

SACRAMENTS

PREPARATION FOR SACRAMENTS

INTRODUCTION: Each parish is to form its own sacramental preparation policies and guidelines in accord with the Code of Canon Law and the Diocesan Policies.

Mandated:

1. When developing parish programs each parish is to give attention to:
 - a. Involvement and education of parents;
 - b. Involvement and education of the entire parish community.
2. Dialogue is essential among pastors, directors of religious education, principals and religion administrators in matters dealing with sacramental preparation and celebration.
3. Collaboration between neighboring parishes, when possible, is strongly recommended when scheduling preparation programs, retreats, celebrations and other activities which can be done collaboratively.
4. Care must be taken to include persons with disabilities in special preparation programs and in the same community celebration of the sacraments.

BAPTISM

INTRODUCTION: Infants are to be baptized according to the norms of the Rite of Baptism. Children of catechetical age and adults are to be initiated according to the principles of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.).

Mandated:

1. The ordinary ministers of Baptism are bishops, priests, and deacons. In imminent death of the one to be baptized, any member of the faithful or anyone with the right intention may administer Baptism.
2. The primary responsibility of raising a child in the faith rests with the parents. The parish is to provide preparation for the parents.
3. Only if no adult is willing to make a commitment to bringing the child up as a Catholic would the celebrant have an obligation to delay the Baptism. In cases of indefinite delays the celebrant is to inform the Regional Vicar.
4. The celebration is ordinarily to take place in the parish church of the candidate for Baptism (Canon 857). Exceptions to this policy are to be discussed between the pastor of the parish church of the candidate and the celebrant of the Baptism.

5. Every person initiated into the church must have a sponsor. Canon 873 states that "There is to be only one male sponsor or female sponsor or one of each." The sponsor must be a confirmed Catholic who lives the faith in visible fashion. A baptized Christian may serve as a witness, but only with a single Catholic sponsor who meets the above mentioned requirements (Canon 874).
6. The Roman Ritual is the only approved ritual for Baptism.
7. A complete entry is to be made of the Baptism in the baptismal registry of the church of Baptism. In the case of an unwed mother, the name of the father cannot be entered without the supporting evidence of an authentic statement signed by the father and witnessed by a notary public or from information on a valid certificate of live birth.

Recommended:

1. The celebration of Baptism should suggest its paschal character. Ideally, Baptisms should take place at the Easter Vigil.
2. It is good for the community of faith to be involved in the preparation and celebration of Baptism.

FIRST COMMUNION

INTRODUCTION: Children who reach the age of reason (approximately seven years old) are to be prepared to receive First Communion. Children are to have the preparation and the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to First Communion. The R.C.I.A. is to be used to prepare adults.

Mandated:

1. Readiness for First Communion is when the child expresses a desire for it and is able to distinguish it from ordinary bread and wine.
2. The child should be able to recognize the communal aspect of the sacrament.
3. The determination for readiness is the responsibility of the parents, the catechists, and the pastor.
4. Parents have a duty to be involved in the preparation of their child for the first reception of Communion.
5. Parishes will provide programs which help parents teach their children.
6. The parish church rather than the school is the appropriate place for preparation and celebration of First Communion.
7. An entry is to be made in the sacramental registry of the parish.

FIRST RECONCILIATION

INTRODUCTION: Children who reach the age of reason (approximately seven years old) are to be prepared to receive sacramental reconciliation. The R.C.I.A. is to be used to prepare adults.

Mandated:

1. First Reconciliation is to be celebrated prior to the reception of First Communion.
2. Parents, as the primary educators of their children, must be involved in the preparation of their children.
3. Parishes will provide programs which help parents teach their children.
4. Parents, catechists, and the pastor have the responsibility for determining the readiness of the individual child.
5. The parish church rather than the school is to be the place of preparation and celebration.
6. No child may be denied this sacrament if properly disposed.
7. A child's desire and choice not to celebrate this sacrament is to be respected.
8. Catechesis for First Reconciliation is to be conducted separately from First Communion.

CONFIRMATION

INTRODUCTION: Students must be in the 11th grade and/or sixteen years of age to be confirmed.

Mandated:

1. Preparation for Confirmation involves the coordinated efforts of the candidates, pastor, parents, sponsors, catechists, and the parish community.
2. Preparation for Confirmation takes place within the parish community.
3. The initiation of children into sacramental life is primarily the responsibility of the parents.
4. Sponsors are to be named by the student's parents and must be of at least sixteen years of age. They are to be Catholics, themselves confirmed, and lead a life in harmony with the duty they are undertaking. A sponsor cannot be one of the parents of the student nor can they be bound by any canonical penalty.

5. An entry is to be made in the appropriate registry of the parish. If Confirmation takes place outside of the parish of Baptism, notification is to be sent to the parish in a timely fashion.

Recommended:

1. The sponsor should be one of the sponsors from the student's Baptism.
2. It is acceptable to have two Confirmation sponsors.
3. Collaboration is encouraged between neighboring parishes in scheduling preparation programs, retreats, and celebrations.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION GUIDELINES

Parishes are to refer to *Marriage Preparation and Celebration (2006)*, the marriage preparation policy manual for the Province of Louisiana, for policies.

Approved + Michael Jarrell Date August 15, 2006