

SACRAMENTAL POLICY AND PREPARATION

Preparing children to receive the sacraments of First Eucharist and Reconciliation at Holy Family is a family affair involving the candidates (those preparing to receive a Sacrament), their families and the larger parish community.

This means:

- Sacramental preparation sessions are done outside of and in addition to class time.
- Sacramental preparation is done in collaboration with Family Faith and HFCA.
- Parents are integrally involved in the sacramental life of their child, as teachers and mentors, as well as deepening their own understanding of the Sacraments.
- Some of the components for sacramental preparation occur during our weekend liturgies, involving the larger parish community.



Sacramental policies are set by the Pastor and implemented by those he delegates as catechetical leaders. Careful attention is given so that parish sacramental policy is in concert with:

- Sound sacramental theology
- Canon (Church) Law
- Archdiocesan Policies and Guidelines and best practices in catechesis
- Local traditions and customs

The Catholic Church emphasizes readiness and disposition, not age, in the preparation for and reception of a Sacrament. Readiness involves both a person's capacity to understand the meaning of the Sacrament **and** the commitment that preparation requires. If your family does not have the time to fully participate in the preparation process, we strongly recommend you wait until the time is right. Every year we have children and adults of all ages who prepare for and receive Sacraments. When the time is right for you and your family, we will be here to serve you.

STEPS IN THE PREPARATION PROCESS FOR 1st COMMUNION AT HOLY FAMILY

1. Regular attendance at weekend liturgy.

We cannot stress enough the importance of worshipping together as a family. Participating in the Sunday Eucharist is the best way you can reinforce everything we teach in our Family Faith and in our Academy programs. We know it is difficult. We know that you wonder if it is worth it. It IS worth it; it IS really important. When families worship together, kids learn that *'worship is what we do as a community of faith, that everyone is welcome and that their worship matters. When we teach children that their worship matters, we teach them that they are enough right here and right now as members of the church community.'* (See more at https://www.huffingtonpost.com/jamie-bruesehoff/parents-kids-church_b_3909085.html)

2. Children wishing to receive 1st Reconciliation and 1st Communion must be baptized Catholics (a copy of the Baptismal Certificate will be required).

- **If the child was baptized in a Christian Church that was not Catholic** (i.e. a Lutheran, Episcopalian, etc.), parents must:
 - Obtain and provide verification of the Baptism from the Church in the form of a certificate or letter.

- Enroll in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children** to have the child prepared to make a **Profession of Faith** in the Catholic Church. The RCIC process is designed as a family process. All family members are invited to attend these sessions, but at least one parent is expected to attend the RCIC sessions with their child. For more information please see <https://holyfamilyparish.org/r-c-i-c>.
 - **Children of school age who are not baptized or those in grades 4-9 who wish to complete their preparation for 1st Reconciliation and 1st Eucharist** must:
 - Enroll in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children**. The RCIC process is designed as a family process. All family members are invited to attend these sessions, but at least one parent is expected to attend the RCIC sessions with their child. For more information please see <https://holyfamilyparish.org/r-c-i-c>
3. Those wishing to receive 1st Communion must be a registered parishioner in a Catholic parish (Archdiocesan Policy). Simply attending Mass, being registered at Holy Family Catholic Academy, or having filled out a visitor card does equate to being a registered parishioner. There is a formal process that must be completed.
- Registering at Holy Family is a simple two-step process. For more information contact Sue Geegan, sgeegan@holyfamilyparish.org.
 - If you are registered at a parish other than Holy Family, we will need a letter from that parish to verify it.
 - If you are not sure if you are registered at Holy Family, contact Jean Swenson jswenson@holyfamilyparish.org for verification.
4. Two years of formal religious education are required prior to receiving the Sacrament. This is a recommendation found in both the Chicago Archdiocesan Guidelines and best practices in the field of catechesis.
- If you were enrolled previously in another Catholic School or parish Religious Education program, please provide a letter from that school/program verifying your child's participation/attendance.
 - During the second year, attendance to ALL additional prep sessions is required (outside of Religious Ed classes/ Catholic School).
 - Children with significant gaps in their formal religious education will be assessed on their knowledge and understanding of their faith, which is required by Canon Law, and if necessary asked to do additional study.
- Why?** Religious education, like all educational endeavors, builds upon the mastery of foundational concepts and the development of certain skill sets. When substantive gaps exist in learning, they hampers one's ability to understand new and more complex concepts and develop the skills needed to apply what they learn.*

Disabled and/or developmentally delayed children/teens are encouraged and most welcome to receive the Sacraments. Preparation with these children is adapted to meet their needs and can be done at home in the family unit. The celebration of the sacrament can also be adapted to meet the family's need.

** The **Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIC)** at Holy Family is open to all parishioners who are in need of preparation for these Sacraments and for reception into the Roman Catholic Church. The sacraments of initiation are celebrated during the Easter Season. Whether your family is just entering the church, is returning after time away, have decided as a family to delay a child's sacramental preparation, or any other circumstance you are most welcome at Holy Family.