

Procedure for Baptized Catholics to Complete Sacramental Initiation

(or to begin Celebrating Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and/or Eucharist)

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Sacramental initiation begins with Baptism and is completed with Confirmation and First Eucharist. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is an important part of preparing for Confirmation and First Eucharist for any baptized person who has the use of reason. With the movement to celebrate Confirmation prior to First Eucharist, the parishes and missions in the Diocese of Tyler will need to adopt some new practices. This procedure is put forth to offer a consistent and orderly manner of helping candidates seeking formation for Confirmation and First Eucharist. Generally a baptized Catholics should begin formation for these Sacraments at the age of reason (7 years old). NB: A similar procedure should be followed for those baptized Catholics that already have celebrated Confirmation or First Eucharist and are seeking to complete their sacramental initiation.

- I. Petition to begin formation for celebration of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Eucharist
 - A. A candidate seeking formation to celebrate Confirmation and First Eucharist, begins with a petition submitted to the parish priest to begin formation for Reconciliation, leading to Confirmation and First Eucharist. For a child who begins to have the use of reason, about 7 years of age, the parents or guardian should submit the petition.
 - B. A copy of the Baptismal record of the candidate should be included with the petition. This both emphasizes that Baptism is the foundation sacrament, and it is necessary so that when Confirmation and First Eucharist are celebrated the appropriate notice can be readily sent to the church of Baptism.
 - C. All those in the household who desire sacraments should be helped to work together in readying themselves for celebration of the Sacraments together.
 - D. The parish priest in accepting the petition should list the child's name so they might be included in prayer by the parish community.
 - E. The names should be listed in a book along with those parents preparing for baptism of an infant and those in the RCIA program.

- II. Initial Formation
 - A. The candidate takes an active role in their formation. For minors, this is properly facilitated by parents as the primary educators of their children. The parish community should offer help to candidates, parents, and the household of faith.
 - B. The candidate should have at least an initial catechesis on the 15 Goals
 - C. The candidate should have an understanding why they need Confession as part of living the Christian life. The level of understanding has to be age appropriate.
 - D. The Curriculum Guide for the Diocese of Tyler provides some objectives based on the 15 Goals for each age group. This can be helpful in determining

- appropriate understanding of the Goals as a basic formation in the faith.
- E. Parish sessions to help parents form their children for the Sacraments should not be part of the regular Religious Education program in the parish/mission/school. It should be intergenerational. Indeed these sessions should be open to the whole community.
 - F. Each parish should be aware of individuals with special needs. With some adaptation and individual attention many people with special needs can be presented as candidates for the Sacraments.
- III. Presentation for First Reconciliation
- A. Candidates for First Reconciliation should be helped to identify sin in their lives. Parents should be helped to identify when their child is ready to celebrate First Reconciliation. This could be aided by written guidelines.
 - B. There should be an opportunity for an objective evaluation of their preparedness, this might be done by either individual discussion or by a group discussion with several children seeking to approach the Sacraments.
 - C. Once ready, candidates are free to choose to whom and when they will celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation. Parents can choose to bring the child with them at one of the regular Confession times, or to a parish Reconciliation Service, or to make an appointment for a special time. Ideally, the parents and others in the household of faith will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with the child. This helps to affirm that the Sacrament is a part of the Christian life.
- IV. Ongoing celebration of Reconciliation
- A. After First Reconciliation a person should celebrate the Sacrament monthly, or at least every other month, in preparation for Confirmation and First Eucharist. Again, it would be hoped that others in the household of faith would be joining them in frequenting this Sacrament.
- V. Formation for Confirmation and First Eucharist
- A. Formation for the Sacrament of Confirmation and First Eucharist should begin shortly after First Reconciliation.
 - B. This should include a systematic presentation of the 15 Goals, in accord with the Curriculum Guide.
 - C. There should also be a particular focus on the Sacraments of Initiation
 - D. Each candidate should be helped to live a good life as a child of God in response to the Call to Holiness given them at Baptism.
 - E. The curriculum guide for the Diocese presents for various age levels the appropriate understanding of these 15 Goals.
 - F. Parish sessions to help parents form their children for the Sacraments should not be part of the regular Religious Education program in the parish/mission/school. It should be intergenerational. Indeed these sessions should be open to the whole community. They may deal with everyone together or include time for breaking them out according to age or interest.

- VI. Establishing readiness
 - A. The diocese will develop some written criteria, supplementing the objectives contained in the Curriculum Guide.
 - B. Each candidate should submit a written reflection sheet when they are ready to be considered for celebration of the Sacraments.
 - C. There should be either individual or preferably group assessment of the readiness for celebration of the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist.
 - D. This assessment should not resemble an examination, but provide a chance for the pastor or some designated leadership of the community to hear from the candidate their desire and readiness for celebrating the sacrament.
 - E. It could take the form of the priest, master catechists, or other trained persons from the community asking the candidates why the sacraments are important and how they will help them live a better life as part of the church family.

- VII. Registration for a particular date for celebrating the sacrament
 - A. The parish will announce scheduled date(s) for the Bishop to visit and celebrate Confirmation and First Eucharist. (Each parish will schedule dates for Confirmation with the Bishop's Office as has been the practice.)
 - B. Households with people that will be ready for the celebration of the sacrament should in a timely fashion register for the date they desire to celebrate the sacrament. (Some parishes/missions may have more than one date each year when Confirmation and First Eucharist will be celebrated in their community.)