

First Reconciliation

Immediate preparation for a child's first Reception of Reconciliation (a maximum of 12 hours) helps children to:

- ✠ Acknowledge God's unconditional love for us
- ✠ Turn to Christ and the Church for sacramental forgiveness and reconciliation
- ✠ Recognize the presence of good and evil in the world and their personal capacity for both
- ✠ Recognize their need for forgiveness, not only from parents and others close to them, but from God
- ✠ Understand how to celebrate the Rite of Reconciliation
- ✠ Understand that 'sacramental confession is a means offered children of the Church to obtain pardon for sin, and furthermore that it is even necessary per se if one has fallen into serious sin.' (*General Catechetical Directory*, Addendum #3)
(*National Directory for Catechesis* #36 B – 2)

First Eucharist

Immediate preparation for a child's first Reception of Eucharist (a maximum of 12 hours):

- ✠ Teaches the Eucharist is the living memorial of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of all and the commemoration of his last meal with His disciples.
- ✠ Teaches not only "the truths of faith regarding the Eucharist but also how from First Communion on...they can as full members of Christ's Body take part actively with the People of God in the Eucharist, sharing in the Lord's Table and the community of their brothers and sisters." (*Directory for Masses with Children* #12)
- ✠ Ensures that the baptized have been prepared, according to their capacity, for the Sacrament of Penance prior to their First Communion.
- ✠ Develops in children an understanding of the Father's love, of their participation in the sacrifice of Christ, and of the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- ✠ Teaches that "the Holy Eucharist is the real body and blood of Christ" and that "what appears to be bread and wine are actually his living body."
- ✠ Teaches the difference between the Eucharist and ordinary bread.
- ✠ Teaches the meaning of reception of the Holy Eucharist under both species of bread and wine.
- ✠ Helps them to participate actively and consciously in the Mass.
- ✠ Helps children to receive Christ's Body and Blood in an informed and reverent manner.
(*National Directory for Catechesis* #36 A - 3a)

Confirmation

Immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation (a maximum of between 12 -18 hours to allow for a comprehensive retreat) includes the following:

- ✠ Teaches that Confirmation increases and deepens the grace of baptism, imprinting an indelible character on the soul.
- ✠ Teaches that Confirmation strengthens the baptismal conferral of the Holy Spirit on those confirmed in order to incorporate them more firmly in Christ, strengthen their bond with the Church, associate them more closely with the Church's mission, increase in them the gifts of the Holy Spirit (CCC #1303), and help them bear witness to the Christian faith in words and deeds.
- ✠ Teaches about the role of the Holy Spirit, his gifts and his fruits.
- ✠ Is developmentally appropriate and includes retreat experiences.
- ✠ Includes instruction in the Rite of Confirmation and its basic symbols: the Imposition of hands, the anointing with Sacred Chrism, and the words of the sacramental formula.
- ✠ Ensures that parents and sponsors are involved in the catechetical preparation of the children for Confirmation.
- ✠ Teaches that the bishop is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

(National Directory for Catechesis #36 – A – 2)

The Confirmation Retreat should focus on the above preparation statements only.