

Assisting Parents to Prepare their Children for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist beginning in First Grade

Parishes have already implemented sessions in light of recommendations from Synod V and Canon Law: "Especially at the time of preparation for the reception of a Sacrament, parents should be fully engaged in the renewal of their own understanding of that Sacrament" (Synod V, Diocese of La Crosse, n. 146).

Canon Law 913 #1: For the administration of the Most Holy Eucharist to children, it is required that they have 1) sufficient knowledge, 2) careful preparation, 3) understand the Mystery of Christ according to their capacity and are 4) able to receive the Body of Christ with faith and devotion.

Our Hearts Were Burning within Us is the Bishop's response to the New Evangelization in the area of Adult Faith Formation. The document states that the first major goal of adult catechesis is to help adults develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. (See n. 69)

In this regard, will you consider this formation for parents? Please do what you can.

Year One Suggestions – 1 to 3 sessions with Parents who have children in 1st Grade

1) Careful Preparation – Focus on Sunday Mass Attendance

1st Session: Parents/Child 10-minute meeting with the Priest at the outset of the Preparation

- 1) Get to know the family; Ask the child what prayers he/she knows. Encourage meal, bedtime prayer
- 2) These two years are a very special time in preparing to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. You will want to receive both Sacraments with your child. If you have obstacles may we help you?
- 3) Sunday Mass attendance. You and your child need to gather with the community to worship God and receive Jesus every Sunday. If this isn't possible, Sacraments need to be delayed.
- 4) Call them to a higher level: if they attend Mass every Sunday, then encourage one of the following: meal time prayers, developing a daily habit of prayer, family Rosary – begin with a decade, other family prayer times, adoration etc.
- 5) Give each family a booklet such as *Getting More Out of Confession* and/or *Getting More Out of Your Child's First Communion*. Summarize the importance. Discuss it at next mtg.

2) Sufficient knowledge: Suggested resources 2nd and 3rd sessions:

- *Jesus and the Eucharist Series*: 1. What's Our Story?, DVD with handout diolc.org/eucharist/lead
- *Jesus and the Eucharist Series*: 2. Who is Jesus? DVD with handout diolc.org/eucharist/lead
- *Jesus and the Eucharist Series*: 3. Am I Saved? DVD with handout diolc.org/eucharist/lead
- *Jesus and the Eucharist Series*: 4. Why a Church? DVD with handout diolc.org/eucharist/lead
- Introduce "Going Deeper in Prayer" Initiative: Prayer Card / Resources diolc.org/prayer
- Forgiven: The Transforming Power of Confession DVD's by Augustine Institute / Lighthouse Media

*Presentation materials available from the Office for Catechesis and Evangelization

Year Two Suggestions – 4 sessions with Parents who have children in 2nd Grade

3) Sufficient knowledge: Suggested presentations to parents

- *Jesus and the Eucharist Series: 5. God is With Us* DVD with handout diolc.org/eucharist/lead
- *Jesus and the Eucharist Series: 6. The Story of the Eucharist* DVD with handout diolc.org/eucharist/lead
- *Jesus and the Eucharist Series: 7. Bread for the Journey:* DVD with handout diolc.org/eucharist/lead
- Penance: God's Mercy Revealed - "Symbolon II" DVDs by Edward Sri
- What is Prayer – "Oremus" (Let Us Pray) DVD by Fr. Mark Toups (available for review)

4) Understand the Mystery of Christ according to their capacity (which grows over a lifetime)

Suggested interview with the Priest

Before receiving First Holy Communion, it is suggested that the Priest interview each child with parents present, or if it is better to have the child alone with the priest so that the child is able to be more focused, parents can be within eyesight.

Below is a series of questions to draw from the student the main points of the Bible that are the foundational points regarding the Holy Eucharist:

- 1) God providing manna in the Old Testament – the people could not have survived 40 years in the desert.
- 2) Jesus, God Himself, feeds the people with the multiplication of loaves and fishes – the people could not have made it without being fed.
- 3) Jesus gives His own flesh and blood to us in the Holy Eucharist to feed us spiritually – we cannot survive without the Body and Blood of Christ.

Careful Preparation

Retreat for the children and parents before First Holy Communion: Suggested sessions:

Praying with Scripture using Prayer worksheet on the multiplication of the loaves and fishes (John 6)

The true Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist / why we genuflect

How to prepare our hearts to receive Jesus in Holy Communion*

An appropriate amount of time in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, allowing time for silence

Reverential tour of the Church: sanctuary, tabernacle, stained glass windows, statues, sacristy, holy water, proper dress and reverential attitude toward this holy place

- Signs of Grace – short animated DVDs by Augustine Institute and on FORMED

5) Receiving Jesus with Faith and Devotion

How to prepare for and reverently receive Jesus in Holy Communion and prayer of thanksgiving*

"This is My Body; This is My Blood – Miracles of the Eucharist" DVD (parents only) free rental

*Presentation materials available from the Office for Catechesis and Evangelization