

Mystagogy for Reconciliation

Mystagogical Catechesis

Mystagogical catechesis is the name given to the process of gradually uncovering the meaning of the mysteries of sacraments that have already been celebrated. This type of catechesis was first done by the early Church Fathers in sermons preached to the neophytes after their initiation at the Easter Vigil. We still possess some of those sermons. They are instructions rich in images and symbols that help the newly initiated come to a fuller understanding of the sacraments they have celebrated and are now living out. Mystagogical catechesis is based on the principle that as we live out the commitments of sacraments, we experience a fuller, deeper, more personal and communal meaning of them.

Although the process of mystagogy is usually connected with the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, it certainly can be used for the other sacraments, since each of them is rich with meaning that is uncovered as we live out our lives.



Here are some practical suggestions to involve children and their families in mystagogical catechesis for Reconciliation:

- Shortly after the celebration of Reconciliation, gather children and/or family members to reflect on their experience of the celebration. Use the process outlined in the *Catechist Edition* for reflection.
- Send out special invitations for scheduled Parish Reconciliation celebrations to children and families who have recently celebrated the sacrament for the first time.
- During Advent and Lent, which are seasons of penitence and conversion, plan gatherings of those who have celebrated Reconciliation for the first time within the past two years to reflect on the Scripture readings that are in the child's Reconciliation book or other healing and forgiveness stories from the Gospels. Focus the gatherings on how the children are experiencing themselves as messengers of peace and reconciliation.
- Arrange with the Director of the catechumenate to invite those who have recently celebrated Reconciliation to be involved in the Scrutiny preparation for children who are in the RCIA.
- Encourage catechists in all levels of your catechetical program to invite children and their families to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation frequently and to attend any parish communal celebrations.