**PREPARING CHILDREN & YOUTH FOR SACRAMENTS**

SACRAMENTS ARE A JOINT EFFORT BETWEEN THE PARISH AND THE SCHOOL

* Celebrations are to include all children from various programs together
* Catechists must be fully initiated to teach the classes and give witness to the faith
* A common textbook series if possible is to be used and approved by the Archdiocese of San Francisco
* Program materials that are age appropriate using sound catechetical principles and adopted to each culture and parish
* Take home materials and resources should be supplied for parents/guardians & families
* Parish, Home Schoolers and Catholic School must have joint parent meetings

SACRAMENTS & DETERMINING READINESS

* The child must be in the program and faith life of the community for two years or more for each: Reconciliation, Eucharist, Confirmation
* Parish provides an opportunity for the parish representatives, parents and child to assess readiness within an interview process
* If the child is not ready for the sacrament s/he should not be forced to receive
* A child who wishes to receive the sacrament is not to be refused simply because of age
* First Reconciliation
  + Awareness that God loves them
  + They know right from wrong and our relationship with God & others can be broken through sin
  + They need to be able to put into their own words what they did wrong and try to say why they did it
  + They need to be sorry for what they did wrong
  + They need to want to tell Jesus they are sorry and want to make amends
  + Know a simple Act of Contrition in language they use at home and at church
  + An understanding that the Sacrament of Penance is a special sign of God’s forgiveness
* First Eucharist
  + The candidate must demonstrate an active, regular life of prayer
  + Candidates must participate regularly in Sunday Liturgy
  + Understand the Real Presence & parts of the Mass
  + Participate in faith formation classes on a regular basis
  + Have a desire to receive Jesus in the Eucharist
  + Demonstrate a Christian life of virtue and service
* Confirmation
  + The candidates must be 8th grade or older
  + The candidate must demonstrate an active and regular life of prayer
  + Candidates must participate regularly in Sunday Liturgy and the life of the parish community
  + Understand the role of the Holy Spirit and discipleship in their lives
  + Have a desire to receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and act with them for mission
  + Demonstrate a Christian life of virtue and service
  + Service projects/Acts of Justice are required both as group projects and individuals with theological reflection as integral

SACRAMENTS & THE CELEBRATION

* The child needs to have received Baptism in the Roman Rite and proof needs to be recorded
* The celebration happens within the context of the parish community – not the school
* The Liturgy Committee of the parish should be a vital part of the planning
* The community provides the celebration for those receiving first sacrament therefore the children should not acts as lectors, gift bearers, cantors, etc.
* First Reconciliation
  + Communal celebration with individual Confession
  + The child should be familiar with the confessional setting
  + A simple Act of Contrition in the language the child understands should be used
  + Parents should be invited to receive the sacrament as an example
  + Children should be encouraged to receive the sacrament often
  + No sacramental certificate is given and no permanent records are maintained
  + The Sacrament of Reconciliation must be celebrated before First Eucharist with ample time between the sacraments to distinguish between the two
* First Eucharist
  + First Eucharist does not happen during Lent
  + Registration of the sacrament is made in the parish sacramental registry
  + First Eucharist certificates should be given
* Confirmation
  + The pastor requests the date from the Office of the Archbishop
  + Confirmation does not happen during Lent
  + Registration of the sacrament is made in the parish sacramental registry
  + Confirmation certificates should be given

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS – Adapted for Children

* For all those over the age of 7
* Many rites can be done privately
* Parents must be involved in process and committed to bringing child to Mass and instruction
* Later children should participate with their peers in their respective programs for First Reconciliation, Eucharist (it just won’t be their *first*), and Confirmation (youth receive a blessing at Confirmation Mass and are not reanointed).