

Saint Thomas the Apostle Sacrament Preparation Guidelines

Please note: St. Thomas Parish & Diocesan policy requires 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. 1st grade + 2nd grade = First Holy Communion prep and 7th grade + 8th grade = Confirmation prep)

Eucharist

The Sacrament of Eucharist traditionally occurs in second grade. Children must be baptized and have received the Sacrament of Penance. Parent(s) must be a registered member here at Saint Thomas the Apostle, register as a visitor (if non-parishioners), or have dual-membership. Parent(s) and children must be regularly attending weekly Sunday Mass.* Children must participate in one academic year of Religious Education (1st grade) prior to the year of Sacramental preparation for Eucharist (2nd grade). 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 and an all-day retreat with the children from Saint Thomas the Apostle School, Religious Education, and Home-Schooled programs.

Reconciliation

Children are properly catechized for the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to First Eucharist. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is received prior to the celebration and first reception of Eucharist. Variation of this norm occurs on an individual basis and after deliberate consultation between the Pastor and individual parent(s).

Father Jim Chelich has offered Reconciliation to the children in grades 1-3 under "Form B" and in grades 4-8 under "Form A". "Form B" simply means that students gather as a class with Father Jim. 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, receives individual absolution, and is given a penance. Students in the 4th grade receive a complete and total catechesis of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Students in grades 4-8, under "Form A", are taught "the art of examining one's conscience" which simply means the individual prepares his/her own examination of conscience, they make a confession of sin, receive absolution and given a penance.

Confirmation

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 weekly Sunday Mass.* Your child must have participated in one academic year of Religious Education (7th grade) prior to the year of Sacramental preparation for Confirmation (8th grade). Candidates must participate in all the Sacramental preparation determined by the Director of Faith Formation. Preparation consists of classroom instruction, parent meeting with Candidates, Sunday sessions with Candidates and their Sponsors, and an all-day retreat with Candidates from both Saint Thomas the Apostle School, Religious Education, and Home-Schooled programs.

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, Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation. Parent(s) need to inform the Director of Faith 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.

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