

SACRAMENTS

FIRST RECONCILIATION and FIRST EUCHARIST

Preparation to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharist in the second grade is a two-year formation process. Students are required to have completed at least one year of religious education in preparation to receive Reconciliation and Eucharist for the first time.

CONFIRMATION

The formation process to be fully initiated into the Catholic Church is a two-year formation process that begins in the seventh grade and culminates with the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation in the spring of the eighth grade year.

In keeping with the guidelines established by the Diocese of Trenton students are required to have attended religious education classes continuously from first through eighth grade to be considered for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

All grade levels of religious education are important, each assisting the child to grow in deeper knowledge of God, an awareness of the responsibilities as a disciple of Jesus and member of the Catholic parish community and Church. Students must also possess knowledge of the faith. Students who drop out of religious ed after First Communion will need to complete courses for grade levels three through six in preparation to begin formation to be confirmed include: Commandments & Beatitudes, Sacraments, Scripture, the Church and Catholic Christian Service.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

The Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation are unquestionably the most joyous and important events of a Catholic Christian's life. The following policies are adopted for the purpose of communicating this importance, and ensuring appropriate preparation and formation for the reception of these sacraments in accordance with the current diocesan norms.

What does the Church ask of parents?

The Church views the role of parents in the religious formation of children as both a privilege and an obligation. When parents presented their child to the Church for Baptism, they were distinctly reminded that they had the responsibility "to bring [their child] up in the practice of the faith" (*Rite of Baptism of Children 56*).

This obligation and privilege extend to sacrament preparation. It is important for parents to remember that it has been within their family that their child has come to faith. And it is within their family setting that their child will continue to practice faith and witness the daily example of Catholic believers.

First Reconciliation and First Eucharist

Formation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist is a two-year program. Children must attend and successfully complete Grade Level 1 Religious Education classes in order to be prepared for Grade Level 2. Preparation involves classroom instruction, parent preparation meetings, Eucharist retreat and attendance at Mass. The involvement of the parents in their child's preparation for these sacraments is essential. During the 2nd grade level year the Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated in November/December and First Eucharist is celebrated in May. Faithful attendance is expected for scheduled classes.

Responsibilities of Parents with children preparing for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist:

Because parents are the primary educators of their children, they are responsible for initiating their children into the sacramental life and serve as models for their children by being committed Catholic Christians, parents are expected to:

- attend Mass with their family regularly.
 - make the reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation a normal part of their life.
 - pray for their child's spiritual growth every day.
 - be actively involved in the sacramental preparation of their child by engaging in discussions about what is being learned in the classroom, including sharing their faith, completing family activities from the student text with their child, as well as special assignments.
 - attend scheduled preparation meetings and designated retreats with their child.
 - make sure their child attends and is on time for class each week.
- Only three excused absences are permitted (grade levels 2).

Confirmation

Formation for Confirmation is a two-year program for students in Junior High grade levels 7 and 8. Confirmation I (First Year Formation) is designed to explore our catholic faith and begin preparation for Confirmation. The second year of formation (Confirmation II) is designed to finalize the preparation for Confirmation through liturgical catechesis and a continued commitment to living the faith, worship, service, and prayer. The Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated in the spring.

Who may be confirmed?

Confirmation candidates:

- have received the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and Eucharist
- are practicing their faith (attending Mass on a regular basis).
- have continuously been enrolled in religious education classes in all years prior to the eighth grade.
- Have successfully completed the first year of our formation program.
- can demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith.
- are aware of the responsibilities that come with being a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church, committed to continuing the faithful practice and study of their religion and serving others.
- have a sincere desire to receive the sacrament as well as an appreciation of sacramental life.

Responsibilities of parents with children preparing for Confirmation:

Because parents are the primary educators of their children, they are responsible for initiating their children into the sacramental life and serve as models for their children by being committed Catholic Christians, parents are expected to:

- Attend Mass with their family regularly.
- Make the reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation a normal part of their life.
- Make sure their child has good attendance and is on time for class.
- Be actively involved in the Confirmation preparation of their child by engaging in discussions about what is being learned in the classroom including sharing their faith, understanding and perspective.
- Support and encourage completion of assignments, preparation for tests, activities and expectations.
- Pray for their child's spiritual growth every day.
- Attend the First Year Formation preparation meetings with their child,
- Attend the Second Year Formation preparation meeting for parents.

Confirmation I - First Year Formation Program

Seventh Grade Level:

- Classes meet twice a month on Mondays.
- Session time 6:30 – 8:15 PM

Expectations for first year candidates (7th grade level):

- Participate in weekly Mass.
- Attend all sessions.
- Be on time for class.
- Come to class prepared and ready to learn.
- Pass five written tests (80% or above) on the essential beliefs and doctrines of the Catholic Church (including the Ten Commandments, The Works of Mercy, The Beatitudes, the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, the Mass, and Sacraments).
- Complete a minimum of 10 service hours based on the Works of Mercy, and complete a reflection worksheet for each project).
- Participate in a Confirmation Interview (seventh grader with a parent).
- Begin to think about choosing a qualified sponsor.
- Begin to think about choosing a Confirmation name (research and learn about the saints).

Confirmation II - Second Year Formation Program

Eighth Grade Level

- Classes meet once a month on Sundays (twice in January for Teen Theology of the Body sessions)
- Session times: 4:15 to 8:00 PM

Expectations for second year candidates (8th grade level):

- Participate in weekly Mass.
- Attend all sessions. One absence per student is allowed for the year. *This excused absence is to be kept in reserve in case a student is too ill to attend a session or for a family emergency.*
- Candidates must be on time. No early dismissals permitted.
- Complete a minimum of 5 hours of service based on the Works of Mercy, and complete a reflection worksheet for each project.
- Choose a sponsor.
- Choose a saint whose name you would like to take for Confirmation
Research and write a report on the saint whose name the candidate will take for Confirmation.
- Write a letter to Father Manning requesting Confirmation.
- Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Attend and participate in the Confirmation retreat.
- Attend and participate in Confirmation practice.
- Attend and participate in the Confirmation Liturgy.