



CATECHETICAL HANDBOOK POLICIES & RESOURCES

GUIDELINES FOR SACRAMENTAL CATECHESIS
FOR THE DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT



OCTOBER 2010





OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIocese OF BRIDGEPORT

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October 1, 2010

Dear friends in the Lord,

The Diocesan Office for Pastoral Services has just completed new Sacramental Guidelines for use in both our parish catechetical programs and our elementary and secondary schools. I ask that they be implemented in all parishes by January 1, 2011.

This letter affords me the opportunity to thank Damien O'Connor, Director of the Office for Pastoral Services; Carol Pinard, Director of Religious Education Programs; the Executive Board of the Catechetical Leaders of the Diocese of Bridgeport (CLDB); Dr. Margaret Dames, Director and Superintendent of Schools; Sr. Mary Grace Walsh, A.S.C.J., Deputy Superintendent; and the Presbyteral Council for their dedicated labors in preparing and reviewing these new guidelines.

These Guidelines are rooted in the teaching and discipline of the Church and reflect the experiences of those involved in pastoral ministry, in evangelization, and catechesis. It is my prayerful hope that these Guidelines will prove to be truly a blessing for the people of God of Fairfield County.

May the Lord abundantly bless all who work to form our young people in the Faith of the Church.

With grateful prayers and best wishes, I remain

Sincerely in Christ,

The Most Reverend William E. Lori
Bishop of Bridgeport

ABBREVIATIONS

CT	Catechesi Tradendae, On Catechesis in Our Time, 1979
C.I.C.	Code of Canon Law
GDC	General Directory for Catechesis, 1997
NDC	National Directory for Catechesis, 2005
RCIA	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, 1972, Appendix III, National Statutes for the Catechumenate
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
	Diocese of Bridgeport Curriculum Guidelines for Grade Level Competencies, 2004

PREAMBLE AND PURPOSE

Preamble

“Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity for it is in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of human beings.” (CT, 23)

This transformation primarily takes place within the family because the Christian family is often the first experience of Christian community. Parents are the most influential first educators who catechize primarily by their witness and participation in prayer and the Eucharist.

It is the responsibility of the parish to strengthen the faith of parents or guardians and to assist them in their roles as the primary educators of their children. “...there exists an intermediate situation where entire groups of the baptized have lost a living sense of the faith, or even consider themselves members of the Church and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel.” (GDC, 58c) Sacramental preparation of the children is a window of opportunity to catechize the parents or guardians, drawing them into ongoing conversion of mind and heart to Jesus Christ.

Conversion, which is a life-long school of faith, following the major stages of life from childhood, young adulthood and parenthood leads to a maturity of mind and heart, from which discipleship expresses this love of God and community. The goal of sacramental preparation, therefore, is to draw members into active participation in the life of the church community and clarify the roles and ministries within the sacred action so that all may experience full, active, and conscious participation in the celebration of the Mass. (NDC, Eucharist, #3, pg 126)

“The Christian community is the origin, locus and goal of catechesis. Proclamation of the Gospel always begins with the Christian community and invites man to conversion and the following of Christ.” (GDC, 254)

“If catechesis is done well, Christians will be eager to bear witness to their faith, to hand it on to their children, to make it known to others, and to serve the human community in every way.” (CT, 24)

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS FOR CANDIDATES IN PARISH AND SCHOOL SETTINGS

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- A.** “Catechesis aims to bring about in the believer an ever more mature faith in Jesus Christ, a deeper knowledge and love of his person and message, and a firm commitment to follow him.... With God’s grace, catechesis develops initial faith, nourishes the Christian life, and continually unfolds the mystery of Christ until the believer willingly becomes his disciple.” (NDC, 19) The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ (CT, 5)
- B.** Catechesis sheds light on the sacraments, but at the same time it receives from the experience of the sacraments a living dimension that keeps it from remaining merely doctrinal, and it communicates to the child the joy of being a witness to Christ in ordinary life. (*Based on* CT, 37)
- C.** Evangelization is a crucial component of the process of sacramental preparation for the person celebrating the sacrament as well as the family, sponsors and godparents. Every moment is an opportunity for evangelization.
- D.** Sacraments bring about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (with cooperation on the part of the individual), and therefore call for, and foster, faith on the part of the individual and the community.
- E.** Family involvement in the child’s preparation for celebration of a sacrament plays an essential role for the child’s faith development. “Family catechesis ...precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis...” (CT, 68)
- F.** Sacramental catechesis is under the direction of the pastor, shared with the parents, DRE, catechists, and in many ways, the entire parish community. “The Parish is also the usual place in which the faith is born and in which it grows. It constitutes, therefore, a very adequate community space for the realization of the ministry of the word at once as teaching, education, and life experience.” (GDC, 257)
- G.** Suitable catechesis is to be given for the celebration of all sacraments. (C.I.C. ,777.1) Readiness with respect to an individual’s natural ability and life circumstances, rather than age or grade level, determines when the celebration of a sacrament ideally takes place, except in the case of infant Baptism.
- H.** Although ongoing sacramental catechesis is included in all religious education programs, a focused and specific proximate preparation is necessary for the reception of the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Holy Eucharist, and Confirmation.
- I.** Phases of Preparation in Sacramental Catechesis have two distinct components:
- Remote Preparation: general sacramental catechesis, which is an intrinsic part of all ongoing education. (Refer to the Diocese of Bridgeport Curriculum Guidelines for grade-level competencies.)
 - Immediate Preparation: catechesis, specific to the sacrament that is to be celebrated, takes place within the same academic year that the sacrament is celebrated and is set apart from the grade-level catechesis.

II. THE CELEBRATION OF A SACRAMENT

“The sacraments of Christian initiation – Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist – lay the foundations of every Christian life... Christian initiation is accomplished by three sacraments together: Baptism which is the beginning of new life; Confirmation which is its strengthening; and the Eucharist which nourishes the disciple with Christ’s Body and Blood for his transformation in Christ.” (CCC, 1212, 1275)

- A. **ALL** sacramental catechesis takes place and is celebrated in the Parish of the person preparing for and receiving the sacrament and is to involve the candidate’s family when feasible and appropriate.
- B. When suitably instructed and properly disposed, the candidate is to be invited to celebrate a sacrament.
- C. A sacrament may be celebrated for a group of candidates or for an individual, as is pastorally appropriate.
- D. The symbols and rituals of a sacrament should be appropriately emphasized so as to highlight the interaction of the sacred and the ordinary life of the Christian where the presence of Christ is revealed.
- E. It is important to invite children with disabilities and their parents into the process and provide appropriate accommodations for them. The Church “must recognize and appreciate the contributions that persons with disabilities can make to the Church’s spiritual life and encourage them to do the Lord’s work in the world according to their God-given talents and capacity.” (NDC, 36,3b-3, Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities, 7)

III. GUIDELINES FOR THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

A. ADULTS

1. The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* is the process to be followed, to the extent possible, in bringing adults to full initiation in the Roman Catholic Church. (C.I.C., 851.1)
2. All Catechumens and Candidates in the Diocese of Bridgeport are urged to attend the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion.
3. The period of Catechumenate should extend for at least one year of formation, instruction, and probation, ideally the period from at least one Easter season to the next. (RCIA, National Statutes for the Catechumenate, Appendix III, #6)
4. “This journey includes not only the periods for making inquiry and for maturing, but also marking the catechumen’s progress, as they pass, so to speak through another doorway or ascend to the next level...”(RCIA,#6) The third period, following the Rite of Election, ordinarily coincides with the Lenten preparation for the Easter celebration and the sacraments of initiation. It is a time of purification and enlightenment and includes the celebration of the rites belonging to this period. (RCIA, # 7)
5. “In order to signify clearly the interrelation or coalescence of the three sacraments which are required for full Christian initiation, (C.I.C. 842.2), adult candidates, including children of catechetical age, are to receive Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist in a single Eucharistic celebration, whether at the Easter Vigil or, if necessary, at some other time.” (RCIA, National Statutes for the Catechumenate, Appendix III,#14)
6. “Because of unusual circumstances and pastoral needs, however, the Rite of Election and the rites belonging to the period of purification and enlightenment may be held outside of Lent and the sacraments of initiation may be celebrated at a time other than the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday. Even when the usual time has otherwise been observed, it is permissible, but only for serious pastoral needs, to choose a day other than the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday, but preferably one (Sunday) during the Easter season, to celebrate the sacraments of initiation; the program of initiation during Lent, however, must be maintained.” (RCIA, #26)
7. “When the time is changed in either way, even though the rite of Christian initiation occurs at a different point in the liturgical year, the structure of the entire rite, with its properly spaced intervals, remains the same.” (RCIA, # 26)

B. CHILDREN

1. Unbaptized children who have reached the age of discretion are considered, for purposes of Christian initiation, to be adults, in accordance with the C.I.C., 852,1. Their formation should follow the general pattern outlined above, with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual. (RCIA, 256) They should receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil, together with the older catechumens. (RCIA, National Statutes for the Catechumenate, Appendix III, #18)

2. Such children...”seek Christian initiation either at the direction of their parents or guardians or, with parental permission, on their own initiative. Such children are capable of receiving and nurturing a personal faith and of recognizing an obligation in conscience. ...but they cannot yet be treated as adults because, at this stage of their lives, they are dependent on their parents or guardians and are still strongly influenced by their companions and their social surroundings.” (RCIA, # 252)
3. “...the process of initiation thus must be adapted both to their spiritual progress, that is, to the children’s growth in faith, and to the catechetical instruction they receive. Accordingly, as with adults, their initiation is to be extended over several years, if need be, before they receive the sacraments...corresponding to the periods of adult initiation are the periods of the children’s catechetical formation that lead up to and follow the steps of their initiation.” (RCIA, # 253)
4. “For the celebrations proper to this form of Christian initiation, it is advantageous, as circumstances allow, to form a group of several children who are in this same situation, (baptized/ uncatechized children seeking Eucharist and/or Confirmation outside the general age of reception) in order that by example they may help one another in their progress as catechumens.” (RCIA,#254, 255)
5. It is generally preferable to celebrate the rites during the process of initiation with a represented parish community that “consists of a suitable number of the faithful, the parents, family, members of the catechetical group, and a few adult friends.” (RCIA, # 257)
6. “In regard to the time for the celebration of the steps of initiation, it is preferable that, if possible, the final period of preparation, begun by the second step, the penitential rites coincide with Lent and that the final step, celebration of the sacraments of initiation, take place at the Easter Vigil. Nevertheless before the children are admitted to the sacraments at Easter, it should be established that they are ready for the sacraments. Celebration at this time must also be consistent with the program of catechetical instruction they are receiving, since the candidates should, if possible, come to the sacraments of initiation at the time that their baptized companions are to receive Confirmation or Eucharist. (RCIA, # 256)
7. “Because of unusual circumstances and pastoral needs, however, the Rite of Election and the rites belonging to the period of purification and enlightenment may be held outside of Lent and the sacraments of initiation may be celebrated at a time other than the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday. Even when the usual time has otherwise been observed, it is permissible, but only for serious pastoral needs, to choose a day other than the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday, but preferably one during the Easter season, to celebrate the sacraments of initiation; the program of initiation during Lent, however, must be maintained. (RCIA, # 26)
8. “When the time is changed in either way, even though the rite of Christian initiation occurs at a different point in the liturgical year, the structure of the entire rite, with its properly spaced intervals, remains the same.” (RCIA, # 26)

C. INFANTS

1. Catechesis for infant Baptism is directed primarily to the parents or guardians and sponsors (godparents) of those who are to be baptized. (C.I.C., 851,2) “All those preparing for the Baptism, including parents and godparents, need the prayerful support and apostolic witness of the people of the local community of faith – the parish. This preparation is an especially important opportunity for the Church to encourage the parents and godparents of infants to reexamine the meaning of the Christian message in their own lives.” (NDC, 120)
2. Parents or guardians have a critically important role in preparing for Baptism and are to be assisted through a minimum of three formational sessions: one on the sacraments in general, and two on the sacrament of Baptism in particular.
3. Parishes are to provide immediate preparation programs for the sacrament of Baptism in which parents or guardians and sponsors are expected to participate.
4. Parents or guardians and sponsors of an infant are to be properly instructed on the meaning of the sacrament and the obligations attached to it. (C.I.C., 851,2)
5. For an infant to be baptized licitly:
 - a. At least one parent or guardian must consent
 - b. There must be a founded hope that the child will be brought up in the Catholic religion, and if such hope is lacking, the Baptism is to be delayed according to the precepts of particular law after the parents or guardians have been advised about the reason. (C.I.C., 868.2; NDC, 121)

D. SPONSORS/ GODPARENTS

1. To be admitted to the role of sponsor, a person must:
 - Be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or guardians or, in their absence, by the pastor or minister and is to have the qualifications and intention of performing this role;
 - Have completed their sixteenth year, unless a different age has been established by the diocesan bishop or it seems to the pastor that an exception is to be made for a just cause;
 - Be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the sacrament of the Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken. This includes attending Sunday Mass and receiving the sacraments.
 - Sponsorship forms must be presented and signed by the Parish in which the Sponsor/Godparent is registered.
 - Not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized. (C.I.C., 874,1)
2. The responsibility of the sponsor, as a role model, is to show the candidate how to practice the Gospel in personal and social life, to sustain the candidate in moments of hesitancy and anxiety, to bear witness and to guide the candidate’s progress in Baptismal life. (RCIA, 10,11)

E. CURRICULUM

Curriculum for the preparation for the sacraments should adhere to the curriculum guidelines of the NDC, 2005 (cf. appendix A) and the Diocese of Bridgeport Curriculum Guidelines for Grade Level Competencies, 2004.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

- A.** Every baptized child is to be prepared for and encouraged to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Catechesis for children must always respect their natural disposition, ability, age and circumstances. Since the family is intimately involved with the formation of a child's moral conscience, parents or guardians should be involved so that they can affirm and reinforce frequent participation in the sacrament and orient the child toward God and encourage continual growth in understanding of God's mercy and love. (NDC, 135)
- B.** Children must receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time before their first reception of the Eucharist. Since conversion is a life-long process, catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is ongoing. (NDC,135)
- C.** Before entering into the immediate preparation for Reconciliation, a child is to have completed one full year in a catechetical program and be currently enrolled in the second year of the regular catechetical program.
- D.** Since the celebration of Reconciliation precedes First Communion, catechesis for the sacrament must be kept distinct by a clear and unhurried separation so that the specific identity of each sacrament is apparent. (NDC, 135)
- E.** The immediate preparation for First Reconciliation is to be a parish program of at least six hours apart from and in addition to the regular ongoing parish or school catechetical program.
 - 1.** The immediate preparation program enriches the catechesis given in the regular classes by offering a deeper understanding of the person of Jesus and the Gospel message of forgiveness, knowledge of sin and its effect, and an understanding and experience of sorrow, forgiveness and conversion.
 - 2.** The child should be familiar with the revised Rite of Reconciliation and be at ease with the reception of the sacrament. (NDC, 135)
- F.** Curriculum for the reception of the sacrament must adhere to the curriculum guidelines of the NDC, 2005 and the Diocese of Bridgeport Curriculum Guidelines for Grade Level Competencies, 2004.
- G.** Parents or guardian and the parish catechetical leader together with the pastor are responsible for determining when children are ready to receive First Reconciliation.
- H.** Parents or guardians have a critically important role in preparing their children for reconciliation and are to be assisted through a minimum of three formational sessions: one on the sacraments in general, and two on the sacrament of reconciliation in particular. However, the sacrament may not be automatically denied if such participation is not achieved.
- I.** The child's first experience of sacramental Reconciliation and its celebration should be as meaningful and positive as possible.
- J.** Children have the right to celebrate Reconciliation face to face or anonymously and are free to choose their own confessor whenever this is possible.
- K.** A child sufficiently prepared is to be invited, not coerced, to celebrate the sacrament.
- L.** It is often pastorally opportune to offer the sacrament of Reconciliation to parents at the time of their children's First Reconciliation. This both creates an opportunity for parents to offer a good example to their children and provide an

opportunity for those who perhaps have been away from the sacrament to reconnect with the sacramental life of the Church.

V. GUIDELINES FOR THE FIRST RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST

- A.** As baptized children reach the use of reason, they are ready to be properly prepared to celebrate the reception of First Eucharist. (C.I.C., 914)
- B.** A copy of the child's Baptismal certificate is to be obtained as part of the record keeping process.
- C.** Before entering into the immediate preparation for First Eucharist, a child is to have completed one full year in a catechetical program and be currently enrolled in the second year of the regular catechetical program.
- D.** The immediate preparation for First Eucharist is to be a parish program of at least six hours apart from and in addition to the regular ongoing parish or school catechetical program.
 - 1.** The immediate preparation program enriches the catechesis given in the regular classes by offering a deeper understanding of the meaning of the sacrament, its liturgy and its symbols, and the significance of the sacrament for one's daily life in relationship with God and the Church.
 - 2.** Immediate preparation can be accomplished through such means as: retreat day, workshops, liturgical celebrations, focus on various symbols of the sacraments such as bread and wine, teaching the basic meaning and structure of the Mass, etc.
- E.** Curriculum for the reception of the sacrament should adhere to the curriculum guidelines of the NDC, 2005 and the Diocese of Bridgeport Curriculum Guidelines for Grade Level Competencies, 2004.
- F.** Catechesis for First Eucharist is to be separate and distinct from the catechesis for Reconciliation so that the specific identity and value of each sacrament is clearly understood. (NDC, 120)
- G.** Reception of the Sacrament of First Eucharist requires that the child have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so that they understand the mystery of Christ and are able to receive the Body and Blood of Christ with faith and devotion. (C.I.C., 913)
 - 1.** The child is to have a desire for the sacrament.
 - 2.** The child is to be able to distinguish the Eucharist from ordinary bread and wine.
 - 3.** The child is to know who Jesus is and be aware of the principal events in His life, especially His death and resurrection.
- H.** The reception is to be preceded by sacramental Reconciliation except in unusual circumstances. (NDC, 122)
- I.** Parents or guardians have a critically important role in preparing their children for Eucharist and are to be assisted through a minimum of three formational sessions: one on the sacraments in general, and two on the sacrament of Eucharist in particular.
- J.** Families are expected to participate in the Sunday celebration of the Mass weekly. Children who participate with their family in the Mass experience the Eucharistic mystery and gradually learn to join with the liturgical assembly in prayer.
- K.** Parents or guardians and catechetical leader or catechist, together with the pastor, are responsible for determining when children have attained the age of reason and are ready to receive First Communion. (C.I.C., 914)

- L. The preparation and celebration of Eucharist is to take place in the candidate's own parish and is to include children who have prepared together whether attending parochial, private or public schools.
- M. A general parish celebration of First Eucharist is encouraged, although options may include smaller groups or a family celebration during a regularly scheduled parish Mass.
- N. First Eucharist is to be recorded in the church records where the sacrament is received.

VI. GUIDELINES FOR THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

- A. All baptized persons, having received the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, who have not been confirmed and have reached the age of discretion may celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation when they have been suitably instructed, properly disposed and able to renew the Baptismal promises (C.I.C., 889-891)
- B. A copy of the child's Baptismal certificate is to be obtained as part of the record keeping process.
- C. A person is to be enrolled in an ongoing parish or school catechetical program for at least two years immediately before entering into the Confirmation preparation program. The child should have satisfactorily achieved competency of Diocesan Curriculum and Guidelines of the child's grade level and according to the child's ability.
- D. The immediate preparation for Confirmation is to be a parish program of at least six hours apart from and in addition to the regular ongoing parish or school catechetical program.
- E. Parents or guardians have a critically important role in preparing their children for Confirmation and are to be assisted through a minimum of three formational sessions: one on the sacraments in general, and two on the sacrament of Confirmation in particular.
- F. Regular Mass attendance is the right and responsibility of the child, having reached the age of discretion and should be guided by the Parent or Guardian.
- G. The preparation and celebration of Confirmation is to take place in the candidate's own parish and is to include children who have prepared together whether attending parochial, private or public schools. (cf. pg 4, II.,2A)
- H. It is highly recommended that the parish provide a retreat experience for the candidates.
- I. The decision as to the readiness of those to be confirmed is normally determined by the pastor along with the DRE/ parish catechetical staff in consultation with the candidates and their parents or guardian.
- J. The right of the candidate to delay the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is to be respected, and when appropriate, pastoral counseling is to be made available to the candidate.
- K. Normally Confirmation is to be celebrated within a Eucharistic liturgy in order to express more clearly its intimate connection with the other sacraments of initiation.
- L. Confirmation is to be received in the state of grace and should be preceded by reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. (GDC, 912-914)
- M. The liturgical directives as posted on the Diocesan website are to be observed in the celebration of the sacrament.
- N. The requirements for Confirmation sponsors are the same as for Baptism (cf. Baptismal Guidelines, Sponsors/Godparents, D; 1, 2) It is desirable, however, that the candidate's godparent should be a sponsor for Confirmation. (C.I.C., 893,2)

- O. The reception of Confirmation is to occur by the 9th Grade, but no later than the fall of 10th Grade for those parishes holding Confirmation every other year (approved by the Diocese, 1/7/91, on the recommendation of the Presbyteral Council).
- P. The parish is to invite the newly confirmed to participate more fully in the life of the community and its ministries, i.e., youth group, bible study, lector, greeter, etc.
- Q. Curriculum for the preparation of the sacrament should adhere to the curriculum guidelines of the NDC, 2005 and the Diocese of Bridgeport Curriculum Guidelines for Grade Level Competencies, 2004.
- R. Confirmation is to be recorded in the church records where the sacrament is received. A letter of notice to the parish of Baptism is also required.

Appendix A

National Directory for Catechesis (NDC), 2005

B. General Principles for Sacramental Catechesis

Some fundamental principles apply to catechesis for each of the sacraments. Dioceses and parishes should present sacramental catechesis that:

- Is a comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith, one that integrates knowledge of the faith with living the faith
- Is fundamentally Trinitarian and centers on initiation into the life of the Triune God
- Presents Christian life as a lifelong journey to the Father in the Son and through the Holy Spirit
- Is appropriate to the age level, maturity, and circumstances of those being catechized
- Is intended for all members of the Christian community, takes place within the community, and involves the whole community of faith
- Involves parents in the preparation of their children for the sacraments
- Is integrated into a comprehensive catechetical program
- Focuses primarily on the symbols, rituals, and prayers contained in the rite for each sacrament
- Enables the believer to reflect on the meaning of the sacrament received by implementing a thorough experience of mystagogia following the celebration

Diocese of Bridgeport Curriculum Guidelines for Grade Level Competencies

- **Must be followed as well as the curriculum from the NDC, 2005.**

Curriculum for the preparation of the sacrament of Baptism should include: (NDC, 2005)

- Teaches that Baptism (1) is the foundation of the Christian life because it is the journey into Christ's death and Resurrection, which is the foundation of our hope; (2) gives sanctifying grace, that is, God's life; (3) gives them a new birth in which they become children of God, members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit; (4) cleanses people from original sin and from all personal sins; (5) incorporates them into the life, practices, and mission of the Church; and (6) imprints on their souls an indelible character that consecrates them for Christian worship and is necessary for salvation in the case of all those who have heard the Gospel and have been able to ask for this sacrament. (cf., CCC, 1257)
- Teaches that through Baptism we receive a share in the mission of Christ as king, priest and prophet.
- Teaches that Baptism "symbolizes the catechumen's burial into Christ's death, from which he rises up by resurrection with him, as a 'new creature.'" (CCC, 1214)

- Teaches that Baptism is “the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit...and the door which gives access to the other sacraments.” (CCC,1213)
- Teaches that through Baptism the faithful “share in the priesthood of Christ, in his prophetic and royal mission.” (CCC, 1268)
- Teaches that the Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of *justification*” (that is, to cleanse us from our sins and to communicate to us, “the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ,” and through Baptism. (CCC, 1987)
 - “enabling them to believe in God, to hope in Him, and to love Him through the theological virtues”
 - “giving them the power to live and act under the prompting of the Holy Spirit through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.”
 - “allowing them to grow in goodness through the moral virtues” (CCC,1266)
- Teaches that “having become a member of the Church, the person baptized belongs no longer to himself, but to him who died and rose for us. From now on he is called to be subject to others, to serve them in communion of the Church, and to ‘obey and to submit’ to the Church’s leaders, holding them in respect and affection.” (CCC,1269)
- Includes a thorough explanation of the Rite of Baptism together with the fundamental signs and symbols that it employs: immersion in or the pouring of water, the words of the Trinitarian formula, and the anointing with oil.
- Teaches that the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Baptism is a priest or deacon (in the Eastern Catholic Churches the priest is the only ordinary minister of Baptism, since Chrismation follows immediately) but that, in the case of necessity, any person who intends to do what the Church does can baptize by pouring water on the candidate’s head and saying the Trinitarian formula.

Curriculum for the preparation of the sacrament of Reconciliation should include: (NDC, 2005)

- 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.
- Explore the meaning of absolution, the symbols, gestures, prayers, and scriptures of the Rite of Reconciliation.
- Understand how to celebrate the Rite of Reconciliation
- Through the ministry of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, “the priest is the sign and the instrument of God’s merciful love for the sinner” (CCC, 1465)

**Curriculum for the preparation of the sacrament of Holy Eucharist should include:
(NDC, 2005)**

- Teaches that the Eucharist is the living memorial of Christ's sacrifice (death and resurrection) 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.
- 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 appear 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.
- Provide opportunities for children to be catechized and experience Eucharistic Adoration.
- Teach that through the priest, the other Christ, the bread and the wine are transformed through the Eucharistic Prayer into the Body and Blood of Christ.

**Curriculum for the preparation of the sacrament of Confirmation should include:
(NDC, 2005)**

- 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, 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 on 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 (in Eastern Catholic Churches, however, the priest is the ordinary minister of Chrismation.)



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