase board, chalkboard, or overhead projector), and marker, you can easily share with your students what the Catholic Church teaches about the seven sacraments. As you read a story about someone who is receiving a sacrament, you draw a line, put in a squiggle, add a swirl. (The book tells you when!) By the end of the tale, your final picture shows a symbol of that sacrament.



First Sacrament Family Posters

From Our Sunday Visitor

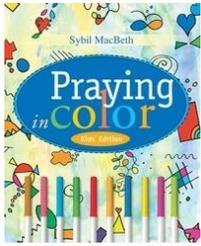
Reinforce classroom study by bringing the "textbook" home in the form of this colorful, engaging poster that can be referred to often as it hangs proudly on the fridge or bedroom wall. In addition to the personalized color front, the back side is filled with helpful summaries of classroom teaching, family prayer, and how-to for the entire family! Comes in packages of 10. Also in Spanish.



Creative Teaching

www.creativeteaching.net

An online resource for hands-on teaching tools that can be used in classroom or home formation for sacrament preparation. Shown here are sacrament image cards and Sacrament Bingo cards.



Praying in Color

By Sybil MacBeth, at Paraclete Press

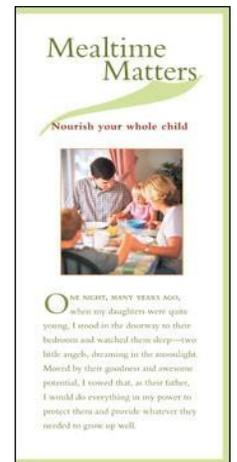
Wonderful book that provides an alternative way to pray through drawing/doodling and coloring. A good tool for helping children and adults alike reflect on Scripture, pray the Psalms, or simply pray to God.

Mealtime Matters

Published by Loyola Press

An attractive, full-color handout from Loyola Press that informs parents of the benefits of eating together and offers parents positive suggestions on how to make it a positive experience.

Loyola Press has many other resources for families to purchase, as well as articles and activities available online.

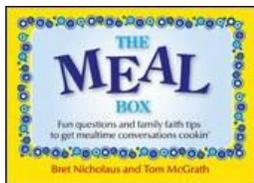


Mealtime Matters

Nourish your whole child



ONE NIGHT, SEVEN YEARS AGO... when my daughters were quite young, I stood in the doorway to their bedrooms and watched them sleep—two little angels, dreaming in the moonlight. Moved by their goodness and awesome potential, I vowed that, as their father, I would do everything in my power to protect them and provide whatever they needed to grow up well.



The Meal Box

Published by Loyola Press

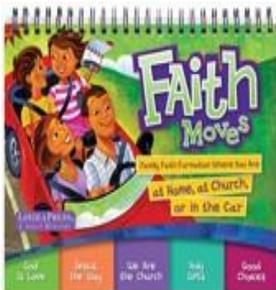
Fun questions and family tips to get mealtime conversations going. Fifty-four cards each containing fun questions to discuss on one side and a meaningful “Food for Family Thought” on the other. Also available in Spanish.



Keep Talking: Daily Conversation Starters for the Family Meal

Published by Liguori

Here are 288 discussion points for mealtime with your family. This book is best with older elementary and middle school students.



Faith Moves: Family Faith Formation Where You Are

Published by Loyola Press

A practical and fun, spiral-bound booklet that provides opportunities for parents to have faith conversations with their children, followed by a game or an activity to drive the message home. Keep this in your purse or glove compartment for use anywhere.

Gabbit—Family Faith Edition

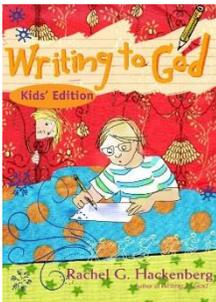
At Saint Mary's Press

An electronic device with hundreds of family-friendly questions. There are no rules, no instructions—just pick.



Writing to God—Kids' Edition

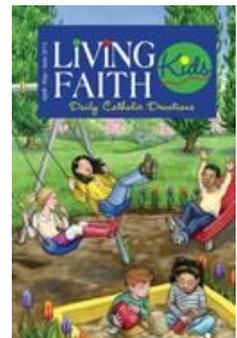
Published by Paraclete Press



Offers guidance to kids that parents can also appreciate: It teaches them how to pray to God creatively through their pens (or pencils, or crayons). In 35 days, kids learn how to pray to God using their senses, reflecting on their feelings, in light of Bible verses, looking at nature, to understanding the ordinary events of life, using new words and pictures for God, and writing to God as a way to say "thanks."

Living Faith Kids

Features daily devotions based on the daily Scripture readings from the Catholic Mass. Each quarterly issue helps children 8-12 develop the habit of daily prayer and build their relationship with Jesus and the Church. *Living Faith Kids* is the daily Scripture-based prayer companion for Catholic children and an invaluable resource for parishes, families and schools.



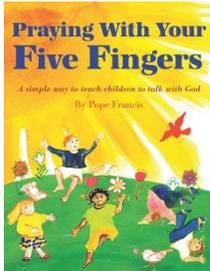
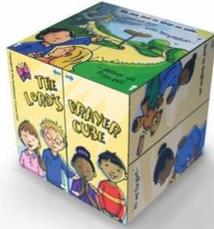
Ten Commandments Cube



Learning Cube

A new, full color "magic cube" from Paraclete Press to help ages 4-8 learn the Ten Commandments and the Our Father. Easy to use and tactile, it has the ability to continuously unfold to reveal each commandment or each part of the prayer with illustrations that are relevant for kids <http://www.paracletepress.com>

Our Father Cube



Praying with Your Five Fingers

Introducing a new 8 1/2 x 11, laminated prayer card, designed for pre-kindergarten through second-grade children to help them learn the prayer method taught by Pope Francis. Each finger on their hand represents a people to pray for - from family and friends to world leaders and those who are ill.

This creative form of prayer has been around for a long time and is often credited, especially today, to Pope Francis when he was the Archbishop of Buenos Aires. Perhaps, it even existed prior to Pope Francis. Either way, it is a powerful way to pray—and to teach our children to pray—which the Holy Father has often utilized in his ministry.

This prayer card makes a perfect end of vacation bible school send-off gift, a start of year gift, or a gift for first reconciliation or first Communion.

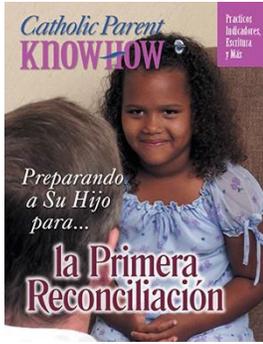
<http://www.paracletepress.com>



Your Child's First Confession and First Communion

From Liguori, written by the Redemptorists

This easy-to-read magazine-style guide is designed to help the priest or catechist work with children by involving parents. Illustrated with color photographs throughout, it helps parents clarify their own approach to the sacrament and provide support for their child during the preparation period. It features a question-and-answer section that deals with issues such as children's fears, parents who cannot receive the sacrament, a non-Catholic parent, changes in the sacrament, and more.



Catholic Parent Know-How

From Our Sunday Visitor

Parents can be empowered with the faith-building activities and ideas in this affordable eight-page tool. Parents can gain involvement in their children's growth and even give them some spiritual nourishment of their own. The series include an edition for first reconciliation, first Holy Communion and the Catholic sacraments. All are in Spanish, as well.



Take Out: Family Faith on the Go

From Our Sunday Visitor

Simplify family life with the help of your Catholic faith. Part magazine, part newsletter, this is a brand new, one-of-a-kind combination activity guide and support tool designed and written for busy families. The eight-page, monthly mini-magazine offers insightful, creative solutions to real-life issues and interesting, fun ideas for living your faith. Start making new family connections with a positive approach today!



At Home with our Faith

From Claretian Publications

Your source for everyday wisdom from real Catholic parents, the newsletter offers down-to-earth, creative ideas and tested strategies for parents to hand on a living faith to their children, while deepening their own faith in the process. Published nine times per year (monthly September through May).

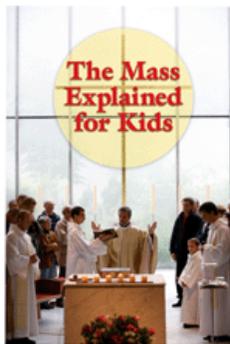
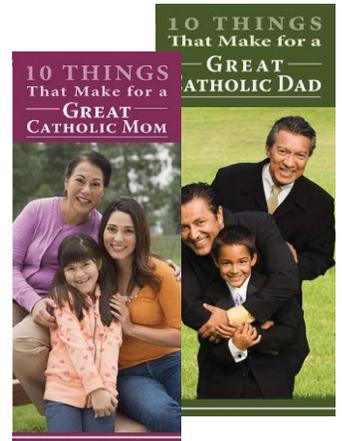




10 Things That Make for a Great Catholic Family

From Our Sunday Visitor

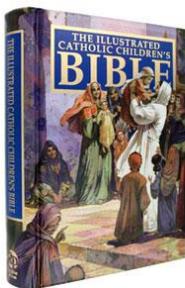
Today's families come in all shapes and sizes. Amid all those differences, one thing is certain: maintaining a strong family takes a lot of time, energy, and work -- oh, and a good dose of prayer! Looking at who we are through the eyes of our faith, we see that, although we may not be the image of the perfect family every day, we are holier, indeed "greater," than we think.



The Mass Explained for Kids

Adults aren't the only ones who want to know what happens at Mass and why. *The Mass Explained for Kids* enables children to understand what we do and say at Mass and why. Liturgical texts are linked with corresponding explanations. This colorful booklet helps kids become fully active and enthusiastic participants at Mass. Features the official texts of the new translation. Includes accurate, kid-friendly, engaging explanations of the Liturgy. Ideal for ages 7-11.

<http://store.pauline.org/english/books/catpageindex/2/free1/dateno/productid/3658.aspx#gsc.tab=0>



Illustrated Catholic Children's Bible

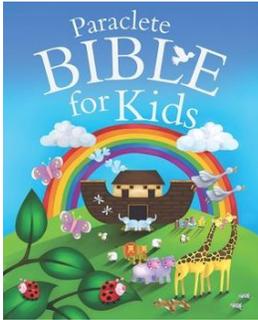
This hardcover children's Bible has full-color illustrations throughout its 432 pages. The Bible stories are based on the NAB version of the Holy Bible. A perfect gift for a special child or a great resource for family story time.

The Bible stories are retold by Anne deGraaf, an award-winning author of over 80 children's books.

This impressive children's Bible contains over 250 traditional stories from the Old and New Testaments, as well as a full-color presentation page for the owner's name, who gave the gift, and the date of the occasion.

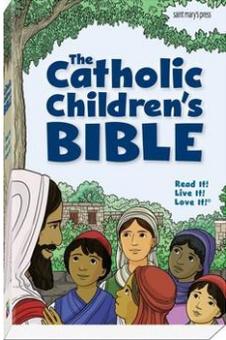
For more information or to order go to [Illustrated Catholic Children's Bible](#).

The Paraclete Bible for Kids



Perfect for any child ages 1-6. Here are the most essential stories from the Old and New Testaments, from Creation and Noah's flood through Abraham, Moses, David, and Daniel, to the Nativity of Jesus and the very first Easter. Bright, simple maps and rich illustrations combine with simple language to become a child's first, treasured introduction to the Word of God.

<http://www.paracletepress.com/paraclete-bible-for-kids.html>



The Catholic Children's Bible

Published by Saint Mary's Press

- Children will know and understand God's saving plan revealed through 125 featured stories highlighting key Bible passages.
- Vibrant illustrations and borders immediately engage children and allow them to dive in to Scripture and become immersed in the stories.
- Understand It! Live It! and Tell It! sections help bring God's Word to life for the youngest of readers.

"Apps" for iPhone and iPads are available for purchase, as well.

Glossary of Terms for Parents - Year 1

Adam and Eve	First parents of the human race created in God's own image and likeness; God gave them stewardship over all creation.
Advent	Four weeks of joyful preparation for the celebration of Jesus' birth at Christmas (Incarnation and Nativity). This special season is also the beginning of the Church year.
Advent Wreath	An evergreen wreath with four candles that are lighted during the weeks of Advent to symbolize the coming of Christ, the Light of the World.
Angel	A spiritual being who worships God in heaven and serves as God's messenger. There are many kinds of angels (guardian, archangel, etc.)
Apostle	One of twelve men who accompanied Jesus in his ministry and were witnesses to the Resurrection. Apostle means "one sent." They were sent by Jesus to preach the Gospel to the whole world.
Baptism	The first of the seven sacraments. Baptism is the initiation sacrament through which God the Father gives us new life in Christ through the Holy Spirit, frees us from original sin which opens the gates of heaven to humanity, and incorporates us into the Church.
Bible	The written revelation of God's love for His people, also called sacred Scriptures. These writings are inspired by the Holy Spirit and written by human beings. It includes 46 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament.
Christmas	The special day and season that celebrates the birth (nativity) of Jesus.
Church	The people of God throughout the whole world, or diocese (the local Church), or the community of those gathered together to worship God.
Creation	God's act of making everything that exists outside himself. The story of the creation of the world and its inhabitants by God is told in the book of Genesis.
Disciple	A person who studies and accepts Jesus' message of salvation, who then and tries to live as He did and continues his mission.

Easter	Commemorates Christ's Resurrection from the dead, which completes our redemption from sin and grants us eternal life. This special season is the central Christian feast and is celebrated for fifty days.
Eucharist	The third Sacrament of Initiation in which we give thanks to God for giving us Jesus Christ. The Body and Blood of Christ, which we receive at Mass and brings us into union with Jesus' saving death and resurrection. Can be called the "Blessed Sacrament" and "Holy Communion"; it is also another word for "Mass."
Faith	The theological virtue by which we believe in and come to know God.
Forgiveness	The act of pardoning those who have hurt us. Because God always forgives us when we are sorry, we forgive others in the same way.
Genuflect	A gesture of touching the right knee to the ground to show respect for the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, which is reserved in the tabernacle; we turn towards the tabernacle and make this gesture before entering a pew in church.
God	The Supreme Being who is, was, and always will be; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—one God in three distinct persons. God has created all that exists, saves all people from sin and death, and sanctifies (blesses with His life, truth and love) all creation.
God the Father	First person of the Trinity who is creator of heaven and earth.
Grace	The gift of God, given to us without our meriting it. Grace is the Holy Spirit alive in us, helping us to respond to His call, to choose love, to do good, and to avoid evil.
Heaven	Union with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in life and love that never ends. Heaven is a state of happiness and the deepest wish and ultimate goal of the human heart.
Holy Communion	The consecrated bread and wine that we receive at Mass, which is the Body and Blood of Jesus. It brings us into union with Jesus Christ and His saving death and resurrection.
Holy Week	The celebration of the events surrounding Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. It commemorates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the gift of Himself in the Eucharist and mandate to serve others on Holy Thursday, His death on Good Friday, and His resurrection that is celebrated at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday.

Holy Spirit	The third person of the Trinity, who was sent to us as a helper and guide through the sacraments of baptism and confirmation; the Holy Spirit fills us with God's life and love.
Hope	The theological virtue by which we trust in God and His promises for us.
Incarnation	When Mary said yes to God's invitation to be the Mother of his Son, the Word of God took on human flesh in Mary's womb so that Jesus could be born and be one like us in all things except sin.
Jesus	The second person of the Trinity (also known as the Son or the Word of God), who was incarnate (took on human flesh) and born of the Virgin Mary, who lived like us in all ways except sin, who suffered death and was buried, and who rose from the dead and ascended into heaven so that we can live with God forever.
Lent	The forty days before Easter during which we prepare through prayer, fasting and almsgiving to change our lives and live the Gospel message more completely. This special season begins on Ash Wednesday and ends with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday.
Liturgical Year	The celebration throughout the year of the mysteries of the Lord's birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. It begins in Advent and ends with the Feast of Christ the King. The liturgical year is divided into the special seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and ordinary time.
Lord	Old Testament title for God; one of the titles given to Jesus in the New Testament.
Lord's Prayer	The prayer that Jesus taught His disciples; it is also called the "Our Father."
Love	The theological virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.
Magi	Wise men who were led by the star to pay homage to the infant Jesus in Bethlehem.
Mary	Mother of Jesus. She is called "blessed" or "full of grace" because God chose her to be the mother of His Son.
Mass	The most important sacramental celebration of the Church. Established by Jesus at the Last Supper as a remembrance of His death and resurrection. At Mass, we listen to God's word from the Bible and receive the Real Presence of Jesus in the bread and wine that at the consecration has become His Body and Blood.

Miracle	A sign or act of wonder that cannot be explained by natural causes but can only be attributed to God.
Nativity	The feast of the birth of Jesus; also known as Christmas.
Parish	A community of believers in Jesus Christ who meet regularly in a particular church within the diocese under the leadership of a pastor for the celebration of the Eucharist.
Pastor	A priest who is responsible for the spiritual care of the members of a parish community. This leadership is entrusted to him by the bishop. The word “pastor” means “shepherd.”
Pentecost	The fiftieth (50 th) day after Jesus was raised from the dead. On this day, the Church was born as the Holy Spirit was sent upon Jesus’ apostles, Mary, and other disciples.
Praise	An expression or form of prayer which honors God not only for what God does but simply because God is. In the Eucharistic prayer, the whole Church joins Jesus in expressing praise and thanks to God the Father, through His Son and in the unity of the Holy Spirit.
Prayer	Raising our hearts and minds to God. We are able to speak to and listen to God in prayer because He teaches us to pray. Prayer is private, communal, or liturgical.
Respect	The attitude of treating a person or object with kindness and thoughtfulness.
Rosary	A set of beads on which prayers are said (the Lord’s Prayer, the Hail Mary, and Glory Be), while meditating on the mysteries of Jesus’ and Mary’s lives.
Sacrament	One of the seven ways through which God’s life enters our lives through the work of the Holy Spirit. Sacraments are visible signs that convey the invisible reality of God’s grace. Jesus gave us three sacraments of initiation that bring us into His family, the Church: baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist. He also gave us two sacraments of healing: reconciliation and anointing of the sick; and he gave us two sacraments at the service of Communion: matrimony (marriage) and holy orders (becoming a deacon, priest, or bishop).

Sacramental	An object, a prayer, or a blessing given by the Church to help us grow in our spiritual life. Some well-known sacramentals are blessings by a priest, holy items such as water, ashes and palms, blessed medals, scapulars, and rosaries.
Sacraments of Initiation	As Christians, these sacred signs are the foundation of our lives in God and the Church. We are born anew in the waters of baptism, strengthened by an anointing with sacred chrism (oil) in confirmation, and nourished throughout our lives by the consecrated bread and wine in the Eucharist.
Saint	A holy person who lives in union with God and God's will and laws. A person who has manifested heroic virtue during his/her life and who is officially honored by the Church after his/her death as one who has entered heavenly glory.
Sin	Ignoring, injuring or rejecting our relationship with God or others. A deliberate thought, word, deed, or failure to act that offends God and hurts our relationship with other people. Some sin is mortal (serious or deadly) and needs to be confessed in the sacrament of penance, also called reconciliation. Other sin is venial (less serious).
Soul	The part of us that makes us human and in the image of God. Our body and soul together form one unique human nature. The soul is responsible for our consciousness and freedom. The soul does not die and will be reunited with the body in the final resurrection.
Sunday	The Lord's Day when we celebrate Jesus' resurrection. The Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life, and Sunday is the day when the community is obliged to come together to celebrate Christ's paschal mystery.
Trinity	The mystery of one God existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Why celebrate Confirmation before First Eucharist?

On September 21, 1997, Bishop Joseph J. Gerry, OSB, restored the order of celebrating the sacraments of initiation for children (confirmation before first Eucharist) in all of the parishes throughout the Diocese of Portland.

What is the restored order of the sacraments?

This means, quite simply, that it becomes standard policy for Catholics who were baptized in infancy to receive confirmation *before* first Eucharist, not *after*. Practically speaking, this means that the two sacraments are received at the first Eucharist Mass, with confirmation being celebrated after the homily.

Why do they call it restored order?

During the first five hundred years or so of the history of the Roman Catholic Church (and still today in the Christian churches of the East), it was always the case that the sacraments of Christian initiation were celebrated in this sequence: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist.

Putting the celebration of confirmation between baptism and Eucharist better expresses its role as the completion of baptism. As a matter of fact, the sacrament that is the culmination of a person's Christian initiation is the Eucharist, not confirmation.

Theologically, it is the gift of the Holy Spirit given in all its fullness at confirmation that best prepares one to receive Eucharist and, thus, to be most fully joined to the Body of Christ. Everything leads to the Eucharist, which is the source and summit of our faith.

Following the lead of official documents that were issued by the Church after the Second Vatican Council, more and more dioceses are restoring this original order to the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation.

What is the relationship between confirmation and first Eucharist?

In article #1275, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* articulates the inseparable nature of the sacraments of initiation as follows: "Christian initiation is accomplished by three sacraments together: baptism which is the beginning of new life; confirmation which is its strengthening; and the Eucharist which nourishes the disciple with Christ's Body and Blood for his transformation in Christ."

Why is our parish celebrating confirmation and first Eucharist at the same event?

In the early Church, Christian initiation was celebrated together as a single event. The person was immersed into the waters of baptism, anointed with chrism, and shared in the Eucharistic meal. Over time, and for many reasons, the celebration of these sacramental rituals became separated from one another. In the renewal of the sacraments mandated by the Second Vatican Council, the Church was invited to restore the celebrations of the

sacraments of Christian initiation to their original order -- baptism, confirmation, Eucharist. This restored order helps us recognize that sharing in the Eucharist completes our initiation into the Church.

What about age? Doesn't the Church require a certain age for confirmation?

Both the *Rite of Confirmation* and Canon Law (Canon #891) set the age of discretion (age 7) as the age for confirmation. Effective July 2002, the U.S. Conference of Bishops designated the age for confirmation to be between the age of discretion and age 16. Within that range, local bishops may determine their own diocesan policy.

Isn't confirmation a sacrament of maturity that should come after first Eucharist?

Confirmation is actually the completion of baptism (by the full gift of the Holy Spirit). The perfection of baptismal grace found in the sacrament of confirmation is not dependent upon age or knowledge of the confirmand. In truth, the sacrament of confirmation is an effective moment of grace at any age. The grace of this sacrament conferred at a young age could be of great assistance to children as they grow toward adolescence and young adulthood. Regardless of age, the important thing to remember is that sacraments are about growing in faith, about sharing in God's grace.

Is it wrong, then, to be confirmed after receiving Eucharist?

The Church has many ways of celebrating the mysteries of God's love in the sacraments. It is strongly encouraged that the order of the sacraments be restored. Although here in the Diocese of Portland, we returned to the original sequence in 1997, this is not the case in all other dioceses.

How can a young child know everything about the faith?

Faith formation is a lifelong process. Catholics of all ages need to deepen their understanding of faith and grow in their relationship with Christ throughout their whole lives. Children at a young age can understand the sacraments they will receive in a simple, age appropriate way but will grow into a deeper understanding as they continue to participate in the celebration of Mass, faith formation, and the life of the parish.

Parents, you have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so, you are accepting the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and neighbor.

Rite of Baptism #39

Prayers for Young Children

Please help your child learn the following prayers.

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen

Morning Offering

Oh my God, I offer you this day, every thought, word and act of today.
Please bless me my God and make me good today. Amen.

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day
our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those
who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among
women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary,
mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and
at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Grace before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts which we are
about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Simple Phrases (examples)

Jesus, I love you. Thank you, Father. Help me, Jesus.