

Archdiocesan Policies

First Penance and Reconciliation

Sacramental Preparation

Policy 24 Formal instruction for the sacrament of penance and reconciliation must be separate and distinct from the preparation for first communion so that the integrity of each sacrament is maintained. A child receives catechesis on the sacrament of penance and reconciliation before his/her first communion and subsequent catechesis on these sacraments follows in later years.

Procedures:

1. Catechesis precedes the celebration of each sacrament.
2. Subsequent catechesis on these sacraments follows in later years.

Policy 25 Requirements for religious education programs are established by the archdiocese and the parish.

Role of Parent

Policy 26 The parent's right and responsibility to direct the religious formation of their children must be safeguarded and enhanced. For this reason, preparation for the first reception of the sacrament shall involve the parents and provide guidance to them in helping to prepare their children.

Readiness

Policy 27 The decision as to when the child will receive the sacrament of penance and reconciliation is to be made by the child and his or her parents, in consultation with the priest who knows the child and the catechist who has helped prepare the child. In all cases the rights of the child must be respected.

Procedures:

When doubts arise about a child's readiness:

1. After a child has prepared to receive the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, if parents question the readiness of their child to receive the sacrament they are to contact the priest or catechist to discuss their concerns.
2. In those individual cases in which a child chooses not to receive the sacrament of penance and reconciliation under the guidance of his or her parents due to exceptional circumstances, the child shall not be deprived of the right to receive first communion.
3. The child shall be encouraged to receive the sacrament of penance and reconciliation later so that he or she will not be deprived of the sacrament altogether.

Occasion of Celebration

Policy 28 Children shall be offered the opportunity to celebrate the sacrament of penance and reconciliation before their reception of first communion.

Procedure:

1. It is preferable that this be a communal celebration in which parents, other family members and even the larger parish community take part.