SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

GUIDELINES

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SASKATOON
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The Guidelines for Sacramental Preparation have been developed to provide Pastors, Pastoral Associates and Catechists in the Diocese of Saskatoon with a framework for preparing children and youth for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Eucharist.

Preparing for the sacraments is an occasion for evangelization and an opportunity to share the joy of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Office of Evangelization & Catechesis exists to provide support, resources and training to parish leadership in the delivery of catechetical and initiation processes that are deeply informed by the New Evangelization.

The General Directory for Catechesis (GDC) tells us:

“The Christian community has received the gospel and the community is responsible to understand it, celebrate it, live it, and communicate it to the world.” (105)

Families, parishes and Catholic Schools each have a specific role in preparing children and youth for the sacraments:

**PARENTS**

Parents as the primary teachers of faith for their children; it is strongly recommended that parents attend sessions with their child.

**PARISHES**

Parishes as the church community where sacraments are celebrated and lived.

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

Catholic schools as a special venue for religious formation and education.

The Office of Evangelization & Catechesis is committed to assisting those involved in Sacramental Preparation to:

- provide an experience that will help children, families and parishes to grow in their faith
- ensure that sacraments are pivotal life changing events for all Catholics
- encourage missionary discipleship

QUESTIONS? Call Marilyn Jackson 306-659-5836, mjackson@rcdos.ca

“The Christian community has received the gospel and the community is responsible to understand it, celebrate it, live it, and communicate it to the world.”
In the Diocese of Saskatoon, the Sacraments of Initiation currently are celebrated according to the “restored order” of:

- Baptism
- Confirmation
- Eucharist

This means that children who are baptized as infants usually celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation at the same celebration that they receive First Eucharist, usually around the age of 7 or 8 years. Part of the preparation for Confirmation and First Eucharist includes preparing for and celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation (first Confession).

- For older children who have not been baptized, recommended preparation is the RCIA process adapted for children. Please call the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis for more information
- For older children who have been baptized and wish to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist, special consideration should be given to determine how they can best be accommodated. It is important to be sensitive to the unique dynamics of all families.

For a complete list of Frequently Asked Questions about the Restored Order of Initiation, please visit our website at:

Sacramental Preparation takes place in the parish where the family worships. When children attend a Catholic school whose associated parish is different than the family’s place of worship, the family’s parish is responsible for preparing the child.

An information session can be conducted before families register their child in the preparation process. The information session has the following aims:

- Empower and encourage parents to be the primary educators in the faith of their child
- Illustrate for parents the different ways they can be authentic faith witnesses
- Describe the basics of the sacrament to parents and sponsors
- Explain the process of preparing children for the sacraments
- Outline what is expected from the family and sponsor
- Explain the roles and responsibilities of the parents, the parish and the Catholic school

Consider holding more than one information session to ensure that you are reaching all parents

Consider advertising the information sessions in:

**THE PARISH**
- Parish Website
- Parish Bulletin

**THE SCHOOL**
- School Website
- School Newspaper

**THE COMMUNITY**
- Local or Community newspaper
- Community bulletin boards

“The family is, so to speak, the domestic church. In it parents should by their word and example, be the first preachers of the faith to their children.”

-Second Vatican Council,
  Lumen Gentium, 11
Welcoming Mass

A welcoming Mass is a good way to begin the formal sacramental preparation process and is an opportunity for:

- Children to be introduced to the church community
- Children to receive a blessing from the Priest
- Parish community to offer support and prayers for the children and their families
- Fellowship and welcoming following Mass

Faith Formation

*Faith Formation* includes religious education through Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and for parishes who are not associated with a Catholic School, catechism classes held in the parish for Kindergarten and up.

*Sacramental Preparation* is done in the parish and may include:

- 4-6 sessions for Reconciliation, 4-6 sessions for Eucharist and 4-6 sessions for Confirmation
- Resources to be used at home
- Resource material to be used in the sessions
- Retreat
- A teaching Mass

*See Recommended Resources for Sacramental Preparation (Appendix A)*

Catechesis

We recognize the great responsibility placed upon Catechists who prepare children and families to receive the sacraments and we want to offer support and resources. We want to ensure that Catechists in our Diocese feel equipped and supported in their call to sow the seeds of faith in their students.

Catechesis has many dimensions. To help Catechists in imparting thorough, life-giving catechesis, the General Directory for Catechesis lists six fundamental tasks of catechesis. All six tasks should be considered in the preparation of children to receive the sacraments:

**Promoting knowledge of the faith**

- Introducing and deepening knowledge of Scripture and tradition to help families grasp the truth concerning God’s saving plan in Jesus Christ
- Children will learn the symbols of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist; will recognize the Bible as the Word of God; appreciate being actively involved in a gathering

*cont...*
Liturgical Education
- Taking part in and understanding the Liturgy of the Church and the sacraments
- Children will learn to see the Church as the place of liturgy; appreciate the sacred meaning of symbols

Moral formation
- Demonstrating how to walk in the footsteps of Christ through a life of conversion in accordance with the teaching of the Beatitudes
- Children will learn what the Bible says and how to apply it to personal life; appreciate God’s forgiveness and know what sin means

Formation In Prayer
- Experiencing contemplation and prayer, adoration, praise and thanksgiving
- Children will learn prayers as well as responses at Mass

Education For Community Life
- Engaging with society through modelling simplicity, humility, caring for the poor, working together, ecumenical openness
- Children will experience being part of a community gathering

Missionary initiation
- Forming Christian witnesses to bring the Gospel message to the world
- Children will learn the importance of the Word; appreciate their role in contributing to gathering at Mass

The General Directory for Catechesis (GDC) was offered to our universal Church in 1997 to guide the ministry of evangelization and catechesis into the 21st century
“According to their respective roles in the Church, both pastors of souls and the other members of Christ’s faithful have a duty to ensure that those who ask for the sacraments are prepared for their reception. This should be done through proper evangelisation and catechetical instruction…”

Passing on the Faith

- The six fundamental tasks are universal. The implementation can be adapted to suit the culture, demographics and circumstances of the children being catechised.
- Catechesis must be age appropriate, welcoming and motivating
- Jesus Christ is the teacher; catechists are his disciples leading children to a deeper relationship and intimacy with Him
- The role of the Catechist is that of a facilitator
- The Holy Spirit is our Helper – call on Him!
- The most powerful way catechists sow the seeds of faith is by being authentic living witnesses of their own faith and sharing stories about their personal relationship with Jesus and how he is working in their lives.

“§2. According to their respective roles in the Church, both pastors of souls and the other members of Christ’s faithful have a duty to ensure that those who ask for the sacraments are prepared for their reception. This should be done through proper evangelisation and catechetical instruction…”

(Canon Law 843)

- Programs should assist the faithful in preparing to receive the sacraments fruitfully.
- Care should be taken to ensure that programs are accessible to all.
The Office of Evangelization & Catechesis can provide parishes with:
- programming recommendations
- practical tools and ideas
- spiritual support and prayers
- training and workshops

Training and Faith Formation Workshops

Workshops are offered three times per year in the fall, winter, and spring. Please call at least four weeks in advance to book sessions in your parish. Whenever possible, workshops will be held in a central location in a deanery. Every effort will be made to ensure that every parish will have the opportunity to take part in a workshop.

FALL WORKSHOP
practical, fun, hands-on sessions; catechists will take home one or two tools that are classroom ready and a tool kit full of easy to implement ideas.

WINTER WORKSHOP
focused on your personal formation and deepening your faith; catechists will have the opportunity for reflection on the Word and our Baptismal call to be disciples of Christ.

SPRING WORKSHOP
evaluation and planning exercises; catechists will learn effective evaluation processes that will aid in planning sessions, learn new ways to engage children and families.

Catechists are welcome to participate in all three workshops and required to take part in at least one.
First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation
(in restored order)

Kit for Leading Parent-Child Sessions. This eResource product includes six sessions of preparation for First Eucharist, six sessions for Reconciliation and four sessions for Confirmation, as well as a parent retreat and parent-child final retreat/rehearsal. It is designed to coach parents alongside their children, utilizes effective handouts, explicitly brings the faith home, and helps children and parents enter into deeper relationship with Christ.

For information on how to order Growing Up Catholic, please visit http://www.growingupcatholic.com/sacrament-prep-sessions.html

The following resources can be ordered through Universal Church Supplies, 437 2nd Ave N, Saskatoon SK S7K 2C1  306-384-1924  www.ucssask.com

Fun Activities Help Children Learn Profound Truths About God’s Infinite Mercy and Love

Designed for use in the classroom or at home, Making Things Right & Called To His Supper Revised are the perfect way to help children prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation & First Eucharist. Here is catechesis at its finest as, page after page, ideas and activities engage children and reinforce lessons presented by a parent or catechist and is consistent with the “Catechism of the Catholic Church.”

Journey of Faith for Children introduces children to the Catholic faith in a way that’s easy for them to understand, using an engaging pastoral approach. Based on the ever-popular and long-running adult Christian initiation program from Liguori Publications, Journey of Faith for Children provides a solid catechetical foundation. The warm and engaging style of the Redemptorists speaks to children about faith topics in a way that starts them on a lifelong journey of knowing and loving Jesus.

The ever-popular and long-running RCIA program, Journey of Faith for Teens, has a fresh, new look and expanded leader materials. Written in the engaging, pastoral style of the Redemptorists, Journey of Faith speaks more clearly to teens where they are in their faith journey and offer more integration with their daily life. New content more fully addresses relevant life issues, faith topics, and questions in a catechetical approach to RCIA.

With world-class animation, workbooks that are works of art and catechist friendly leader guides, First Communion and First Reconciliation prep meets children where they are and leads them, step-by-step, to where God is calling them to be.
The following resources, distributed by Novalis, can be ordered through the Office of Evangelization & Catechesis. Please call the office 306-659-5836 to inquire about bulk discounts.

This newly revised edition of the On Our Way With Jesus series, complete with short, thought-provoking, colourful sidebars invites children, parents, and catechists to enter the mysteries of faith more deeply, to pray more often, and to experience the sacraments of Eucharist and reconciliation more fully as joy-filled encounters with Jesus Christ.

Written, edited, and revised by the most respected catechists in Canada and the United States We Share in the Eucharist and We Prepare for Reconciliation are essential resources to prepare children for the sacraments.

Digital supplemental resources coming soon!

Confirmation preparation for young children, ages 6-8. In Come, Spirit of God! the sacraments are understood as revealing the action of God in our lives.

- uniquely addresses the question about the appropriate age for Confirmation
- is experientially based and ritually centred
- has strong catechesis orientation
- features a user-friendly Leader’s Guide to provide catechists with all the tools for success
- connects young Catholics and their families to their local parish
- offers easy faith-enriching activities for busy families to do.

A popular resource that offers programs for parents and sacramental preparation leaders. Come Join Us at the Table emphasizes parental involvement as Catholic children prepare for Confirmation and First Communion. The entire family is encouraged to learn, share, play and pray together.

Come Join Us at the Table provides a process that respects the children and their families and links their life experience with the story of Jesus. Parents are able to deepen their understanding of sacramental and liturgical language as they follow the rhythm of the liturgical seasons. The entire family is able to reach a more integral appreciation of the sacramental experience without ever feeling inadequate.

God’s Gift provides a flexible and adaptable program, employing the same structure and pedagogy as the primary edition which helps children and catechists make a seamless transition.

**God’s Gift: Reconciliation and Eucharist** offers powerful, meaningful lessons to help children and their parents understand, prepare for, and celebrate the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Engaging children’s hearts and minds through prayer opportunities, active learning and compelling videos, God’s Gift leads children to a life of faith and discipleship.

**God’s Gift: Confirmation** in the Restored Order helps children grow deeper in their relationship with God and in their love for the Church as they prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation.
Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ is a Religious Education program sponsored by the Catholic Bishops of Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories and developed in collaboration with Catholic educators from across Canada. It is the primary religious education program in Saskatchewan's Catholic schools, replacing the Born of the Spirit series. Grades 1-4 are currently available, and Grade 5 will be available in Fall 2019.

For parishes who are associated with a Catholic School, the following links have been provided by Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools as a way to facilitate the home-school-parish partnership:

**STUDENT/HOME PORTAL**

Universal username and password for all available grades. Access information may be shared with the families in your parish.

http://www.pearsoncanada.ca/school/growinginfaith/student-home/

**Username:** gscs  
**Password:** Student99

- Electronic Student Resource  
- Media by Unit and Type  
- Interactive Activities

**PARISH PORTAL**

Universal username and password for all grades. May be shared with your parish staff.

http://www.pearsoncanada.ca/school/growinginfaith/parish/