

## Initial Pastoral and Administrative Steps for Preparing Children for Confirmation and First Communion

Canon Law requires that a person be validly baptized and there be an intention to maintain a permanent relationship with the Catholic Church before proceeding to receive the sacraments. **A parish needs to review a physical baptismal record to determine the appropriate path for formation.** The Diocese of Portland takes a two-year, family-centered approach to forming baptized children for receiving Confirmation and first holy Communion.

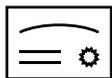
Follow three basic steps at the outset of the immediate sacramental formation process to meet families where they are, help them understand what it means to be Catholic, and to accompany families while preparing their children for a lifelong relationship with the Church and participation in her sacramental life.



**1. Learn about the child and family** – prefer pastor\* or sacrament formation coordinator has personal conversation with child and parent (may refer to [initial inquirer interview guide](#) as a starting place), gather info such as:



- a. basic household info (address, phone, email, preferred communication method)
- b. baptismal status of the child desiring sacraments (where and approximate date)
- b. birthdate of the child
- d. religious practice and intentions of the family
  - i. why want sacraments for child and intentions after the celebration
  - ii. at least one parent is Catholic or demonstrates reasonable hope that child will be brought up in the Catholic faith
  - iii. any other faith traditions
  - iv. marital status of parent(s) as one factor shaping child's home environment [if unmarried, note cohabiting status]



**2. Obtain baptismal record within six months of starting formal preparation in Year 1**

- a. if child not baptized in local parish, parent contact parish of baptism to request certificate; a copy of original certificate is acceptable
- b. if child baptized at local parish, person who works with the local sacramental records looks up child's record to confirm
- c. if you don't have the record by end of six months, you or someone else at the parish reach out to the place of baptism directly to request the certificate
- d. a child cannot begin Year 2 preparation without the parish having a valid baptismal record



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### 3. Inspect record to verify the baptismal status of the child then take appropriate steps

- a. If says both “Roman Catholic” *and* “Baptism”, continue with two-year formation process for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation, and receiving first holy Communion (Can. 97; 891; 914)
- b. If see anything other than “Roman Catholic” or “Baptism” on the certificate work with pastor to determine appropriate path (Chart available online)
  - i. if child is 7 or older shift to RCIA adapted for children (Can. 97, 852)
  - ii. if 6 or younger prepare parent and child for baptism as soon as possible and continue with rest of formation for Confirmation and first holy Communion
- b. Communicate with parent/child what next steps are in forming for the sacraments and why

**\* Only a pastor who has direct, personal knowledge of a catechumen or candidate has the authority to make decisions about the readiness to receive or necessity to defer reception of a sacrament.** Such decisions should be made in consultation with those involved in the child’s formation, though the final determination cannot be made by a sacrament coordinator or initiation team alone.

