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II. Guidelines for First Eucharist

A. Essential Roles

1. **Parents**, as models of faith and Christian witness for their children, have a serious responsibility to grow in their devotion to the Eucharist.
 - a. Catholic parents should participate in the parish Eucharistic celebration on Sunday.
 - b. Parents must give explicit permission for their child to continue the process of initiation into the Church through the Eucharist.
 - c. The determination of the readiness for a child's first reception of Eucharist is the responsibility of parents, catechists and pastor (cf. NCD #122).
 - d. Parents are expected to participate in all sessions for parents and to share in the total preparation of their child for First Eucharist.
2. **Candidates** for First Eucharist are reminders to the community of the Church's call to be nourished by and formed into the Body of Christ.
 - a. Candidates must express explicit desire for the Eucharist to the pastor or his delegate.
 - b. Candidates must participate in the total preparation for First Eucharist provided by the parish.
3. A **catechist** is a person of faith commissioned to share in the ministry of the Word. (cf. Confirmation guidelines for specific roles of the catechist.)
4. The Christian **assembly** encourages and gives example to the candidates through active participation in the Eucharistic celebration.

B. Process of Preparation

1. It is impossible to prescribe a single catechetical process for first Eucharist which meets the needs of each parish in the diocese. However, since full initiation into the Church occurs by stages, the RCIA provides the norm for catechetical as well as liturgical practice in this regard. Therefore, all catechesis will take place within the parish community, which has the obligation to participate in the

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catechetical preparation of those to receive Eucharist for the first time. Parents along with godparents are to be intimately involved with the children's formation. A parental program is an important element in planning the process of preparation for first Eucharist.

2. "Catechesis for the Eucharist recognizes the Eucharist as the heart of Christian life. It helps people understand that celebration of the Eucharist nourishes the faithful with Christ, the Bread of Life, in order that, filled with the love of God and neighbor, they may become more and more a people acceptable to God and build up the Christian community with the works of charity, service, missionary activity, and witness" (NCD #121).

(Further considerations for the catechesis for reception of the Eucharist is outlined in the **National Catechetical Directory** #121-122.)

C. Celebration of First Eucharist

1. Ideally, First Eucharist should be celebrated during the Easter Season. If this is not possible, First Eucharist may be celebrated during Ordinary Time.
2. First Eucharist should be celebrated in the parish. If, for any reason, it is celebrated outside the parish, permission from the pastor must be obtained.
3. First Eucharist is a family event; this means that the candidate should receive with his/her family at a Sunday liturgy chosen by the parents.
4. Children should be encouraged to receive the Eucharist in the hand and from the cup.

