

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. 1st grade + 2nd grade = First Holy Communion prep. 3rd grade + 4th grade = Sacrament of Reconciliation prep. 5th grade is Altar Server training. 7th grade + 8th grade = Confirmation preparation.)

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 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 Father Jim 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 of 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, makes a confession of sin, receives absolution and is given a 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.

Children must participate in one academic year of Religious Education (3rd grade) prior to the year of Sacramental preparation for Reconciliation (4th 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.

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 of 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.