

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Sacrament of Confirmation

Sacrament of the Eucharist

Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

**Diocese of Allentown
Secretariat for Education
2012**

INTRODUCTION

Our life as members of the Church begins in the mystery of God. God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might have life through Him.¹ The mystery of Christ is continued in the Church through the signs that Christ instituted, the sacraments. The sacraments provide us with the primary way of participating in the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. The sacraments are symbolic actions which effect what they symbolize, celebrate the coming of the Spirit at special moments in the life of the community of faith and its members, and express the Church's faith and interaction with Christ.²

The sacraments, instituted by Christ the Lord and entrusted to the Church, as they are the actions of Christ and Church, stand out as the signs and means by which the faith is expressed and strengthened, worship is rendered to God and the sanctification of humankind is effected.³ The sacraments give grace which flows from our encounter with Him. We experience God's relationship through moments of reflection, shared with one another in celebration, giving our lives meaning. We recapture a sense of wonder, a sense of mystery.

Sacraments are the vehicle of God's continuing contact with us. In Baptism, the water and words both assure us of the mystery revealed and make that profound change in reality happen. The bread and wine of the Eucharist are not just signs of Jesus' presence, they become His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity." The audible confession of sins by the penitent and the absolution spoken by the confessor not only assure us of forgiveness, they accomplish it. The husband and wife in a Christian Marriage not only become signs of Christ's love for His Church, they actually make that love present as they increase the Body of Christ with children, the fruit of their creative love. They challenge us to accept the reality of God's perfect love for us as we witness their imperfect struggle to love.

In the sacraments of the Church, we are given a great gift. The Lord who knows us better than we know ourselves, allows us to experience His nearness and to grow in His grace.

The sacraments involve this relationship with Jesus and therefore presume faith on the part of the individual, the family and the parish community. "The sacraments, symbolic actions which effect what they symbolize, celebrate the coming of the spirit at special moments in the life of the community of faith and its members, and express the Church's faith and interaction with Christ."⁴

The sacraments involve a personal faith development, catechesis and the reception or celebration. They require on-going catechesis and development.

The family has an essential role in preparation for the catechesis and celebration of a sacrament. Studies have clearly demonstrated the effect of families on the faith expression of children. A parent/guardian has no choice about being a teacher or catechist of the child. Teaching and catechizing, positively or negatively, is constantly being done through attitudes, actions, values, by the way one encourages prayer or not, by active participation in worship or lack of it. The only choice is to be a good teacher or a poor teacher. Therefore, because of the significant influence of the parent/guardian who plays an important part in the preparation of the child for the reception of a sacrament, they too must be catechized about the sacrament.

The family requires on-going development (knowledge, experience). The readiness of the individual and the family is an essential criterion for determining when the celebration of the sacraments should take place.

Involvement in the celebration of a sacrament is a process into the worship life of the Church. The celebration of a sacrament is the action of the community which gathers to celebrate faith and, in this celebration, the Lord becomes present in a deeper way. The community; and the worship community should somehow be visibly

involved in an individual's preparation for a sacrament, therefore, the preparation and celebration of a sacrament is essentially a responsibility of the parish which exists as a permanent worshipping community.

The guidelines reflect liturgical, catechetical and canonical concerns. They are directed toward those who are responsible for preparing candidates for the sacraments and to the whole Christian community, which has an essential role in sacramental preparation. The samples given can be adapted to individual parishes and circumstances.

Footnotes:

1. *John 3, 16; Catechism of the Catholic Church*. No. 1066.
2. *Sharing the Light of Faith. National Catechetical Directory*, Chapter VI, par. 114.
3. *Code of Canon Law*, No. 840.
4. *NCD*, No. 114

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

INTRODUCTION

Through the sacrament of Confirmation those who have been born anew in baptism receive the inexpressible Gift, the Holy Spirit himself by whom “they are endowed...with special strength.” 1

“The sacrament of Confirmation impresses a character and by it the baptized, continuing on the path of Christian initiation, are enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit and bound more perfectly to the Church; it strengthens them and obliges them more firmly to be witnesses to Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith.” 2

“Confirmation emphasizes the transformation of life by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in his fullness. Confirmed Christians claim as fully their own the new life into which they were first initiated at Baptism. The Church community expresses its continuing support and concern for the spiritual growth of those confirmed, while the latter promise in turn to help others grow and mature in the Christian life.”3

PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITY

“The parish is the faith community into whose life of prayer and worship those seeking the sacrament of Confirmation will be more fully initiated. It also embodies the message to which they are to respond and gives witness, in service, to the faith they profess. The parish should strive to catechize on behalf of obedience to Christ and loyal testimony to him through the power of the spirit.” 4 It should pray for and with the candidates and their families, enter with them into the ongoing conversion to which all are called.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

A parent/guardian, along with the sponsor, is to be intimately involved in catechesis for Confirmation. This will help them renew and strengthen their own faith, besides enabling them to set a better example for the child or godchild.⁵ They must teach the child that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is not a climax in spiritual life but the beginning of an ever growing Christian spirituality that seeks a perfect, glorified communion with God for all eternity.

SPONSOR

“It is the role of the sponsor to see that the confirmed person acts as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations connected with this sacrament.”⁶ “It is desirable that the one who undertook the role of sponsor at Baptism be sponsor for Confirmation.”⁷

To be admitted to the role of sponsor, a person must:

- Have completed the sixteenth year of age;
- Be fully initiated in the Catholic Church, that is, have received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist;
- Must be living a life in harmony with the Catholic faith;
- Be registered in a Catholic parish;
- If not from the parish where the sacrament is being conferred, present a certificate of eligibility from the home parish;

- If possible, a baptismal godparent should serve as sponsor. The choice of another sponsor, however, is not excluded;
- Not be the father or the mother of the one to be confirmed.

If someone is going to stand in as a proxy for a sponsor who cannot be physically present at the time of the Confirmation, the real sponsor must write a letter:

- Stating that he/she accepts the responsibility of being a sponsor;
- Stating the name of the one to be confirmed, the date of Confirmation and the name of the proxy;
- Letter must be signed by the real sponsor and dated.

CONFIRMATION NAME

Because the Church recognizes the close link between Baptism and Confirmation a candidate may use his/her baptismal name or choose another. With the number of new saints added to the liturgical calendar, more names are acceptable today. Only names that are clearly not Christian in character should not be used.

FORMS

Record of Baptism. If the person to be confirmed was baptized in the church where the sacrament of Confirmation is to be received, a baptismal certificate is not necessary but verification is needed. If baptized in another church, a certificate of baptism must be submitted.

If the person to be confirmed is not from the parish where the sacrament of Confirmation is to be received, a letter of permission from the Pastor of the church the candidate belongs to is necessary.

Record of Confirmation. “the names of the confirmed with mention of the minister, the parents and the sponsors, the place and date of the conferral of confirmation are to be noted in the confirmation register....in the parish archives. The pastor must advise the pastor of the place of baptism about the conferral of confirmation so that notation be made in the baptismal register, in accord with the norm of canon 535, No. 2”⁹

Parish Notification. The parish in which the candidate was baptized must be notified of the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation. The form must include the name, date of Baptism, date and minister of Confirmation and parish in which Confirmation was ministered.

Sponsor Eligibility. A form of eligibility must be completed by the sponsor and signed by the pastor or priest of the parish in which the sponsor lives stating that the sponsor is a reliable and practicing Catholic, fulfilling the Catholic requirements for the role of sponsor. (See Confirmation Sponsor Form)

Letter of Request to Principal/Public School Children (ACT 175). The Law provides for children to be validly excused from school for 36 hours of religion or religion related activities.

Retreat. Notification of and permission from parent/guardian to attend a retreat day is necessary.

CATECHESIS

Catechesis for an adult preparing for Confirmation follows the pattern recommended in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.¹⁰

Catechesis for children should focus on spiritual formation. It should emphasize the theology of Christian initiation, which links Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist as one, incorporating continual process into a life-long journey of conversion in faith. The celebration of the sacrament calls and challenges the candidate to model Jesus' life more fully.

Preparation for Confirmation is to be seen as a process of deeper Christian formation. The content of the preparation includes principles of Christian living, witnessing to the faith, service projects, spiritual formation (present and ongoing) and participation in liturgical services. No one may be confirmed unless he/she has received sufficient instruction in Catholic teaching, especially with regard to the sacrament of Confirmation. Hence, **all candidates must attend any scheduled periods of instruction determined by the pastor and DRE/CRE and practice faithfully by attendance at Mass.** Catechesis must be at least a six month period prior to the reception of the sacrament. As the retreat, service project, saint report, etc. are important pieces of formation, they are established at the discretion of the pastor and DRE/CRE for the reception of the Sacrament.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

The systematic catechetical program in the parish or school have significant responsibility for providing the child with a basic understanding of the meaning and rites of the sacrament. Preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation takes place in the **regularly scheduled sessions of the parish religious education program and Catholic school religious education program.** Those who are responsible for total religious education insure that the child's understanding of the sacrament of Confirmation deepens as he/she matures.

SPECIAL SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION PROGRAM

This program is distinct from the sacramental preparation program in the parish or school religious education program. The special preparation program considers in depth the participant's relationship with the Lord, relationship with the community, an exploration of the rite and the ritual of the sacrament. The children continue their involvement in the parish or school religious education program and participate with their families in the parish community and liturgical services.

CATECHESIS AND RECEPTION: PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The following are adaptations and considerations regarding the sacrament of Confirmation for the learner with disabilities.

A severely mentally challenged person should be admitted to the sacrament of Confirmation, even when, for some good reason, cannot receive First Eucharist. Any person who meets the diocesan age requirement may receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

The student enrolled in a Diocesan Special Learning Center is instructed in the educational setting. A student attending another school should seek instruction at the parish. Parental involvement is strongly recommended and encouraged.

The reception of the sacrament of Confirmation occurs when the parent and catechist deems that the student or adult is ready. The place where the sacrament is received is usually the parish of residence. Exceptions to this can be made when the needs of the student require it. These exceptions must be approved by the pastor. Information concerning the reception of the sacrament should be registered in the parish of the recipient.

ON GOING SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Newly confirmed Christians need the support of the parent/guardian, sponsor and Christian community as they live out their life in the spirit and continue their ongoing spiritual development and conversion. Formation does not end with the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation. The formation of Confirmation is but a part of an ongoing process of Christian formation.

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

CATECHESIS AND RECEPTION: CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL/PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

MODEL A

All candidates from each parish within the consolidation (Religious Education Program and Catholic School Program) are serviced through a consolidated program with includes:

- a) Catechetical instruction received in the Catholic school program or in the religious education program.
- b) A joint parent/guardian catechetical program helping them grow in understanding the sacrament of Confirmation and participating readily in catechizing their children. The location of the program rotates among the parishes.
- c) The reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation is held at the individual parishes.

PERSONAL INTERVIEW WITH CANDIDATE – MODEL

Name of Candidate_____

1. What is a sacrament?
2. How many sacraments are there?
3. What sacraments have you received?
4. What is the sacrament of Confirmation?
5. Do you want to receive this sacrament? Why?
6. Why do you receive the sacrament of Reconciliation?
7. What happens in Confession?
8. What is necessary to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation worthily?
9. When was the last time you went to confession?
10. When do we receive Jesus in the Eucharist?
11. Do you go to Mass every Sunday (Saturday evening) and Holy Days?
12. Name the Holy Days of obligation.
13. What prayer contains the chief truths of our faith?
14. Say the Apostles Creed.
15. How have you prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation?
16. Did you do any service projects?
17. Is receiving the sacrament of Confirmation the end of your religious formation or should you religious formation continue?
18. Why?
19. What role do you see the Holy Spirit playing in your life?
20. Where are you on your journey of faith in your relationship with Jesus?

CONFIRMATION SPONSOR FORM – MODEL
(NAME OF PARISH)
(ADDRESS OF PARISH)

(Please return this form by (date))

A. (To be completed by the prospective Confirmation Sponsor)

I _____
(Name of Confirmation Sponsor, please print.)

have been requested to act as a sponsor for the sacrament of Confirmation for:

(Name of person to be confirmed, please print).

- I believe and accept the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.
- I attend Holy Mass every Sunday and Holy Days of obligation.
- I receive the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist frequently and the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly.
- I understand and accept the responsibility which I undertake as a Confirmation Sponsor and I promise to pay special attention to the above-named candidate and to help him/her attain happiness in Christ by my own Catholic Faith practice, prayers, support and Christian example.
- I am also prepared to help the parents of the Candidate in a similar fashion.

ALL THIS I PROMISE TO FULFILL WITH THE HELP OF GOD’S GRACE.

(Signature of Confirmation Sponsor.)

B. (To be completed by the parish of the Confirmation Sponsor.)

_____ is a registered member of the parish
(Confirmation Sponsor)

community of _____
(Parish Name) (City, State)

at least 16 years of age, fully initiated into the Church, a practicing Catholic in good standing, and therefore capable of assuming and fulfilling the duties of a Confirmation sponsor.

Date: _____ Parish Seal _____

ENROLLMENT RITUAL FOR CANDIDATES FOR CONFIRMATION
(CHILDREN – MODEL)

After Gospel:

1. **Allocution of Celebrant** **(All Seated)**
2. **Presentation of Petitions** **(Parents Stand)**
 by Parent/guardian

“Father, just a few years ago, the Church was asked for the gift of faith to be given to our children at the time of their baptism. During the ceremony, it was promised to make it our constant care to bring them up in the practice of the faith. We have tried to do this not only by providing for the religious education of our children, but also, by giving them an example of faith in action within our homes.

We now come to the Church and request that the faith of our children, be sealed by the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation. We present to you our children for enrollment into the final period of preparation for this sacrament.

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| 3. | Announcement of Petitions
by Representative Sponsor | (Candidates Stand When
Called by Name) |
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Father, as a sponsor, and in the name of those who will share this privilege with me, I am pleased to announce the names of those who seek to be enrolled in the final preparation period for the Sacrament of Confirmation. In naming the candidates, I assure you of the prayerful and active support of all sponsors who will oversee, together with the parents and guardians, the final months of our candidates’ formation. As I announce each name, I ask the candidate to please rise and remain standing.

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| 4. | Inquiry of Petitions
by pastor | (Candidates Stand and
respond) |
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| 5. | Call and Blessing of Petitioners
by Pastor | (Candidates Kneel) |
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| 6. | Commitment and Presentation of
Petitioners | (Candidate, parent/
guardian/sponsor
Approach altar) |
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| 7. | Prayer for Candidates | (All Kneel) |
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| 8 | Blessing | (All Stand) |
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PARENT/GUARDIAN MEETING – ONE SESSION – MODEL

Purpose:

- 1. To involve the parent/guardian in the sacramental preparation and spiritual development of the child.**
- 2. To promote an understanding of the sacrament of Confirmation as it is related to the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist.**
- 3. To promote an appreciation of service to others as an expression of what it means to be a confirmed Catholic.**

Agenda:

- 1. Welcome/Introductions**
- 2. Prayer**

- 3. Presentation: a)theology and history of Confirmation; b) audio-visual on the sacrament.**
- 4. Distribution of the child's text. This reinforces the parent/guardian's role by receiving the books from them, establishing a link between home and school/parish in the child's mind, and is also a way of knowing the presence of the parent/guardians.**
- 5. Break – allows for informal discussion among the parents/guardians**
- 6. Explanation of Enrollment Ritual**
- 7. Explanation of service projects**
- 8. Question and Answer Period**
- 9. Announcements**
- 10. Prayer**
- 11. Departure**

THE BISHOP'S CONFIRMATION QUESTIONS

What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is the sacrament in which the Holy Spirit comes to us in a special way to join us more closely to Jesus and his Church and to seal and strengthen us as Christ's witnesses.

What are the Sacraments?

The sacraments are sacred signs through which Jesus gives us his spirit and makes us holy and pleasing to Him by grace.

How many Sacraments are there?

There are seven sacraments.

What are the names of the Seven Sacraments?

The seven sacraments are: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy orders and Matrimony.

How is Confirmation given?

The bishop extends his hands over the person and anoints the forehead in the form of a cross while saying, "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." The person being confirmed answers, "Amen" meaning "Let it be so". The Gift is the Holy Spirit Himself. He is the Gift of the Father and the Son to us.

What is Chrism?

Chrism is a blessed mixture of oil and balm used during the baptismal ceremony, in Confirmation, during the ordination of priests and bishops, and in the consecration of churches, altars, and other things.

Who is the minister of Confirmation?

The bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation.

What are the effects of Confirmation?

The effects of Confirmation are: an increase in sanctifying grace, the gift of a special sacramental grace and the imprint of a lasting character on the soul.

What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are: wisdom, understanding, right judgment (or counsel), courage (or fortitude), knowledge, reverent love (or piety) and holy fear.

Rite of Confirmation General Instructions

PLEASE MAKE COPIES OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE DRE/PRINCIPAL/READERS/DEACONS SO THAT ALL CAN FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH THE CEREMONY BEFORE THE BISHOP ARRIVES.

1. Confirmation will be conferred **within** Mass. All priests present, and invited, may concelebrate. If a priest is a sponsor, he should be a concelebrant or in choir dress and seated in the sanctuary. The Bishop desires the presence of permanent/transitional deacons, if possible. If they are present, they lead the Kyrie, read the Gospel and proclaim the intercessions, along with other diaconal functions. Candidates for Confirmation are to be in the grade determined by the diocesan guidelines for confirmation, exception to these rules are granted on an individual case only.
2. Parishes should prepare a reception for the confirmands, parents and sponsors immediately following the ceremony. To make plans for the family celebrations/dinners, afterwards, it would be advisable to inform the families that the ceremony usually lasts one and one half hours (depending on the number of confirmands). If it is possible, all parishioners attending the Confirmation should also be invited to the reception. The pastor is to accompany the remain with the Bishop as the reception. Light refreshments are called for, e.g. punch/cookies, soda/cake, etc.
3. If a candidate has been confirmed at birth and is, at present, a member of the Latin Rite, and wishes to partake in the confirmation Mass the candidate is to: be present with the godparent, if possible, yet seated behind the confirmation class. A special format is available from the Bishop's office giving an outline of the presentation of the person. The Bishop will bless the person(s) in a part of the ceremony which establishes that they have already been confirmed, yet prepared and studied with their classmates. Note of this should be made on the Mass outline sent to the Chancery and indicated to the MC upon his arrival.
4. The candidates are to be seated **BEFORE** the ceremony begins (5-7 mins.). They will **NOT** have altar servers lead them into the Church.
 - Girls are seated in the front pews on one side, boys in the front pews on the other side of the main aisle.
 - Adult candidates should attend the Pentecost Confirmation at the Cathedral. If they are unable to attend, they should sit, apart from, but directly behind the young people.
 - Sponsors should be seated as a group immediately behind the candidates. Sponsors do not have to be of the same sex as the candidate.
 - Sponsors are not to be seated alternately between/among the candidates.
 - Sponsors may sit in the side aisles if there is no room behind the candidates.
5. The Bishop sits in front of the altar for Confirmation. The first candidates come forward together, accompanied by their sponsors. These are the **ONLY** two who come forward together. As soon as the Bishop confirms the first candidate (boy/girl), they are to move immediately away from the Bishop and

the next candidate is to kneel before the Bishop. Please, if possible, have a microphone available for the Bishop's dialogue with the confirmands. It will also aid in the profession of faith and prayer of the Holy Spirit.

6. Each candidate is to be accompanied by an individual sponsor. A baptismal godparent should serve as sponsor, if possible. The choice of another sponsor, however, is not excluded. PARENTS MAY NOT ACT AS SPONSORS.
7. Each candidate needs a card that they will present to the assisting priests standing on either side of the Bishop. It is to contain:
 - The candidate's confirmation name. They may use their baptismal or choose another name. Please be aware that with the number of new saints added to the calendar, most names are acceptable today. Only names that are clearly not Christian in character should not be used.
 - The name of the candidate.
 - The name of the candidate's sponsor.
 - These cards are NOT used after the ceremony. They are not given to the Bishop's office.
8. Participation aids are neither necessary nor desirable. The response are so few and brief that they can easily be led by a cantor.
9. Three readings are to be used in the Liturgy of the Word. They are to be chosen from among those found in the Lectionary (#763-767). During the Easter season, no Old Testament reading should be used. They could be from the Sunday previous/next. Still, three readings are used. Only after the Bishop has received the mitre is the reader to approach the lectern. If the reader is a confirmand, they should be prepared beforehand and able to read well.

NO READINGS CAN BE READ FROM A TYPED OR PHOTOCOPIES SHEET, THEY ARE TO READ FROM THE LECTIONARY ONLY!

Readers are to introduce the readings exactly as they appear in the lectionary. They are not to begin: "The first reading is....., the second reading is...." At no time are any indications in small red print to be read. Readers are to be made aware that the readings end first with a pause, followed by the proclamation: "The Word of the Lord."

Readers, deacons, all who proclaim the word are to refrain from raising the lectionary/book of the gospels while concluding the readings.

10. The responsorial psalm should be sung.
11. The verse before the Gospel, as well, should be sung. If it is not, it is never to be recited. The readers/organists/cantors should also be instructed not to indicate: "please stand for the gospel".

12. Deacon or pastor reads the Gospel. Immediately afterward, he will present the candidates to the Bishop. The presentation is included in this packet on a separate sheet of paper, clearly marked.
13. The Bishop will speak to confirmands and question the candidates. They are to stand when responding to the Bishop, even as individuals, and are to address him: "Bishop....."
14. All will be invited to stand and renew their baptismal promises and remain standing for the prayer of imposition.
15. After the MC has readied the Bishop, the reader will instruct the candidates to come forward. They are to kneel as closely to the Bishop's chair as possible. The first confirmands approach the Bishop, together, once confirmed the confirmand stands up immediately and another takes their place. They hand their card to the assisting priest while next in line, the priest will present their name, meanwhile the sponsor places their hand on the right shoulder of the candidate.
16. Candidates are to have practiced and be familiar with the responses at the time of their anointing:

Bishop: _____be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Candidate: AMEN

Bishop: Peace be with you.

Candidate: AND ALSO WITH YOU.

No other gesture or response is either indicated or needed.
17. Hymns are to accompany the anointing, but should not begin until the first couple of candidates are anointed.
18. The Bishop will wash his hands at his place after the anointing. The following should be available in the sacristy beforehand: two white linen towels (small powder room towels), lemon cut in quarters. Note: The Bishop does not require bread for the cleaning of the hands.
19. Four of the confirmands are to present the gifts. They will be taken to the rear of the church by an altar server. They are not to leave during the intercessions! The altar server will lead the young people to the Bishop/MC, who will instruct them. While walking up the aisle they are to hold the gifts up, come to the Bishop, present their gift, step to the side and wait until all four gifts have been given to the Bishop, the MC will instruct them to bow to the Bishop. They return to their places, unaccompanied by the server. They are to be instructed beforehand that no genuflection takes place at the time of the presentation of the gifts. Music should accompany this action, followed by the hymn at the time of the preparation.
20. The confirmands are to receive Holy Communion FIRST. Others (choir, ushers, etc.) are to receive after the confirmands and their sponsors.

21. The recessional hymn should be congregational in nature. The procession will move at the start of the hymn. The order of the procession: altar servers, priests, Bishop, mitre/crosier bearer, confirmands, sponsors.
22. Altar servers are to be **HIGH SCHOOL** students. If you do not have high school servers, the local catholic high schools willingly supply them. Six are needed, they are to be present one half hour before the ceremony. Do not assign the servers to various position, the MC will be responsible for determining them. If possible, have the names of the servers (and grade) available at the vesting case for the MC. Seats should be provided in the sanctuary for the servers. Seventh and Eighth graders can substitute for high school servers, but lower grades are not preferred.
23. Records: Confirmation register need to include: name of the minister of Confirmation, the confirmed, parents, sponsor and date and place of the sacrament. Notation is also to be made in the baptismal register, or sent to the church of Baptism. This is a principal reason for the retention of the “traditional” cards carried by the candidates, they can be mailed to the parish of baptism for notification purposes.
24. **Indulgence:** Please announce either at Mass or in the parish bulletin the week prior to the Bishop’s visit: As the Bishop is present for his annual visitation, the following indulgences may be gained: (a) a plenary indulgence to the faithful who assist at ceremonies at which the Bishop presides during his pastoral visitation, (b) a partial indulgence is granted to the faithful who make a visit to their parish church at the time of the Bishop’s visitation.
25. **Readers/Commentators/Lectors:** You might have noticed that these have been combined merely to read: **READER:** This is to simplify matters in the case where one person fulfills all these functions. It is up to the pastor/DRE/school community to distribute these roles if they are to be taken by more than one person.

RITE OF CONFIRMATION

This outline must accompany the reader/musicians/others for the actual confirmation ceremony.

Reader: (4 min. before Mass, please read):

Good (Morning/Afternoon).

Please be aware that today we are celebrating a Sacrament. Picture taking is welcome, both now and at the reception afterward, however, we ask that NO ONE disturb the procession or enter the sanctuary in order to photograph your family member or friend. Thank you for observing this request.

ENTRANCE RITE

1. (When the Crossbearer appears at the entrance of the Church, the master of ceremonies will signal the reader to begin😊)
- Bishop_____is presiding at our celebration. Our gathering hymn is #_____**
2. Sign of the Cross and Greeting
3. Penitential rite (led by Bishop/Deacon)
4. Lord have Mercy (sung or recited)
5. Glory to God (sung or recited)
6. Opening Prayer

LITURGY OF THE WORD

7. Readings (After the Bishop has received his miter, the lector comes forward to proclaim the readings. If the lector passes before the Bishop, the lector should bow reverently.) The lector should read from and introduce the readings as they appear in the lectionary, never saying: “The first reading is from” or “please stand for the Gospel”, etc. the book is NOT to be raised at the end of the reading. Please note that the readings conclude: “The Word of the Lord”. After the second reading an appropriate gospel acclamation is sung, never recited.
8. Gospel: (A deacon or, if none present, the pastor, receives the Bishop’s blessing by standing before the Bishop and proceeds to the pulpit for the Gospel. Again, the Gospel concludes: “The Gospel of the Lord.”)
9. Presentation of the Candidates: (After everyone has been seated, the pastor says)

BISHOP, THE PARISH OF _____PRESENTS TO YOU OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS WHO HAVE BEEN PREPARED AND ARE NOW READY TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

**WILL THOSE WHO ARE ABOUT TO BE CONFIRMED, PLEASE STAND.
(ALL CANDIDATES STAND.)**

THESE CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED AND ARE ACCOMPANIED BY A SPONSOR. I ASK THAT YOU CONFER ON THEM THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

PLEASE BE SEATED.

10. Homily/Questioning of the Candidates: (When speaking to the Bishop, the young person should STAND to speak to the Bishop. The preferred way of addressing the Bishop is "Bishop.....".)
11. Renewal of Baptismal Promises/Imposition of hands: (At the conclusion of the questions and after the Bishop has returned to the sanctuary area, the MC will give the reader the signal:"

Please stand. At this time the candidates will renew their baptismal promises. All in the congregation are invited to participate in this ACT of Faith and renew your own baptismal promises.

Bishop:

Do you reject Satan and his works and all his empty promises?

I DO.

Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?

I DO

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, Our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

I DO

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who came upon the apostles at Pentecost and today is given to you sacramentally in Confirmation?

I DO

Do you believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

I DO

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

AMEN

(Bishop imposes his hands and then says the following prayer)

All powerful God, Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit, You freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy spirit upon them to be their helper and guide. Give them the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Right Judgment and Courage, the spirit of Knowledge and Reverence. Fill them with the spirit of Wonder and Awe in Your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

AMEN

12. Anointing: (Immediately, the Bishop will sit and prepare for the anointing of the candidates. The MC will give the reader the signal to announce the following:

Will those who are to be confirmed and their sponsors please come forward.

(If the congregation has not sat down, also announce:)

All others may be seated.

(During the anointing, hymns are sung, but only after the first file of young people have been confirmed. Afterward, hymn can be sung/announced, but not continuously.)

13. General Intercessions

(If a deacon is present, their ministry requires that they lead the intercessions, otherwise an adult or one of the young people may lead the community.)

(After the anointing the Bishop will wash his hands. After the Bishop has completed this, the reader announces)

Please stand.

Bishop: My dear friends: let us be one in prayer to God our Father as we are one in the faith, hope and love the Spirit gives.

Reader: For these sons and daughters of God, confirmed by the gift of the Spirit that they give witness to Christ by lives built on faith and love: let us pray to the Lord.....Lord, hear our prayer.

For their parents and godparents who led them in faith, that by word and example they may always encourage them to follow the way of Jesus Christ: let us pray to the Lord....Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Holy Church of God, in union with (Benedict) our Pope, (John) our Bishop, and all the Bishops, that God, who gathers us together by the Holy Spirit, may help us grow in unity of faith and love until His son returns in glory: let us pray to the Lord.....Lord, hear our prayer.

For all men and women of every race and nation, that they may acknowledge the one God as Father, and in the bond of unity seek His kingdom which is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit: let us pray to the Lord.....Lord hear our prayer.

Bishop:

God Our Father, you sent the Holy Spirit...continue to grow in the hearts of all who believe. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reader: Please be seated.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

(The song should be introduced as the young people are handing the gifts to the Bishop)

Reader: The hymn during the preparation of the gifts is _____.

- 14.** (The Mass follows as usual. The Eucharistic prayer, acclamations, great amen will be indicated on the Bishop's Mass program. It should not be necessary to introduce them by announcement.)

The reader should be sensitive to the fact that the young people, often enough, are uncertain as to when they are to stand/kneel. A simple gesture or announcement from your place is all that is necessary.

- 15.** Communion Rite

(The Lord's Prayer, sign of peace and Lamb of God follow as normal. Again, if the young people need direction to kneel after the Lamb of God, this can be done by the reader.)

At the time that the Bishop receives from the chalice, the reader announces:

"Our communion hymn is #_____.

THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION

(If a meditation hymn is not sung, the reader waits until the tabernacle is closed and announces)

"Please be seated. Let us make our thanksgiving by reflecting in silence upon the good things God has given us through His Son, Jesus Christ."

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

(Thank you's, invitations to the reception to follow, greetings by the pastor, can be made at this time.)

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

(The Bishop or the Deacon, if present, indicates." "Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing."

(The Bishop or the deacon, if present, indicates: "The Mass is ended. Go in peace."

DISMISSAL

Reader: Our closing hymn is #_____.

The reader/lector does not process in the recessional.

SACRISTAN'S CHECK LIST

Please have the following items available in your sacristy prior to Confirmation.

_____A Chalice

_____Vestments for Bishop

_____Tabernacle Key

_____Sacramentary (Marked)

_____Pall

_____Lectionary (Marked)

_____Corporals (2)

_____Chrism Oil Stock

_____Lemons (cut in wedges)

_____Processional Cross

_____White Towels (2)

_____2 Processional Candles

_____Gremial (or large amice)

_____Matches

_____6 Vested High School Altar Boys

_____Reader(s)

_____Commentary Parts for Readers and Pastor in an appropriately covered binder

_____Paten with hosts* (include enough for Concelebrants)

_____Cruets: Wine* and Water

_____Ciborium*

*to be placed later on the Gift Table

Please have in place if needed:

_____Portable Chair for Bishop for confirming in front of the Altar (placed off to the side until needed.)

_____Microphone with extension

The Sacrament of Confirmation



**“Confirmation renews and strengthens the Christian’s baptismal call to bear witness to Christ before the world and work eagerly for the building up of his body.”
SHARING THE LIGHT OF FAITH, National Catechetical Directory, Ch. VI, 118**

SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST

INTRODUCTION

The Eucharist, the sacrament of Our Lord's presence, his Body and Blood, our food and drink, the sacrifice on the cross renewed, is the center of our faith. It is the center and heart of Christian life for both the universal and local Church and for each Christian.

"The Eucharist is a memorial of the Lord's passion, death, and resurrection, a holy meal which recalls the Last Supper, reminds us of our unity with one another in Christ, and anticipates the banquet of God's Kingdom.' The Eucharist has always been the source of Christian love and the center of ecclesial life" daily building up the life of all Christians, "making of them a holy temple of the Lord, a dwelling-place for God in the Spirit, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ." iii

The Eucharist, as a living memorial and experienced reality of the Paschal Mystery of Christ, is without question one of the greatest works of God's power. 1v Participating in the celebration of the Eucharist, a believer steps out of the limitation of time and space and enters into the eternal work of God's salvation of his people. When a believer enters into the living presence of Christ on the altar, that person is engulfed in a most special way into the living presence of God who is there to support, to strengthen and to manifest his love. The reality of this is so awesome that a life time of faith-response is too short to grasp it all.v

PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the pastor and parent/guardian to see that the children who have reached the use of reason are correctly prepared and receive Eucharist as early as possible, preceded by sacramental confession.vi

Each parish must provide a program for parent/guardians that provide a fuller understanding of the sacrament and an awareness of their responsibility to the children.

Readiness to participate in catechesis for Eucharist can be determined and verified when a child expresses, attitudinally as well as verbally, a desire to participate in this sacrament. This should be done on an individual basis and should not be dependent upon the readiness of a class of other children or upon a specific date proposed by anyone. No child expressing a desire for receiving the Eucharist shall be deprived of the right to receive the Eucharist once the child has completed the necessary catechesis and demonstrates an adequate understanding of the Eucharist. It is required that the child have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so as to understand the mystery of Christ according to one's capacity and can receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion.vii **Students must attend all scheduled classes and activities as determined by the pastor and DRE/CRE.**

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

A parent/guardian has a right and duty and an obligation to be intimately involved in preparing the child for First Communion. Catechesis aims to help the parent/guardian grow in understanding and an appreciation of the Eucharist and participate readily in catechizing the child.^{v111} It is also an excellent opportunity for the parent/guardian's own religious education/spiritual formation.

A parent/guardian must teach the child that the reception of First Communion is not a climax in the spiritual life, but the beginning of an ever-growing Christian spirituality.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian as well as the pastor to see that the child who has reached the use of reason is correctly prepared and is nourished by the divine food as early as possible, preceded by sacramental confession. ix

PARISH COMMUNITY

The parish worshipping community, through its active participation and involvement is constantly teaching by its actions and attitudes that the celebration of a sacrament is an essential and vibrant element of parish life. The parish community incorporates young people into the worship life of the parish. The parish prays for and supports those who are preparing for a sacrament.

FORMS

Record of Baptism. If the person to receive Eucharist was baptized in the church ~where the sacrament of Eucharist is to be received, no Baptismal certificate is necessary. If not, a certificate of Baptism must be submitted.

If the person to receive Eucharist is not from the parish where the sacrament of Eucharist is to be received, a letter of permission from the Pastor of the church one belongs to is necessary.

Record of Eucharist. Record in parish Eucharist register.

Parish Notification. The parish in which the person was baptized must be notified of the reception of the sacrament of Eucharist. The form must include the name, date of Baptism, date and minister of Eucharist, and parish in which Eucharist was received.

Letter of Request to Principal/Public School Children (ACT 175). The Law provides for children to be validly excused from school for 36 hours of religion or religion related activities (Copy of document may be obtained from the Department of Education, Diocese of Allentown.)

Retreat. Notification of and permission from parent/guardian to attend is necessary.

CATECHESIS

"Catechesis 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."x Preparatory sacramental catechesis can be for a specific period of time determined by the pastor and DRE/CRE; the catechesis which follows is a lifelong matter.

"Catechesis for First Eucharist is conducted separately from introductory catechesis for the sacrament of Eucharist, since each sacrament deserves its own concentrated preparation. **11XI**

The family experience influences the faith development of the child and the ongoing sacramental life of the child which begins at birth and continues throughout the different stages of life.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

The systematic catechetical program in the parish or school have significant responsibility for providing the child with a basic understanding of the meaning and rites of the sacrament. Preparation for the sacrament of Holy Eucharist takes place in the regularly scheduled sessions of the parish religious education program and Catholic school religious education program. Those who are responsible for total religious education insure that the child's understanding of the sacrament of Eucharist deepens as he/she matures.

SPECIAL SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION PROGRAM

This program is distinct from the sacramental preparation program in the parish or school religious education program. The special preparation program considers in depth the participant's relationship with the Lord, relationship with the community, an exploration of the rite and the ritual of the sacrament. The children continue their involvement in the parish or school religious education program and participate with their families in the parish community and liturgical services.

CATECHESIS AND RECEPTION: PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The following are adaptations and/or considerations regarding the Sacrament of Eucharist for persons with disabilities:

The mentally challenged person should have some understanding of the love of Jesus for people as illustrated by his life, death and resurrection (personal relationship).

The parent/guardian or catechist may recognize "moments of reverence" as signs of readiness. Some mentally retarded persons cannot use words which express their understanding of the difference between ordinary bread and the Bread of God, but they can show that they recognize the difference by their manner, the expression in their eyes, their gestures, or the quality of their silence.

The person with mental challenges needs to show some desire to receive the Eucharist. That desire may be an attitude of the heart. God's desire to be in communion with the student or adult needs to be presumed. The desire for Communion must be awakened and sustained. Besides contributing one's unique gifts to the Church, the person with mental disabilities is carried by the faith of the Church. However, each one should be further instructed subsequently in the Christian Faith according to one's ability.

The student enrolled in Diocesan Special Learning Centers is instructed in the education setting. A student attending another school should seek instruction at the parish. Parental involvement is strongly encouraged and recommended.

The reception of the sacrament of Eucharist occurs when the parent and/or catechist deems that the child is ready. The place where the sacrament is received is usually the parish of residence. Exceptions to this can be made when the needs of the student require it. These exceptions must be approved by the pastor. Information concerning the reception of the sacrament should be registered in the parish of the recipient.

CELEBRATION

After appropriate preparation, the communicant celebrates the sacrament of Holy Eucharist. The celebration is done in such a way that families are integrally involved in the celebration done in the context of the parish worship life. Active participation of family members is essential to their witness to the importance of what is being done. The symbols and rituals of the sacraments should be emphasized so that of themselves they speak of the interaction of the sacred and the ordinary in which the presence of the Jesus Christ is revealed.

Planning Celebration. The communicant should be actively involved in the planning, for the celebration of First Eucharist. In children celebrations, refer to the Directory For Masses With Children.x1-1 Parents/guardians and other family members are encouraged and welcomed to take an active involvement in celebrating.

Option in Receiving Communion. The two options of receiving communion are to be presented to the communicant. Proper catechesis must be provided to insure the proper and reverent reception of communion: a. option of receiving on the tongue or in the hand b. option of receiving under both species

Appropriate Children's Attire. Values, traditions, and practices of families need to be considered.

Parish Community Celebration. The liturgical celebration should allow for the presence of the parish community to be a witness and affirm those who are receiving for the first time. For children's celebration, the pastor with the assistance of the principal of the Catholic school and/or director/coordinator or catechist should contact the parents/guardians and/or communicants prior to the first reception. This dialogue will be invaluable and will help build parish community.

Size of Group of Children. It is important for parish identity that no distinction or separation be made between children prepared by the Catholic school and those prepared in the parish religious education program.

ONGOING FORMATION OF A EUCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

Since the Eucharist is the foundation of the Christian life, there must necessarily be an ongoing spiritual formation enabling all the Christian faithful to deepen their understanding of the sacrament and their formation by it.

Catechetical emphasis in conjunction with the preparation for Eucharist continues beyond the initial reception of the sacrament. Ongoing catechesis concerning Eucharist should be provided each year for all people at a level appropriate to their ages inasmuch as the sacrament requires lifelong participation and study. A fuller spiritual experience for the child begins with the first reception of Eucharist when the child has become intimate with the Sacrament and its liturgical expression. Continued catechesis and celebration is given in as much as the sacrament requires life-long participation and study. Xiii

The reception of the First Eucharist is the beginning of a child's individual spiritual pursuit rather than its end. For the sake of definition, a communion class is the group which begins with immediate preparation and continues as a community through the reception of Eucharist and until the next class begins its immediate preparation.

SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST

MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

CATECHESIS AND RECEPTION: CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL/PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

MODEL

All candidates from each parish within the consolidation (Religious Education Program and Catholic School Program) are serviced through a consolidated program which includes:

- a. Catechetical instruction received in the Catholic school program or in the religious education program;
- b. A joint parent/guardian catechetical program helping them grow in understanding and appreciating the Eucharist and participating readily in catechizing their children. The location of the program rotates among the parishes;
- c. The reception of the sacrament of Eucharist is held at the individual parishes.

PARENT/GUARDIAN MEETING - MODEL

For parent/guardians, sacramental preparation is the primary encounter with parish adult religious education. The formation process provides the parent/guardian an opportunity to renew one's understanding and appreciation of Eucharistic theology, symbols and rituals in a setting which models community and adult learning principles.

ONE SESSION Purpose:

1. To involve the parent/guardian in the sacramental preparation and spiritual development of the child;
2. To deepen the knowledge of the parent/guardian to the sacramental life of the Church;
3. To renew the commitment of the parent/guardian to the sacramental life of the Church;
4. To provide parent/guardian dialogue with priest, director of religious education, principal and catechists.

Agenda:

1. Welcome/Introduction;
2. Brief summary of parent/guardian's role in influencing a child's attitude toward the sacrament of Holy Eucharist;
3. Presentation: An adult's understanding and a child's understanding of the sacrament of Holy Eucharist;
4. Break - allows for informal discussion among the parents/guardians;
5. Content of the program;

6. Suggestions to the parent/guardian regarding the assistance they can offer;
7. Practical details concerning the day of the First Reception;
8. Question and answer period;
9. The parent/guardian could be invited to observe all or certain key classes with the child.

TWO SESSIONS

Purpose:

1. To involve the parent/guardian in the sacramental preparation and spiritual development of the child;
2. To deepen the knowledge of the parent/guardian to the sacramental life of the Church;
3. To renew the commitment of the parent/guardian to the sacramental life of the Church;
4. To provide parent/guardian dialogue with priest, director of religious education, principal and catechists.

MEETING I

Agenda:

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Prayer
3. Presentation: History of the Sacrament
4. Break allows for informal discussion among the parents/guardians
5. Presentation: Eucharist in Family and Community
6. Question and Answer Period
7. Date for next meeting
8. Prayer
9. Departure

MEETING H

Agenda:

1. Welcome
2. Prayer
3. Presentation: Prayer
4. Break - allows for informal discussion among the parents/guardians
5. Presentation:
Other suggested topics:
 Social Implications of Eucharist
 Ritual Changes in Eucharist
6. Question and Answer Period
7. Prayer
8. Departure

*PENANCE
AND
RECONCILIATION*

-During his public life Jesus not only forgave sins but also made plain the effect of this forgiveness: he reintegrated forgiven sinners into the community of the People of God from which sin had alienated or even excluded them.'

Luke 15, 19:9; Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1444

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

INTRODUCTION

"We are incorporated into Christ's body, the Church, through the Sacraments of Initiation. When we have been weakened by sin or sickness, we are healed and strengthened within that body through the sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick." i The sacrament of Reconciliation celebrates the penitent's first reception of the sacrament and later a return to the eternally merciful Father, renewing his/her union with God-and also With the community. "The sacrament brings about a true spiritual resurrection, restoration of the dignity and blessings of the life of the children of God, of which the most precious is friendship with God.""

As children reach the age of reason, the Church extends to them an invitation to join with the parish community in the celebration of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Initiated into the Christian community at Baptism, the children are now called to prepare for the sacrament of God's loving -mercy.

"The sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, including individual and complete confession and absolution, remains the ordinary way of reconciling the faithful with God and with the Church." iii "Frequent participation in this sacrament, even though one has not committed a serious sin, is a highly desirable way of celebrating ongoing conversion and making progress in holiness." 1v

PASTORAL RESPONSIBIELITY

According to the Code of Canon Law, No. 914, sacramental confession before First Eucharist is normative.

Formation for the celebration of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation involves the cooperative efforts of parents, pastors, catechists, and the children. The candidate should be prepared in such a way that the ritual celebration is more than a memorized experience. It should be a joy-filled celebration.

Each parish must provide a program for the parent/guardian to aid in developing an adult understanding of the sacrament. Through these sessions, the parent/guardian will explore the sacrament and what it celebrates. The sessions will invite the parent/guardian to look at one's personal faith and a renewed celebration of the sacrament. How to converse with a child regarding the concepts of forgiveness and God's mercy will be discussed.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Systematic parish or school religious education programs bear significant responsibility for providing catechesis for the sacrament of Reconciliation. However, family experiences of reconciliation and forgiveness, as well as parental attitudes and participation in the sacrament of Reconciliation, reflect the important role of the family.v Reconciliation in the home can be a model for a child. Within the family, the child can gain the experience, trust and strength to recognize sins and shortcomings, to acknowledge them, and to grow beyond them into a fuller response to the Gospel and a deeper participation in the love and life of God.

PARISH COMMUNITY

By the example and quality of faith and by the sacramental celebration, the entire faith community teaches the child about the Christian life and its sacramental expression in the parish. The community participates in the child's preparation by offering prayer and support.

CATECHESIS

Appropriate catechesis should include the mystery of reconciliation vi, the meaning of sin vii, the rites, formation through prayer, scripture and moral development. It should enable each person to approach the sacrament with proper dispositions: sincerity of heart and personal desire for reconciliation viii

Catechesis for the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is an on-going process in a child's life. As a child matures and faces new situations and questions, it is hoped that the understanding of the sacrament may mature.

"Catechesis for the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is to precede First Communion and must be kept distinct by a clear and unhurried separation. This is to be done so that the specific identity of the sacrament is apparent and so that, before receiving First Communion, the child will be familiar ix with the Rite of Reconciliation and will be at ease with the reception of the sacrament."

"The catechesis for a child must always respect the natural disposition, ability, age, and circumstances of the child. It seeks to, 1) make clear the relationship of the sacrament to the child's life; 2) help the child recognize moral good and evil, repent of wrongdoing, and turn for forgiveness to Christ and the Church; 3) encourage the child to see that, in this sacrament, faith is expressed by being forgiven and forgiving; 4) encourage the child to approach the sacrament freely and regularly. "x

The parent/guardian should participate in sessions to aid in developing an adult understanding of the sacrament. Through these sessions, the parent/guardian will explore the sacrament and what it celebrates and will be invited to a maturing of personal faith.

I

A child is ready to celebrate the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation when the following awareness and abilities can be found, to a degree, appropriate to the child's age. The Code of Canon Law outlines basic principles which must be considered in determining the appropriate time of celebration of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation in relation to First Eucharist:

- a. an awareness of the relationship of love that they have with God and neighbor;
- b. a knowledge that they can harm this relationship with God and neighbor through sin;
- c. sorrow for one's sins and expressing that sorrow;
- d. the realization that one must change sinful ways;
- e. an understanding that the sacrament is a special sign of God's forgiveness and/or reconciliation with one's neighbor;
- f. a desire to receive the sacrament;
- g. talking to the priest about the wrongs done in words and manner appropriate to one's age.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

The systematic catechetical program in the parish or school has significant responsibility for providing the child with a basic understanding of the meaning and rites of the sacrament. Preparation for the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation takes place in the regularly scheduled sessions of the parish religious education program as determined by the pastor and DRE/CRE and Catholic school religious education program. Those who are responsible for total religious education insure that the child's understanding of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation deepens as he/she matures.

SPECIAL SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION PROGRAM

This program is distinct from the sacramental preparation program in the parish or school religious education program. The special preparation program considers in depth the participant's relationship with the Lord, relationship with the community, an exploration of the rite and the ritual of the sacrament. The children continue their involvement in the parish or school religious education program and participate with their families in the parish community and liturgical services.

CATECHESIS AND RECEPTION: PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The following are adaptations and/or considerations regarding the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation for persons with disabilities.

If the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is requested for persons with disabilities, family members have likely recognized expressions of sorrow and seeking forgiveness in the home, and see a need for a sacramental reconciliation. If in doubt about how to communicate, ask the advice of a family member.

The students enrolled in Diocesan Special Learning Centers are instructed in their educational setting. Students attending other schools (also adults) should seek instruction at their own parish. Parental involvement is strongly encouraged and recommended.

The reception of the sacrament occurs when the parent/guardian and catechist deems that the student or adult is ready. The place where the sacrament is received is usually the parish of residence. Exceptions to this can be made when the needs of the student require it. These exceptions must be approved by the pastor.

The Diocesan Special Learning Centers provide on-going religious instruction for students. Parent/guardian(s) of students not in these programs are encouraged to continue religious education in their home parish.

CELEBRATION

Following a program of preparation a child is welcomed into the celebration of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. The celebration of the sacrament should be adapted to the needs and age level of the child and be in accord with the spirit and pastoral theology reflected in the rites of reconciliation.

The family is encouraged to support the child by participation in the preparation and celebration of the sacrament. The parent/guardian is encouraged to receive the sacrament during the First Penance service. This is a strong witness to the child of the importance of the sacrament. Continued celebration of the sacrament by adults also strengthens this witness.

ON-GOING SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Because continuing, life-long conversion is an essential element of what it means to grow in faith, catechesis for the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation must be on-going. Children are given on-going catechesis developmentally in their religious education sessions, school and parish programs. This should include an understanding of sin, redemption, reconciliation, God's healing love.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

MODELS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

CATECHESIS AND RECEPTION: SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL/PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

MODEL

All candidates from each parish within the consolidation (Parish Religious Education Program and Catholic School Program) are prepared through a consolidated program which includes: a. catechetical instruction received in the Catholic school program or in the parish religious education program; b. a joint parent/guardian catechetical program helping them grow in understanding and appreciating the sacrament and participating readily in catechizing their children. The location of the program rotates among the parishes; C. the celebration of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is held at the individual parishes.

PARENT/GUARDIAN MEETING - ONE SESSION MODEL

The formation process provides parent/guardians with an opportunity to renew their understanding and appreciation of penance and reconciliation theology, symbols and rituals in a setting which models community and adult learning principles.

Purpose:

- 1) To involve the parent/guardian in the sacramental preparation and spiritual development of the child;
- 2) To deepen the knowledge of the parent/guardian to the sacramental life of the Church;
- 3) To renew the commitment of the parent/guardian to the sacramental life of the Church;
- 4) To provide parent/guardian dialogue with priest, director of religious education, principal and catechists.

Agenda:

- 1) Welcome/Introductions
- 2) Prayer
- 3) Presentation:
 - a. the parent/guardian's role in the religious education of the child as essential, not optional;
 - b. background on the sacrament;
- C. the parent/guardian personal reception of the sacraments.
 - 4) Distribution of child's text. This reinforces the parent/guardian's role by receiving the books from them, establishing a link between home and school/parish in the child's mind, and is also a way of knowing the presence of the parent/guardian.

- 5) Break - allows for informal discussion among the parents/guardians
- 6) Question and Answer Period
Parent/guardian could be invited to observe all or certain key classes with the children
- 7) Prayer
- 8) Departure

PARENT/GUARDIAN MEETING - TWO SESSIONS MODEL

Purpose:

- 1 To involve the parent/guardian in the sacramental preparation and spiritual development of the child;
2. To deepen the knowledge of the parent/guardian to the sacramental life of the Church;
- 3.To renew the commitment of the parent/guardian to the sacramental life of the Church;
- 4.To provide parent/guardian dialogue with priest, director of religious education, principal and catechists.

Meeting I Agenda:

- I. Welcome/Introductions
2. Prayer
3. Presentation: History and theology of the sacrament
4. Break - allows for informal discussion among the parents/guardians
5. Brief summary on the program the children will follow:
 - a. number of classes for preparation;
 - b. procedure for preparation;
 - C. what will be expected of the children;
 - d. date and time for the reception of the sacrament;
 - e. explanation of the reception;
 - f. discussion on externals.
- 6.Question and Answer Period
7. Date for next meeting
8. Prayer
9. Departure

Meeting 11 Agenda:

- I .Welcome
- 2.Prayer
- 3.Presentation: Conscience Formation of a Child; parent/guardian response
- 4.Break - allows for informal discussion among the parents/guardians
- 5.Question and Answer Period
- 6.Prayer
- 7.Departure

PARENT/GUARDIAN MEETING - THREE SESSIONS MODEL

Purpose:

1. To involve the parent/guardian in the sacramental preparation and spiritual development of the child;
2. To deepen the knowledge of the parent/guardian to the sacramental life of the Church;
3. To renew the commitment of the parent/guardian to the sacramental life of the Church;
4. To provide parent/guardian dialogue with priest, director of religious education, principal and catechists.

Meeting I Agenda:

I. Welcome/Introduction

2. Prayer

3. Presentation on the Importance of the Role of Parent/Guardian

4. Brief summary on the program the children will follow:

- a. number of classes for preparation;
- b. procedure for preparation;
- c. what will be expected of the children;
- d. date and time for the reception of the sacrament;
- e. explanation of the reception;
- f. input on externals of the reception (what children wear) Remind parent/guardian that externals should not ever-shadow the real meaning of the reception of the sacrament.

5. Presentation on some aspect of the sacrament: history, conversion, etc.

6. Group Sharing

7. Questions and Answers

8. Prayer

9. Departure

Meeting H Agenda:

1. Welcome

2. Prayer

3. Presentation: Conscience Formation (optional: Video or filmstrip)

4. Break - allows for informal discussion among the parents/guardians

5. Questions and Answers

6. Prayer

7. Departure

Meeting III Agenda:

1. Welcome

2. Prayer

3. Presentation: Suggested topics - sin in the world, social justice, our role as Christians and other pertinent topics.

4. Questions and Answers

5. Prayer
6. Departure

PARENT/GUARDIAN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – MODEL

What do you understand as the meaning of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation?

What is your experience of the sacrament?

What is sin?

How does your family experience and express forgiveness?

What can you do for your child toward forming correct conscience?

How can you help your child to get a correct and lasting concept of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation?