

Parent Orientation Confirmation/Eucharist (Restored Order) 2

Frequently Asked Questions about Confirmation and Eucharist

Why do I have to prepare my child for these Sacraments?

When you presented your child to the Church for Baptism, you were reminded that you have the responsibility of “raising them in the practice of the faith” (*The Rite of Baptism for Children*, 109). This obligation and privilege extends to sacramental preparation. You also know your child better than anyone else, which places you in the best position to help your child uncover the mystery of the Sacraments of Initiation with words and experiences he or she will understand. No matter what else is done in the parish or school to prepare your child, it is only as effective as the support received in the home. Think of this as an opportunity to deepen your own faith and understanding as well as your child’s.

What do I have to do to prepare my child?

Your parish will have certain expectations that will be explained to you when you begin the process. *Call to Celebrate: Eucharist* provides you with ideas and suggestions in the *Family Guide* and in the “Faith at Home” feature in the *Child’s Book*.

Will my child need a sponsor for Confirmation?

Yes, you and your child may select one of the original godparents or someone else who is at least 16 years of age and a fully initiated Catholic.

What does “restored order” mean?

In the early Church, Christian Initiation was one event. Adults or children were baptized; anointed or had hands laid upon them; and then participated in the Eucharist all at the same celebration. For a variety of reasons, this practice gradually became separated into three different events and the original event of initiation developed into Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. In 1910 Pius X recommended in his encyclical *Quam Singulari* that the first Communion of children should not be deferred too long after they had reached the age of reason. Previous to his urging, children who had been baptized as infants usually celebrated First Communion in the early teen years and Confirmation usually was celebrated at an earlier age. However once children began to fully participate in the Eucharist at an earlier age, the age for Confirmation was varied and not necessarily tied to reception of First Communion.

Many dioceses and parishes throughout the United States have adopted the practice of celebrating Confirmation prior to First Communion. This is often referred to as *restored order*. Some dioceses celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation within the same Eucharistic celebration that children celebrate their First Communion. Other dioceses celebrate at a different time but before First Communion.

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Other dioceses choose to celebrate Confirmation sometime after First Communion. All of these practices are approved by the United States Bishops Conference who has given approval to the celebration of Confirmation for children baptized as infants anytime between the ages of 7 and 16.

How can I tell if my child is ready for Confirmation?

- Does he or she show a reverence for God?
- Does your child have an appreciation of the presence of the Holy Spirit in his/her life?
- Is prayer a part of your child's daily life?

How can I tell if my child is ready for First Communion? Added to what is given as indicators for readiness for Confirmation, the following are indications of readiness:

- Does your child have a relationship with Jesus Christ according to his or her capacity and can he or she receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion?
- Does your child know the difference between ordinary bread and wine and the Body and Blood of Jesus?
- Does your child and some other family members regularly attend Sunday Mass?

What if I do not go to Mass?

As you probably already know, what you do or do not do speaks volumes. If this is the case, now may be a good time for you to look at why you have made the choice not to participate in the worship life of

the community. Examine your reasons. Is it because you have serious questions about the Church? Have you just let other things take priority on the weekend? Are you alienated for a specific reason? Are you willing to speak to a priest or someone on the parish staff about it? Whatever your reasons are, it is important for you to know that if your child is going to celebrate First Communion, you have a responsibility to make sure he or she is able to get to Mass every Sunday during the preparation and after, even if it means finding someone else to take him or her there.

What are the Church's rules about Holy Communion?

Church law requires that we fast from food and beverages, except for medicine and water, for one hour before going to Communion. Catholics must go to confession once a year. They must also go to confession before receiving Holy Communion if they have committed a mortal sin.

How can we as a family continue to participate in the Sacraments of Initiation?

- Continue the conversations and reflections you will begin in this process.
- As a family, plan to participate in the Eucharist on an ongoing basis. Make participation a familiar and serious commitment