

# SACRAMENT PREPARATION GUIDELINES

**Please note: St. Thomas Parish & Diocesan policy require that children preparing to celebrate the Sacraments must be in a Religious Education program at least one full year prior to immediate year of preparation for a Sacrament. (e.g. 1<sup>st</sup> grade + 2<sup>nd</sup> grade = First Holy Communion prep. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade + 4<sup>th</sup> grade = Sacrament of Reconciliation prep. 5<sup>th</sup> grade is Altar Server training. 7<sup>th</sup> grade + 8<sup>th</sup> grade = Confirmation preparation.)**

## **Eucharist**

Immediate preparation for the Sacrament of the Eucharist traditionally occurs in second grade. Children must be baptized and have received the Sacrament of Penance. Parent(s) must be a registered member of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish. Parent(s) and children must be regularly attending Mass. Children must participate in one academic year of Religious Education prior to the year of religious instruction (1<sup>st</sup> grade) and Sacramental preparation for Eucharist (2<sup>nd</sup> grade). Finally, parent(s) and children must participate in all of the Sacramental preparation determined by the Director of Faith Formation. Preparation consists of classroom instruction, parent meeting with children from both Saint Thomas the Apostle School and Religious Education programs, and an all day retreat with the children from both groups.

## **Reconciliation**

Children receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time in grade one and in subsequent years until the fourth grade in "Form B". "Form B" simply means that students gather as a class with the Pastor, Father James Chelich. Father Jim reads to the children from the Word of God and then leads them through an examination of conscience, which is age appropriate. The children then approach Father Jim individually for the confession of sin and individual absolution.

In the fourth grade our students **do not** receive this sacrament for the first time. During the fourth grade year, the boys and girls of Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish receive a complete and total catechesis on the Sacrament of Reconciliation and are also taught, "the art of examining one's conscience". At this time they are introduced to the Sacrament in "Form A". "Form A" simply means the individual prepares his/her own examination of conscience, confession of sin, absolution and penance. This is the first time that the children of Saint Thomas Parish complete this process entirely on their own, in the manner of adults. The youth continue to receive the Sacrament in this [Form A] thereafter.

Preparation consists of classroom instruction, parent meeting with children from both Saint Thomas the Apostle School and Religious Education programs, and an all day retreat with the children from both groups.

## **Confirmation**

Immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation takes place in the eighth grade. Candidates for Confirmation must be Baptized. They and their parent(s) must be a registered member of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish. Parent(s) and Candidates must regularly attend Mass. Your youth must have participated in one academic year of Religious Education prior to the year of religious instruction (7<sup>th</sup> grade) and Sacramental preparation for Confirmation (8<sup>th</sup> grade). Candidates must participate in all of the Sacramental preparation determined by the Director of Faith Formation. Preparation consists of classroom instruction, parent meeting with Candidates from both Saint Thomas the Apostle School and Religious Education programs, Sunday sessions with Candidates and their Sponsors, and an all day retreat with Candidates from both groups.

## **Rite of Christian Initiation of Children**

Occasionally, for many different reasons, there are youth who have not celebrated the Sacraments in the usual order. Arrangements will be made for any child who has not previously celebrated the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, and Reconciliation. Parent(s) need to inform the Director of Religious Education & Formation if they have a child who has not already celebrated these Sacraments. Children should, however, be registered for their appropriate grade level class. If you have any questions, please call Patti at the Parish Office, 459-4662 ext. 1209 or email [pattireynolds@stthomasgr.org](mailto:pattireynolds@stthomasgr.org).

- If a child is transferring from another Rel.Ed. program, parent(s) need to submit a letter from the previous Parish, verifying what preparation your child has completed for the Sacraments.