

DIOCESE OF PORTLAND, ME



GUIDELINES TO PREPARE CHILDREN FOR THE SACRAMENTS OF CONFIRMATION AND FIRST EUCHARIST

*APPROVED BY
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DIOCESE OF PORTLAND OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

June 1, 2015

Dear Brother Priests and Parish Catechetical Leaders,

Among the privileges of our ministry to the Church is our participation in the graced moment of Sacramental Initiation for our children. Thank you for the pastoral leadership you provide to the children and families of your parish as they prepare for the reception of the sacraments. Through the sacraments of Penance, Confirmation and First Eucharist, our children encounter Jesus who, in his mercy, desires to walk with them throughout their lives. We want this encounter to be a true experience of grace, and one which provides a foundation for a life of faith.

To that end, Maryanne Harrington, Director of the Office of Lifelong Faith Formation, has coordinated over the last year an extensive consultation on how best to provide children and their families with the formation necessary for the celebration of these sacraments. Consultation was done with priests through the Presbyteral Council and vicariate meetings and with Parish Catechetical Leaders through individual and group conversations.

Children are a part of families. The participation of parents and families makes a difference in handing on the faith. Pope Francis recently reaffirmed this teaching: *"If family education rediscovers the pride of its leadership, many things will change for the better. We hope that the Lord gives this grace to parents: to not exile themselves from the education of their children. And this can only be done with love, tenderness and patience."* (General Audience, May 20, 2015)

To form and inspire our young people in the faith, we must also focus our energies on involving parents, helping them to fulfill their responsibility as their children's first teachers in the ways of the faith. The key is to nurture the faith of the parents themselves, while helping them to develop patterns of religious practice that will sustain them for a lifetime.

Preparing to receive three sacraments is a daunting task for children. That is why I have approved the recommendation to implement a two-year preparation process for these sacraments. This will provide the children with the time necessary to learn about and develop a relationship with God as they come to know him through Jesus, to learn their prayers, to understand and desire the sacraments, and to be involved in the church, particularly through regular participation at Sunday Mass. Some parishes have already moved to a two-year process involving parents, and it is making a difference.

I am grateful to Maryanne, her committee of catechetical leaders, and the staff of the Office of Lifelong Faith Formation for producing the attached guidelines, which have been developed to assist you in your important ministry to our children and their families. The guidelines are intended to serve as a framework for planning at the parish level and to provide helpful resources. Each parish is unique, but pastoral adaptations should take place within this recommended framework.

Through these renewed efforts, may the children of our parishes and their families, whom the Lord has entrusted to our care, be welcomed with joy into the life of Jesus Christ and his Church through the sacred and mysterious moments of grace we celebrate in the sacraments.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert P. Deeley, J.C.D.
Twelfth Bishop of Portland



Policy Statement on the Preparation of Children for Confirmation and First Eucharist

Two Year Sacrament Preparation

On Tuesday, September 16, 2014 the following policy was unanimously approved by Bishop Robert Deeley and the Presbyteral Council:

In the Diocese of Portland there will be a required two-year formation program for children preparing to receive Confirmation and First Eucharist that includes family involvement.

Therefore, **beginning in the catechetical year 2015/2016**, every child must complete a two-year Sacrament Preparation Process (regardless of his/her grade and/or age) that includes formation opportunities for parents/guardians. This policy is required of all parishes/clusters throughout the Diocese of Portland.

- **Sacrament Preparation Process - Year 1 – *Initial formation in the faith***
 - * For children in First (1st) grade and those in Second (2nd) grade when they are just beginning a Faith Formation program.
 - * Please refer to this as Sacrament Preparation Year 1, **NOT** First (1st) Grade.
 - * Parents/guardians will participate in four to six gatherings along with their children to strengthen their own faith and support the formation of their children.

- **Sacrament Preparation Process - Year 2 – *Immediate preparation for Sacraments***
 - * For children who have completed Sacrament Preparation Year 1.
 - * Please refer to this as Sacrament Preparation Year 2, **NOT** Second (2nd) Grade.
 - * Parents/guardians will participate in four to six gatherings along with their children to strengthen their own faith and support the formation of their children.

- **Ongoing Faith Formation** - Following reception of the sacraments children with their parents/guardians should gather for a celebration that includes:
 - * Reflection on the experience (mystagogia)
 - * Promotion of Faith Formation Program for post-Sacrament faith formation



Implementation of Two Year Sacrament Preparation Program

This policy change was announced to all priests and Parish Catechetical Leaders (PCLs) in February of 2015 with the directive to begin implementation during the 2015-2016 Catechetical Year.

Announcement

It is the responsibility of pastors and PCLs to communicate with all parents/guardians from their parish/clusters (including Catholic School and Home-School) that the preparation of children for sacraments is now a two-year process. It would be helpful to communicate this in many ways and as frequently as possible through the following:

- Parish Bulletin Announcement
- Parish Website Announcement
- A letter or email to parents/guardians of all 5, 6 and 7 year-old children
- Announce to parents/guardians with children in Children's Liturgy of the Word, Pre-K and Kindergarten
- Brochure at church entrances
- Announce at Mass throughout the summer
- Mention in pastor corner throughout the summer

*See sample announcement in appendix

Clarifications

- Children who have already completed one year of formal formation in the Parish Faith Formation program, Catholic School or through home schooling during 2014-2015 should begin Sacrament Preparation Year 2.
- Children (age 6 or 7, grade 1 or 2) who have not attended any formal faith formation should begin Sacrament Preparation Year 1.
- Children in third through sixth grades (age 8-11) who are baptized Catholic and just beginning their formation should begin Sacrament Preparation Year 1. Younger children could be included with 6 and 7 year olds. Older children should be in a combined class with children of a similar age or attend a grade level session with

additional work at home. These children will be confirmed when Bishop Deeley comes to the parish for Confirmation.

- If a child (**younger** than 7) is **unbaptized**, he/she is to be enrolled in Sacrament Preparation Year 1. As soon as the parents/guardians have participated in Baptism Preparation, the child should be baptized immediately according to the *Rite of Baptism for Infants*.
- If a child (**older** than 7) is **unbaptized**, his or her initiation process should be shaped by the *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults* adapted for children of catechetical age. These children and youth will be fully initiated by the pastor, preferably at the Easter Vigil or on a Sunday of the Easter Season.
- If a child (**older** than 7) is **baptized in another Christian tradition**, his or her initiation process should be shaped by the *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults* adapted for children of catechetical age. These children or youth will make a profession of faith and be received into full communion by the pastor, preferably on a Sunday of the Easter Season.
- Teens who are baptized Catholic but not yet confirmed should be confirmed at one of the Confirmation celebrations with Bishop Deeley for teens and adults. Their formation should include participation in Youth Ministry along with formation sessions to prepare them for Confirmation.
**See list of Confirmation materials for teens in the resource section.*
- Children with disabilities should be integrated into the life of the parish community including preparation for and celebration of sacraments. *The Guidelines for the Celebration of Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities* state, “Parish Sacrament celebrations should be accessible to persons with disabilities and open to their full, active and conscience participation, according to their capacity.” Persons with disabilities should be integrated into ordinary catechetical programs as much as possible unless their disabilities make it impossible for them to participate, then other accommodations will be needed. (NDC #49, *The Guidelines for the Celebration of Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*, USCCB).

**See attached Sacraments of Initiation for Children chart to plan for older children who are not baptized, or baptized in another Christian tradition.*

**When adults and children in the same family are receiving sacraments or if there are other particular pastoral issues or needs, please adjust and combine the preparation for and celebration of sacraments in response to these needs.*



General Introduction to Curriculum Guidelines

Annual and Weekly Session Hours

Each parish/cluster is to offer a faith formation program on a regular basis beginning in September and ending in May. Parish faith formation sessions should provide from 26 to 30 hours of formation each catechetical year. It is the expectation that families should participate regularly in Sunday Mass.

Textbooks

The Diocese of Portland requires that all Catholic Schools, parish faith formation programs, and families who choose to formally form the faith of their children in the home use, as their primary textbook, those that have been found to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The link can be found online at <http://www.portlanddiocese.org/olff/sacrament-preparation>. You also can google: [Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series](#).

Parish Celebration of Sacraments

Preparation and celebration of sacraments with children is coordinated within the parish/cluster. All children from the Parish Faith Formation program, the Catholic School and those home-schooled prepare for and celebrate their sacraments together as a community. It is important to collaborate and coordinate with principals, teachers and parents/guardians who provide faith formation in the Catholic School and at home.

Parent/Guardian Involvement

The parents/guardians of the children should be involved in the faith formation and preparation of their children for Sacraments.

“When children are baptized, parents/guardians accept the responsibility to bring up their children in the practice of the faith...” (NDC #54, Rite of Baptism #56)

Parishes are to provide programs that assist parents/guardians in fulfilling their role. These sessions offer parents/guardians the opportunity to grow in their relationship with Christ, (evangelization), to deepen their own understanding of faith and sacraments, to learn how to help their children prepare for the sacraments and to practice faith at home as a family. Therefore, during Sacrament Preparation Year 1 and Year 2, parents/guardians should participate in four to six sessions with their children throughout each year. Sessions may be scheduled in place of regular Faith Formation sessions or as a Retreat Day.



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. Each parent/guardian models to their child what the life of faith looks like. The following practices will help them:

- 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.
- 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 their 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.
- Once your child has made their First Reconciliation, we encourage you as a family to receive the grace of forgiveness in the sacrament regularly.
- Once your child has been confirmed and received First Eucharist, continue as a family to support their faith formation by attending weekly Mass.

“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



Overview of Catechesis for Primary Age Children

Children of this age can learn and understand the following:

Mystery of God: God wants us to know and love Him. Creation shows God’s love; Jesus shows His love; His Holy Spirit living within us guides us in love. Our Heavenly Father—through Jesus Christ His Son and by the power of the Holy Spirit—makes God and His plan of salvation known to us. Faith begins with the knowledge that God has acted first; He has given all for no other reason than He loves us. Our best response is to love God, and to love and care for His people and all of creation.

Jesus Christ: Jesus is God’s own son, who became man to show us how to love God and each other. He gave up His own life out of love for us, and remains with us through the Holy Spirit, the church and the sacraments. The Bible is God’s Word written in human words. The Gospels help us to know and follow Jesus.

Sacraments: In the sacraments, God wants us to share in His life. God touches us and we touch Him. In the sacraments God acts first. Receiving the sacraments is one way we say ‘yes’ to God, His presence, and His love in our lives.

Baptism is the first sacrament of initiation. At Baptism we become children of God and members of the Church, His Family. We receive the gift of grace, God’s life in us, and we are freed from sin. We are fully initiated when we have received all three sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

Reconciliation is a sacrament that celebrates God’s forgiveness and healing. When we choose to do an action that we know is hurtful to others or ourselves, this action is called a sin. When we recognize the hurtfulness of our actions and we are willing to say, “I am sorry, please forgive me,” we ask to be reconciled. God is always ready to forgive us when we choose to ask for forgiveness.

Confirmation is the second Sacrament of Initiation. Confirmation increases and deepens the grace of our Baptism. The Bishop seals us with the gift of the Holy Spirit through the imposition of hands, anointing us with Chrism on the forehead, and praying the sacramental words. The Holy Spirit strengthens our bond with the Church and helps us witness to Christ and our faith. Like Baptism we receive Confirmation only once.

Eucharist is the third Sacrament of Initiation. Eucharist is the living memorial of Jesus' sacrifice for the salvation of all and commemorates Jesus' last meal with His disciples. The Holy Eucharist is the real body and blood of Jesus (Real Presence). We can now take part in Holy Communion with God's people at Mass. The Mass is a time to gather as a parish family and share in a special meal. We listen to stories of God's great love for us. We say thank you to God by bringing gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves. We remember Jesus' Last Supper by receiving Jesus in the bread and wine. We go out into the world to bring Jesus to others.

Living our Faith: We desire to live as children of God. We make good choices when we choose to live as Jesus taught us by following the Great Commandment of Love. The Ten Commandments help us to live happy and holy lives. Mary and the saints show us how to live as faithful followers of Jesus.

Prayer: To better know God and His plan for us, we take time to pray, that is to talk, listen and be with God, especially through His Family, the Church.



Curriculum Guidelines for Sacrament Preparation Year 1 - Children

(Numbers following each statement refers to the CCC)

During Sacrament Preparation Year 1 children will learn:

Creed – Profession of Faith

- There is one God. God always was, is now, and always will be. (200)
- There are three Persons in the one God – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (253)
- Jesus, God the Son, is fully God and fully man. (469)
- The Holy Spirit encourages us to pray and helps us to live as children of God. (2652)
- The Bible is God’s Word. (81)
- The Bible teaches us the truth about God and how we are to live. (131)
- We can understand God better by learning the stories and teachings in the Bible. (65)
- Mary is the Mother of God and our Mother. (963)
- God is the Creator of all things. (292)
- God’s greatest gift to us is the gift of life – both natural life and spiritual life we call grace. (362)
- Jesus teaches us to do good and avoid evil. (459)
- Doing good and being kind pleases God. (1705)
- Jesus showed us how to live. (459)
- Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus. (525)
- Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose to life again on Easter Sunday. (1169)
- Advent is a time of preparation for the celebration of Christmas (Birth of Jesus) and Lent is a preparation for the celebration of Easter (Resurrection of Jesus). (524)
- The Church is God’s family here on earth. (169)
- The church is a sacred place where Jesus is truly present and where our parish family celebrates Mass. (1181)

Sacraments – Celebration of the Christian Mystery

- Jesus shares Himself with us in a special way through the seven sacraments and during Mass. (1323)
- The seven sacraments are Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. (1210)
- The Holy Eucharist is Jesus. (1374)

- Baptism is the sacrament by which God shares his life and love with us. We become children of God, disciples of Jesus and members of Jesus' Church, and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (1265)
- The baptismal font, the holy water, the candle, and the white garment are signs of the new life in Jesus. (1238)
- Sunday is the Day of the Lord, when His Family gathers to worship. The priest takes the place of Jesus at the Mass and leads the worship.
- There are two main parts of the Mass: Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist. (1324)
- We show signs of reverence, including genuflecting and bowing, because Jesus is present in our church in a special way in the tabernacle.
- The Church has special times and seasons called the Liturgical Year which celebrate the life of Christ, Mary and the saints. The liturgical seasons and their colors: Advent (purple), Christmas (white), Ordinary Time (green), Lent (purple), and Easter (white).
- Know the significance of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. (1163)

Christian Morality – Life in Christ

- God made us to know, love, and serve Him and to be happy with Him in heaven. (1721)
- God makes all human beings good, we are made in His image and likeness. (356)
- God is our loving Father and He always loves us. (218)
- We make choices to love God and others. There are right choices (good) and wrong choices (bad). Wrong choices are called sins. Sin hurts our relationship with God and others. (1849)
- There is a difference between a sin and a mistake. (1857)
- Even if others don't forgive, God always forgives us when we are sorry.
- The Holy Spirit helps us make good decisions in our everyday life by giving us the gift of grace. (1695)
- We should ask for forgiveness (from God and others). Practice using the phrases, "I forgive you" and "I'm sorry." (1847)
- The Act of Contrition helps us tell God we are sorry.
- We can all find ways we can serve the needs of others and appreciate and care for the gifts of creation.
- Because of our joy, we tell others about Jesus and His Family, the Church. (Evangelization)

Prayer Life

- Attend Mass on Sunday. (2180)
- Silence helps us to pray and be close to God. (2717)
- Children should know the following:
 - Sign of the Cross
 - Our Father
 - Hail Mary
 - Glory Be

Grace before Meals

Simple words of prayer – Thank you God; I love you Lord; Lord, help me

- Children should practice the responses of the Mass:
Greeting, Penitential Rite, Readings and Gospel
Gloria, Holy, Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen
Our Father, Sign of Peace, Lamb of God
Final Blessing (Sign of the Cross) and Dismissal (Thanks be to God)

Scripture Stories

- Creation Story – Gen 1:1- 31
- God’s resting and the Sabbath – Gen 2:1-3
- Annunciation and Visitation – Lk 1:26-56
- Nativity and Visit of the Magi/Shepherds – Lk 2:1-20, Mt 1:18 -2:12
- Passages that show Jesus’ love for people
- Parable of the Good Shepherd – Jn 10:11-15
- The prayer which Jesus taught us, the Our Father – Mt 6:9-13
- Jesus has risen from the dead – Mk 16:1-8
- Pentecost – Acts 2:1-4

Saints

- God wants everyone to be a saint. Saints are the people in God’s Family in heaven.
- We should ask the saints to help us to be holy.
- They are our friends, our brothers and sisters in heaven.
- Stories of the saints and modern day Christians are models of living Gospel values.
- Angels are God’s messengers and helpers.
- Know the following saints:
 - Mary, Mother of God and our Mother
 - St. Joseph – foster Father of Jesus
 - St. Zechariah, St. Elizabeth and John the Baptist, Jesus’ cousin
 - St. Francis of Assisi – loved all of creation and the poor
 - St. Peter and the other apostles
 - Archangel Gabriel – awaited Mary’s “yes” and announced Jesus’ birth
 - Guardian angels – our special heavenly helpers and protectors

Vocabulary

Adam and Eve	Forgiveness	Lord's Prayer	Pentecost
Advent	Genuflection	Love	Respect
Advent wreath	God	Magi	Rosary
Angels	Grace	Mary	Sacraments
Baptism	Heaven	Mass	Sacraments of Initiation
Bible	Holy Communion	Miracle	Saint
Church	Holy Week	Nativity	Soul
Community	Holy Spirit	Palms	Sin
Creation	Jesus	Pastor	Sunday
Disciple	Lent	Parish	
Easter	Liturgical Year	Praise	
Eucharist	Lord	Prayer	

*See glossary of terms in appendix for definitions.



Guidelines for Sacrament Preparation Year 1 - Parents/Guardians

Why is parent/guardian participation so important?

“We know from research that most active adult Catholics are involved in the Church because they were formed in faith by their parents or guardians. Parents are the real forming agents of their children. Unless the parents of our children are deeply and fully involved in both the formal education and daily lifestyle of faith, we cannot succeed with their children.”

Bill Huebsch

To understand how important it is to include parents/guardians, please take time to read and discuss with the pastor, PCL and catechist the article, *Coaching Parents to Form their Own Children*, by Bill Huebsch, found in the Appendix.

How to foster parent/guardian participation

Parishes are to provide programs that assist parents/guardians in fulfilling their role as the first and best teachers of their children. During Year 1, the parish should plan 4 to 6 sessions for parents/guardians and children together. The purpose of these sessions is to help parents/guardians grow in their relationship with God, deepen their own understanding of faith and learn how to help their children practice faith at home as a family. Sessions may be scheduled in place of a regularly scheduled Faith Formation or as a separate Retreat Day. Children’s presentation could be a lesson from their regular text book.

Family Formation Sessions – Suggested Format – (1 hr. 15 min. – 1 hr. 30 min.)

- Welcome and Introduce Theme (5 min.)
- Opening Prayer (10-15 min.)
 - Sign of the Cross, Scripture Reading
 - Reflection question involving parents/guardians and children
 - Glory Be
- Parent/guardian Presentation (30-40 min.)
 - Children dismissed for class (session)
- Parent/guardian sharing with children (15-20 min.)
 - Activity to help parents/guardians share with Children
 - Family Action Plan
- Closing Prayer and Ritual (10-15 min.)

Suggested Themes - Year 1

1. Why Does Jesus Matter? (Creed)
2. Bible in a Nutshell (Scripture)
3. The Power of the Sacraments (Meaning of Sacraments of Initiation and Baptism)
4. Do This in Memory of Me: Encounter Jesus in the Eucharist
5. Hello, Can You Hear Me Now? (Prayer)
6. I Am The Way – Come Follow Me: Following Jesus as a Family

*Sample Parent/Guardian Sessions found in Appendix

*Sample Parent/Guardian Handbook found in Appendix



Curriculum Guidelines for Sacrament Preparation Year 2 - Children

During Sacrament Preparation Year 2 children will learn:

Creed – Profession of Faith

- God is all-loving, almighty, all-knowing and all present. (268)
- The Blessed Trinity who is with us and in us. (243)
- We have a body and a soul. Humans never become angels when they die. People become saints. (362)
- Jesus is God’s Son, who became man, and came to earth for all people to save them from sin (salvation) and to make them His children (sanctification). (571)
- Jesus suffered, died and rose on Easter Sunday to save us from our sins and death so that we could be with Him in heaven forever (Redemption). (613)
- Jesus ascended to His Father (Ascension). He sent the Holy Spirit to be with us always (Pentecost). We receive the Holy Spirit in the sacraments. (730)
- Jesus is still present among us, specifically in God’s Word, the Church, and the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist. (1340)
- The Bible is the book of God’s Word and has a special place in church, in the classroom and at home. Take time to read the Bible and the readings at Mass as the Word of God.
- The seven sacraments were given to us by Jesus and are the means by which Jesus gives us His life. We call this sanctifying grace. (2003)
- Jesus also gives us His help constantly through the Holy Spirit. We call this actual grace. We need to ask for this help and trust that He is helping us always. (1996)
- Understand the Commandments in a positive way. (2052)
- Understand the story of how sin entered the world: the disobedience of the angels and the disobedience of our first parents/guardians, Adam and Eve. Because of their sin, we are all born in original sin. We need Jesus to save us. (385)
- Know that sin is a break in our relationship with God. When we sin we are disobedient to God. Everyone sins. (386)
- Jesus was obedient. Understand Jesus’ obedience to the Father as a sign and model of our life. (615)
- The Bishops, as successors of the Apostles, lead the people of Jesus today. The Pope takes St. Peter’s place. Our Pope’s name is Francis, and our Bishop’s name is Robert Deeley. (880)

Sacraments – Celebration of the Christian Mystery

- The Sacred Liturgy of the Church is the work of the Holy Trinity. (1076)
- A Sacrament is an outward sign, instituted by Christ, to give grace. (1210)
- Recognize the many gifts that Jesus gives us: a sharing in God's life through Baptism, His forgiveness of our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, His Spirit in Confirmation, His Body and His Blood in the Eucharist. (1262)
- Recognize the difference between ordinary bread and the Eucharist.
- A church is a house of prayer in which the Eucharist is celebrated and reserved. It is not simply a gathering place, but the dwelling place of God and His Family, the Church. (1180)

Sacrament of Baptism

- Learn the rite of Baptism, its symbols, its necessity and effects. (1229)
- Understand that the use of holy water when entering and exiting the church reminds us of our Baptism.
- The Sacraments of Initiation are Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

- Learn the rite of Reconciliation, its necessity, effects and minister. (1491)
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is important for preparing to receive the other sacraments, especially the Eucharist. We must be in the state of grace to receive the other sacraments. (1415)
- Sin is an offense against God and hurts the Church, His Body. Conversion includes both God's forgiveness and reconciliation with the Church. Both are accomplished by receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation. (1440)
- When we are sorry and seek forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, God forgives us. (1455)
- The priest is an instrument of God's forgiving love for us because Jesus gave them the authority to forgive sin. A priest must keep what he hears in confession absolutely secret. (1467)
- This sacrament is called Confession, Penance, and Reconciliation. (1422)
- Everyone sins. We can always be forgiven if we are sorry.
- The steps to prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation:
 - Pray to the Holy Spirit to help us remember our sins (Examination of Conscience).
 - Be sorry for my sins (contrition).
 - Make up my mind not to sin again (conversion/repentance). (1448)
- The steps to make a good reconciliation:
 - Go into the confessional, sit or kneel, make the Sign of the Cross.
 - Tell my sins to the priest (confession).
 - Listen to what the priest says.
 - Say the Act of Contrition loud enough for the priest to hear me.
 - After leaving the confessional, do the penance the priest gives (satisfaction).
 - Thank God for forgiving my sins. (1448)

Sacrament of Confirmation

- Learn the signs and rite of Confirmation, its necessity, its effects, and who may receive. (1293)
- The bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation, but priests may also confirm. (1312)
- Like Baptism, Confirmation imprints an indelible spiritual mark on one's soul; therefore Confirmation may only be received once and remains forever. (1317)
- The Holy Spirit is with us always and ready to help us be true witnesses of Jesus Christ. (1303)
- The spiritual and corporal works of mercy show us how to be witnesses to Christ. (2447)
- The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit - wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord - give us strength. (1830)
- The twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit - charity (love), joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity – are signs to the world of the Holy Spirit working in and through us. (1832)
- The Holy Spirit is a divine person - the third person of the Trinity, the Lord and Giver of Life. We use symbols to understand the Holy Spirit - wind, breath, water, oil (anointing), fire, cloud and light, seal, hand, finger of God, and a dove. (691)
- Sacred Chrism is a sacred oil that is consecrated (blessed) by the bishop at the Chrism Mass for the whole diocese. It is used for our Confirmation. (1297)

Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist

- Jesus told us unless we eat His Body and drink His Blood we shall not have eternal life. He gave us His Body and Blood at the Last Supper when He commanded the Twelve Apostles to celebrate this memorial until His return. (1406)
- The Eucharist is the heart and summit of the Church's life, her highest prayer. (1407)
- Even though the bread (host) and wine look like ordinary bread and wine, after the consecration, they are really Jesus' Body and Blood. He is truly present (Transubstantiation). (1413)
- The richness of the sacrament of the Eucharist is expressed in the different names: (1328)
 - The Lord's Supper
 - Holy Sacrifice
 - Most Blessed Sacrament
 - Holy Communion
 - Holy Mass
- Develop a basic understanding of the parts of the Mass: (1332)
 - Gathering – come together to pray as one family.
 - Scripture Readings and Homily – listen to God's Word.
 - Presentation and preparation of the gifts – thank God and offer ourselves with Jesus to the Father.

Eucharistic Prayer – at the consecration the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus.

Lord's Prayer, Our Father – prepares us to receive Jesus as we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread..."

Communion – we receive Jesus.

Dismissal – we are blessed to go out and help others in the name of Jesus.

- In the celebration of the Eucharist, Jesus acts through the priest. Only the bishop and priest, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can consecrate bread and wine so they become the Body and Blood of Jesus. (1413)
- Receiving Jesus in the Eucharist completes our initiation into God's Family. (1212)
- When we receive the Eucharist we are more fully united to Jesus and His Family, the Church. (1391)
- To receive the Eucharist we: (1415)
 - Must be free from serious sin.
 - Must observe the fast required by the Church.
 - Express reverence and joy by the way we dress, bow our head, and properly receive the host in our hand or on our tongue.
- We should receive Jesus in the Eucharist every Sunday. (1389)
- Realize that Jesus is present in the Church, even after Mass, because the consecrated hosts are kept in the tabernacle. We may be with Jesus and adore Him in the church even outside of Mass. (1377)
- Eucharist nourishes and strengthens us for our life in Christ.

Christian Morality – Life in Christ

- Recognize signs of God's love in his/her life and in the world around us.
- Respect all human life which is created in God's image from the unborn to the elderly. (1929)
- We are called to be holy people.
- The Great Commandment teaches us to love God and love others.
- The Ten Commandments help us to make good decisions. Learn them by heart and understand how to follow them. (2052)
- Beatitudes
- We have a tendency to commit sins because of original sin. (384)
- The devil and other fallen angels try to tempt us to sin (temptation). (391)
- The Holy Spirit helps us to resist temptation and to make good choices as we follow Jesus.
- Tell others about Jesus and His Family, the Church (evangelization).

Prayer Life

- Participate actively at Mass on Sunday in mind, heart and actions. Know all the responses.
- Children should be able to recite the following new prayers:
 - Sign of the Cross

Our Father
Hail Mary
Morning Prayer and Night Prayer
Grace before Meals
Act of Contrition
Prayer to the Holy Spirit
Prayer after Communion

- Experience a variety of ways to pray: silent time; with Scripture; with song, gesture, reflection, the rosary and visits to the Blessed Sacrament.
- Five reasons for praying: to praise God, to thank God, to ask God for help, to say, “I’m sorry” and to listen to God.
- Begin a habit of personal prayer both in the morning and the evening.

Scripture Stories

- The First Sin and the Promise of Salvation – Gen 3
- Moses and the Ten Commandments – Ex 20:1-17
- The devil tempts Jesus – Mt 4:1-11, Mk 1:12, Lk 4:1-13
- Story of Zacchaeus – Lk 19:1-10;
- Parables of the Prodigal Son, Lost Coin, Lost Sheep – Lk 15
- The Ten Lepers – Lk 17:11-19
- The Last Supper – Mt 26:26-30
- Death and Resurrection of Jesus – Lk 23:44-56; 24:1-8; Jn 20:1-17
- Ascension – Lk 4:44-53
- Pentecost – Acts 2:1-13
- Be witnesses to Christ – Acts 23:11, 26:16
- Jesus is still with us – Mt 28:20

Saints

- God wants everyone to be a saint. Saints are the people in God’s Family in heaven.
- We become part of God’s Family through Baptism, but we keep growing as His children until we get to heaven. People in heaven are called saints. When we cooperate with God’s grace, we too can become saints.
- We should also ask the saints to help us to be holy. They are our friends in heaven.
- Know the following new saints:
 - St. John Nepomucene – priest who was executed for not breaking the seal of confession.
 - St. Edward the Confessor – King of England, title of confessor because of his love for God and the poor, and his gift of healing.
 - St. Therese of the Child Jesus – the Little Flower, Carmelite nun learned that love was key to all, known for very ordinary or little ways for following Jesus.

- St. John Vianney, Cure de Ars – priest famous for his ability to assist others in the sacrament of Reconciliation
- St. Stephen – deacon and first martyr
- St. Tarcisius – an altar boy who defended the Eucharist with his life.
- St. Clare of Assisi – religious sister and friend of St. Francis. Gave up everything in order to devote her life to God. Once defended her community from an attack of soldiers by holding up the monstrance.
- St. Pius X – the pope who wanted children to receive the Eucharist.
- Raphael – the Archangel
- Our Lady of Guadalupe – patroness of the Americas
- Patron Saint of one’s Parish

Vocabulary

Absolution	Deacon	Lectionary	Sacraments of Service
Act of Contrition	Eucharistic Prayer	Mary	Sanctifying Grace
Actual Grace	Examination of Conscience	Mortal Sin	Sign of Peace
Altar	Fear of the Lord	Penance	sisters and brothers
Anointing	Fortitude	Penitential Rite	Sorrow for Sin
Bishop	Gospel reading	Pentecost	Sponsor
Blessing	Homily	Piety	Temperance
Celebration	Host	Pope	Temptation
Chalice	Indelible	Priest	Ten Commandments
Chrism	Intercessions	Prudence	The Beatitudes
Christians	Jesus	Psalm	The Father
Confess	Justice	Real Presence	The Holy Spirit
Conscience	Kingdom of God	Reconciliation	The Trinity
Consecration	Knowledge	Sacrament	Understanding
Counsel	Last supper	Sacrament of Initiation	Venial Sin
Creed	Laying on of Hands	Sacraments of Healing	Wisdom



Guidelines for Sacrament Preparation Year 2 - Parents/Guardians

Why is parent/guardian participation so important?

“Hopefully we have long ago moved away from Sacrament parent/guardian meetings which told parents/guardians all the ‘stuff’ they need to know to ‘get through’ the year ... to honoring the role of the family because we are convinced that the real living of Christianity takes place in the home.”

Janet Schaeffler, OP

To understand how important it is to include parents/guardians, please take time to read and discuss the following article by Janet Schaeffler (from appendix) with pastor, PCL and catechist: *Catechizing Parents through their Children’s Sacraments*.

How to foster parent/guardian participation

Parishes are to provide programs that assist parents/guardians in fulfilling their role as the first and best teachers of their children. During Year 2 the parish should plan 4 to 6 sessions for parents/guardians and children together. The purpose of these sessions is to help parents/guardians recognize the many ways we encounter Christ in the sacraments and life of the Church, and to give them the ideas and tools to help them help their children to prepare fully their hearts to receive the sacraments. Sessions may be scheduled in place of a regular Faith Formation class or as a separate Retreat Day. Children’s presentation could be a lesson from their regular text book.

Family Formation Sessions – Suggested Format – (1 hr. 15 min. – 1 hr. 30 min.)

- Welcome/ Introduce Theme (5 min.)
- Opening Prayer (10-15 min.)
 - Sign of the Cross, Scripture Reading
 - Reflection question involving parents/guardians and children
 - Glory Be
- Parent/guardian Presentation (30-40 min.)
 - Children dismissed for class (session)
- Parent/guardian sharing with children (15-20 min.)
 - Activity to help parents/guardians share with Children
 - Family Action Plan
- Closing Prayer and Ritual (10-15 min.)

Suggested Themes for Year 2

1. Forgiving One Another
2. Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation
3. The Holy Spirit and You
4. Sacrament of Confirmation
5. Jesus, the Bread of Life
6. Celebrating the Eucharist

*Sample Parent/Guardian Sessions found in Appendix

*Sample Parent/Guardian Handbook found in Appendix



Resources for Sacrament Preparation

The resources listed below can be found on the Diocese of Portland website at:

- Sacrament Preparation Programs for Parishes
- Confirmation Preparation for Teens
- Resources for Parent/Guardian Formation
- Resources for Children with Disabilities
- Video Resources for Children
- Supplemental Resources for Families
- Suggested Books



Sacrament Guidelines Appendix

The materials listed below can be found on the Diocese of Portland website at <http://www.portlanddiocese.org/olff/sacrament-preparation>

Communicating with Parents/Guardians

- Sample Bulletin Announcement
- Sample Letter to Parents/Guardians
- Sample Parent/Guardian Brochure
- Family Conversation

Articles

- *Coaching Parents to Form their Own Children* – Bill Huebsch
- *Catechizing Parents through their Children's Sacraments* – Janet Schaeffler, OP

Year One

- Glossary of Terms – Year 1
- Sample Parent/Guardian Sessions – Year 1
- Sample Parent/Guardian Handbook – Year 1

Year Two

- Glossary of Terms – Year 2
- Sample Parent/Guardian Sessions – Year 2
- Sample Parent/Guardian Handbook – Year 2

Chart

- Sacraments of Christian Initiation for Children