



ARCHDIOCESE
of MILWAUKEE

PARISH ASSESSMENT OF SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR FIRST RECONCILIATION

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 Reconciliation program fulfills the standard or guideline using the following Rating 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.			
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 the Sacrament of Reconciliation which includes all children in the parish, whether attending a Catholic school, religious education program, or homeschool. This is prior to and distinct from catechesis for first Eucharist.			
Catechesis for First Reconciliation helps children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge God's unconditional love; • Turn to Christ and the Church for sacramental forgiveness and reconciliation; • Recognize the presence of good and evil in the world and their own capacity for both; • Recognize their need for forgiveness, not only from parents and others close to them, but from God; • Explore the meaning of the symbols, gestures, and prayers of the rite; • Understand how to celebrate the Rite of Reconciliation; • Understand that sacramental Confession is necessary if one has fallen into serious sin. 			
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 reconciliation and enable them to participate readily in catechizing their children.			
<p>The sessions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an adult presentation of the theology and experience of reconciliation; • an understanding and appreciation of grace, sin and conversion; • some understanding of faith and moral development; • an overview of the historical development of the sacrament in the life of the Church and the rites that exist today; • an explanation of the parents' role in the preparation of their children for reconciliation. 			
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 Reconciliation Room/Confessional, learn how to do an examination of conscience, and are shown or practice how to receive the sacrament.			
Celebration of First Reconciliation			
The parish celebrates Rite II or a penance service followed by individual confessions, adapted to the needs and age levels of the children.			
Parents are encouraged to receive the sacrament during the celebration of first Reconciliation.			
Timely arrangements are made for a sufficient number of priests for the celebration.			

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The parish provides print resources for those needing an aide for confession.			
Readiness			
Parents and the parish catechetical leader, together with the pastor, are responsible for determining when a child is ready to receive first Reconciliation.			
Readiness for reception includes knowledge of the person of Jesus and the Gospel message of forgiveness, knowledge of sin and its effect, and an understanding and experience of sorrow, forgiveness, and conversion.			
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, priests, and others.			
Ongoing Catechesis			
Continued catechesis on the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist is included in programs for older children, youth and adults.			
An opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation is provided annually for children and youth in the religious education program and Catholic school. This may include encouraging families to participate in a parish-wide communal celebration.			