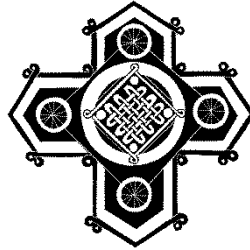


Sacramental Preparation of Children

@ St. Max

FAQs

Revised 6/16/2021



Preparing children for the sacraments of First Penance, First Communion, and Confirmation is a grace-filled time for your family. Here are some frequently-asked questions that might help guide you through the preparation process.

What are the 3 sacraments of initiation?

Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are the three sacraments of initiation, of belonging in the Church. Baptism is the gateway to the other sacraments, and brings us into the family of God. Confirmation is a sealing of our baptism, a commissioning for living out our baptism. Eucharist is the “sacrament of sacraments”, the gathering of God’s people around the table of Christ to grow in unity with God and the Church.

I thought sacramental preparation took place in the Catholic school?

Christian Initiation takes place in the parish, the faith community into which we are initiated. For over 20 years in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, sacramental preparation has been taking place in the parish. There is still religious education about the sacraments in the school curriculum, but preparation is a parish function.

What if my child has received no religious education?

Sacramental preparation must be accompanied by age-appropriate religious education. If your child is not currently enrolled in Catholic grade school or our parish’s RFY program (classroom or homestudy), please contact Mary Lou Baker, RFY Coordinator, ext. 120 to get started!

Why are parents so involved with First Penance/Communion preparation?

At a child’s baptism, parents make a solemn promise to be the first teachers of the faith, to bring their children up according to the law of Christ and the Church. It is the duty of parents to pass on faith to their children. It is the role of leaders in the Church to help equip parents to fulfill that role. At St. Max, our approach to sacramental preparation is family-focused.

I have older children who have already celebrated these sacraments; what’s our process look like?

Each child receiving the sacrament prepares in their own way at their own time, and parents participate with each one.

My child isn’t baptized: do we need to do that first?

Yes. Baptism is the gateway to the other sacraments. Contact Katie Keenan, kkeenana@saint-max.org, ext 111 to talk more.

What if my child is not in 2nd or 8th grade but I want them to prepare? While these are the “typical” ages for preparing for First Penance & First Communion and Confirmation, there is no “magic age”. Discernment of readiness is done collaboratively between the family and initiation ministers.

What if I'm not confirmed or never received Holy Communion?

This isn't a limitation on your child's ability to prepare for and celebrate these sacraments. What's important is your commitment to raising them in the practice of the faith. And when you're ready to complete your initiation in the Church (which is often simpler to do than you think!) you can contact Dave Brunsman, dbrunsman@saint-max.org, ext. 137 to talk more about it.

We plan for this sacrament to be celebrated in another parish...does my child need to prepare here?

Each child must prepare to receive the sacrament, so preparation should be done either here or in another parish. If preparation has been done elsewhere, a letter from that parish will suffice for celebration here. Typically another parish will accept a similar letter from us so that celebration can happen there. Inquire with the other parish about their expectations.

Why do we need to interview with the pastor for Confirmation?

An interview with the pastor is an important part of Confirmation preparation at St. Max. Not only does the interview give the pastor a chance to meet your family and make a connection with you (which is difficult in such a large community), but it allows for interaction between the parents, children, and the pastor in a relaxed, informal setting. The pastor interview is a wonderful time to discuss your family's concerns, hesitations or questions.

Does my child need a sponsor for First Communion?

No. Parents accompany their child in the process of preparing for First Penance and First Communion.

What can we as a family do to help get ready for the beginning of the sacramental preparation process?

If you're not already, praying together as a family is important: before meals, in the morning, at bedtime. If it's not already part of your family routine, make Sunday Mass a priority: come together, discuss afterwards. Explore the many religious education and faith formation opportunities our parish offers for all ages. Get involved in parish life.

Please contact us with any questions or concerns. We're eager to help your family prepare for and celebrate these sacraments, moments of encounter with Christ!

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Baptism of Children,
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