



ARCHDIOCESE
of MILWAUKEE

PARISH ASSESSMENT OF SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR FIRST COMMUNION

A parish catechetical leader, faith formation committee, or other group may use this instrument to review and assess the current program.

Review the statements below. Indicate the extent to which your parish's First Communion program fulfills the standard or guideline using the following scale:

3 = We do this consistently well. No improvement is needed.

2 = We do this, but we may be able to improve.

1 = This area needs attention.

Use the "What we do now" spaces to note current practices. Consider how your parish can improve in areas rated 1 or 2. Think about "Future goals or ideas for improvement."

Standard or Guideline	Rating	What we do now	Future goals or ideas for improvement
Planning			
Sacramental preparation is planned in accord with Archdiocese of Milwaukee <i>Sacramental Guidelines</i> , the <i>National Directory for Catechesis</i> , and other relevant church documents.			
The sacramental program and celebration are planned in consultation with the pastor or parish director, and other staff.			
Invitation			
The parish informs families about sacramental preparation for first Reconciliation and Eucharist before their children enter 2nd grade.			
Parents are informed that children normally participate in preparation for First Reconciliation before First Communion.			
The parish uses multiple forms of communication to reach families, such as flyers, email, postcards, website, social media, bulletin, and pulpit announcements.			
The parish extends the invitation both to registered families and others, invites families in collaboration with the local Catholic school and reaches out to homeschooling families.			
The parish uses bilingual messages when helpful and adapts the means of communication for special situations.			
The parish invites families of children in older grades who have not yet received the sacrament.			

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Remote Preparation			
Children normally participate in the parish religious education program, or a Catholic elementary day-school, or approved home-based catechesis for at least one year prior to immediate preparation for the sacrament.			
The parish catechetical leader or pastor responds to individual situations when a family approaches the parish and requests the sacraments for their child. The catechetical leader or pastor assesses the family's readiness and provides support, resources, or remedial formation as needed.			
Children's Catechesis			
The parish provides a specific program of immediate preparation for First Communion that includes all children in the parish, whether attending a Catholic school, religious education program, or homeschool.			
<p>Catechesis for first reception of the Eucharist helps children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that the Eucharist is a memorial of Christ's sacrifice and a commemoration of his last supper with his disciples; • Understand that the Holy Eucharist is the real body and blood of Christ; • Know the difference between the Eucharist and ordinary bread; • Become familiar with the symbols, gestures, and prayers of the Mass; • Learn the meaning of receiving the Eucharist under both species of bread and wine; • Participate actively and consciously in the Mass and receive communion with reverence. 			
The parish employs multiple settings to provide a comprehensive catechesis for children and their families. Preparation includes two or more of the following: the child's classroom, parent sessions, a parent-child session or retreat day, and home activities.			
Parent Sessions			
One or more parent sessions are offered, which include formation on the sacrament as well as logistical information.			

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Sessions help parents grow in their own understanding of the Eucharist and enable them to participate readily in catechizing their children.			
<p>The sessions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an adult understanding of the theology and experience of Eucharist in their lives; • an appreciation for Sunday as the day of the Lord; • assistance in understanding that Christian family living is part of the catechetical preparation of children for First Eucharist; • emphasis on modeling active participation in the life of the Church by regular Sunday Mass attendance; • an explanation of how to assist in the preparation of their children for Eucharist. 			
Families are instructed and encouraged to participate regularly in Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.			
Textbooks / Resources			
The program uses an archdiocesan-approved sacramental preparation textbook or resource.			
Supplemental resources, such as videos, music, and print materials are age-appropriate, culturally inclusive and compatible with Catholic teaching and practice. Resources are reviewed prior to use with children or families.			
Parent-Child Session			
A retreat day or parent-child session is offered to help families recognize themselves as the domestic church, and to support and coach parents in their role as first teachers of their children.			
Parents and children are introduced to the parish church, and are shown and practice how to receive communion.			
Rehearsal			
Families participate in a rehearsal before First Communion.			
Celebration of First Eucharist			
First Communion is celebrated at a Sunday Mass.			
The Mass is prepared in collaboration with the pastor, liturgist or musician, worship committee, ushers and other ministers.			

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The Mass is prepared in collaboration with the pastor, liturgist or musician, worship committee, ushers and other ministers.			
The first Communion liturgy is prayerful and simple, focused on welcoming children to the Lord's Table.			
Holy Communion is distributed under both species.			
Readiness			
Parents and the parish catechetical leader, together with the pastor, are responsible for determining when a child is ready to receive first Communion.			
Readiness is evidenced by the child's desire to receive the Eucharist, familiarity with the Eucharistic Liturgy, the ability to distinguish ordinary bread and wine from the Eucharist, an understanding of the mystery of Christ, and an ability to receive Communion with faith and devotion.			
Special Circumstances			
The parish communicates welcome and an openness to adapting programs for special needs.			
The catechetical leader meets with parents of children with special needs to discuss accommodations so that the preparation and celebration is accessible to each child.			
Consideration is given to special family situations, including parents who work 2 nd or 3 rd shift, families that lack transportation, divorced parents, and so on.			
The parish continues to re-invite older children who have not yet received sacraments, communicating that it is never too late, and offering separate age-appropriate formation.			
Evaluation			
The parish periodically evaluates the program and celebration, formally or informally, and may gather input from parents, priest, and others.			
Ongoing Catechesis			
Continued catechesis on the Eucharist is included in programs for older children, youth and adults.			